

Life Education in Primary Schools:
Case Studies in Hong Kong and Jiangsu

by

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The Education University of Hong Kong
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

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The Education University of Hong Kong

Life education has recently attracted quite a lot of attention and some education researchers hope to enhance the students' awareness and the value of their life, students' self-protection ability, respecting life through education. There is an urgent need to assess and nurture the life education of primary school students in Hong Kong and Jiangsu. This study employs the case study method to assess and compare the life education of two Hong Kong primary schools with and without life education as a subject with two Jiangsu primary schools with and without life education as a subject. The principals, teachers and students were interviewed for the life education situation in their schools. Life education curriculums were classified by Transcendent, Community, Nature and Self. The practice and implementation of life education were evaluated by Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional and Practical. Results revealed that life education has been carried out in Hong Kong primary schools whether or not they set life education as an individual subject. However, compared with the life

education in Hong Kong, the development of life education in Jiangsu is lagging far behind. Because life education in Mainland China is considered as a part of moral education which is highly political aspect, it is hard to claim that life education has no political. Although almost all principals and teachers in Jiangsu schools stated verbally that life education was very important to students, there is no impetus for them to take the initiative to push the development of life education. After all, life education, unlike other subjects, is a thankless and time consuming task. Compared with Jiangsu, life education in Hong Kong has made great progress which is being driven by some educators and some religious groups. However, there is also some limitation of life education in Hong Kong because there are not much resources and leadership from the Hong Kong government. Moreover, there are also some factors which are hampering the implementation of life education in Jiangsu.

Keywords: life education, case study, Hong Kong, Jiangsu

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction of the Term Life Education

1.1.1 The origins of Life Education. In recent years, life education has become an educational topic in many regions and countries. Nowadays, more and more schools have begun to focus on the life education of students. Parents and teachers are increasingly concerned about children's life situation, physical and mental health. Life education trains students to love their lives, to care for their lives and to maintain the life of the earth. It can help students to develop and balance their wisdom, feelings, willpower and physical development, to build mutual respect, communication and a responsible relationship with others and the environment, and finally to achieve a mature and happy life. When students know how to appreciate and respect life, they are able to know how to cherish life. The deeper they understand what life is, the better they know how to face difficulties with a positive and optimistic attitude. Moreover, they learn to love others and themselves.

As early as 1921, a co-educational boarding school, A. S. Neill's Summerhill, was founded in Suffolk, England. It is the oldest children's democracy in the world. The Summerhill employs a different educational system to eliminate most of the friction and many of the problems experienced by modern families.

The school's philosophy is to allow freedom for the individual - each child being able take their own path in life, and following their own interests to develop into the person that they personally feel that they are meant to be. This leads to an inner

self-confidence and real acceptance of themselves as individuals. All of this is done within the school's structure of self-government through school meetings which are at the core of the school and emphasize the distinction between freedom and license. Living life in a community is of great importance to the pupils. Through this, they learn to compromise, communicate, negotiate and assume responsibility.

(www.summerhillschool.co.uk)

Summerhill is a different way of life and a different way of education with the coincidence of “way of life” and “education” in the social mechanisms of the school. The notion of “living your own life” was a dominant aspect of the culture (Stronach & Piper, 2008). Although there is no “life education” term in this school, it has been carrying out life education over the years.

Many researchers in Taiwan and Hong Kong said that an American J. Donald Walters first explicitly put the concept and thought of life education forward in 1968. Life education, according to Walters, expands the current definition of schooling; it offers parents, educators, and concerned citizens techniques for transforming education into an integral process. Life education is a system which emphasizes relevancy when teaching the “basics”, and instructs children also in the art of living. According to Walters, there are two goals of life education: (1) to prepare children for meeting life’s challenges, and not only fit them for employment or for intellectual pursuit; and (2) to help people to see the whole of life, beyond the years that one spends in school, as education.

For if indeed, as most people believe, life has purpose and meaning, then its goal must be to educate us ever-more fully to that meaning. And the true goal of the

education we receive during our school years must be to help prepare us for that lifelong learning process. (Walters, 1986, p. 9)

The Education for Life system has been tested and proved over nearly three decades at Ananda Village in California, a thriving community founded by Walters. When his book “Education for life: preparing children to meet the challenges” was published, the created idea of life education had attached great importance from people (Garcini, 2013; Ketabi, 2012; Walters, 1986).

In Australia, “Life Education”, the largest non-government organization and provider of drug and health education to children and young people, and their families and communities, was founded by Ted Noffs in 1979 (www.lifeeducation.org.au). Life Education has been empowering children and young people to make safer and healthier choices through education for more than 35 years (Life Education Australia, 2011). By 2014, over 5 million Australian children and young people have benefited from the Life Education program (<http://www.lifeeducation.org.au/who-we-are/our-story>). It has also established branches in many parts of the world, including New Zealand, Hong Kong, the UK, the USA, Barbados, Cyprus, Finland, and Japan.

In the 1980s, destruction, suicide and violence became common childhood problems in Japan. In order to solve the growing social problems among young people, “the fear of human life and respect for human spirit” was clearly mentioned in the new syllabus of Japanese schools (Yu, 2013).

1.1.2 The Appearance of Life Education in the Greater Chinese Region. Life

Education (Shengming Jiaoyu, 生命教育) in Taiwan can be traced back to the 1980s. Some

missionary schools set up an ad hoc school-based ethics curriculum, and religious organizations compiled teaching materials to foster “holistic education”, which emphasized the personal, social, moral, cognitive and emotional aspects of education (Lee, 2004). It has been developed to be an educational paradigm with ideas of both the humanistic and spiritual education. It integrates not only the principles of spirituality, wholeness, and interconnectedness, but also the principles of freedom, autonomy, and democracy.

In 1997, life education was officially promoted for junior and senior high schools by Taiwan’s former Provincial Authority of Education (Sun, 2000). Later, Life Education Panels in Schools were appointed by the Department of Education of the Taiwan Government in February 2000. A Life Education Committee was also established by the Department of Education in August of the same year to promote the planning and delivery of Life Education from primary to higher education (Chen, 2004). Moreover, to reiterate its significance, 2001 was designated the ‘Year of Life Education’ (Ng & Zeng, 2002). The goals of life education are to encourage pupils to understand the meaning of life, to have positive attitudes to life and to cherish their own lives. Life education comprises three main dimensions: life and religious philosophy (spiritual dimension), basic and applied ethics (rational dimension), and the integration of personality and affective education (emotional dimension) (Sun, 2001). The target of life education is to teach people finding their own identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the natural world, to the community, to spiritual values, and even to themselves. To achieve this target, an academic curriculum that condenses the world into instructional packages is not enough. Each person should be directly engaged with the environment. Life education nurtures and educates students as a whole person; a person who

is balanced in body, mind, and spirit.

The following sections will detail the development and situation of life education in Hong Kong and the mainland China.

1.2 The Social Factors Led to the Appearance of Life Education

1.2.1 Influence of Market Economy on Student Life. After 1980s, with the implementation of the policy of reform and opening-up and socialist market economy system in China, people's living level gradually established in continuous improvement. Meanwhile, market economy has also greatly changed people's thinking, motivation and behavior towards financial interest, material consumption and individual identity. Adolescents are inevitably influenced by such concepts as personality liberation and freedom of thoughts which will bring many new questions and contradictions to the society.

As income levels in China rise, the living standards of ordinary Chinese people were also raised. In the last few years, people put forward higher requirement for the systems of housing, medical treatment and education as their income increases. With enough economic foundation and material guarantee, Chinese people have more leisure time than before to enjoy their own life with amusements, shopping, study, sports, travelling, and so on (Dong, 2009).

In order to adapt to changing international markets, Chinese people have undertaken painful socioeconomic reforms and large regional differences for several years. Although people have benefited immensely from market economy, it has also brought out many social problems which are price of the market economy. Therefore, people have to rethink the

relationship between morality and utility, the self and others, competition and cooperation, making contributions and making gains. With the improvement of substantial civilization and melioration of people's living standard, people in China are much more careful to respect the rights and privacy of the individual. Meanwhile, competition, self-interest and personal financial gain are becoming gradually accepted (Zhang, 1996). However, there are also some insurmountable phenomena with market economy, such as materialism, the collapse of traditional beliefs and values, and deterioration in human relationships which have become serious challenges for young people and their moral education (Zhu, 1997). At the same time, more and more young people have concerns about their life situation. They hope to remove the bondage of old-fashioned ideas, hoped to live in their own life. They dreamed of a new type of life, the essence of which was identical with freedom.

1.2.2 Impact of Globalization, Mass Media and Internet on Student Life. By the impact of market economy and globalization, the contemporary Chinese culture is no longer a closed society. Mass media and the internet have permeated through each field in life. Meanwhile, China also actively participates in the international affairs, maintains close contact with its international partners, and works with the UN more closely. Its international standing is being increased (He, 2008).

While Chinese people are meeting various cultures in the world, their own lives are also subtly being changed. At present, ordinary Chinese people are interested in world events these days in the world. They would like to spread Chinese culture around the world and try to learn good things from other cultures and lifestyles in the world, with an open and tolerant attitude towards cultural diversity (He, 2004).

With the popularization and ripeness of the internet, the era of the great explosion of the information has already come. However, the speed of information development is much faster for the Chinese people to be prepared as to how to deal with it selectively. Many people, especially young people who have not yet developed mature value and views, lost themselves in the ideas of deceit, sex, violence, bad language and extremism, and turned into life nihilists and relativists, which puts forward the more, higher and newer requirements for the education (Liu, 2015).

1.2.3 Influence of Family Structural Changes on Family Life. In China, family life is the most basic education. It is critical to a person's growth and development. As an important source of children's moral and life education, family education can play an equally important role with school education. Because of family planning and the one-child policy in China from 1989 to 2013, the population showed the current by 4:2:1. Every family is under a big pressure. The traditional three generations Chinese family has been changed to a small family from 1990s. However, the shift away from households in which three generations would cohabit means grandparents are no longer able to assist with childcare chores (Liu, 2000).

First introduced in 1979 as a measure to rein in China's booming population, the one-child policy has faced widespread opposition from its first day. Even so, this policy was widely accepted in most of area of China, but exceptions were made for minority areas. As a result of the birth control policy, China already entered the low birth level country rank because of the birth rate rapid drop.

The country's family planning policy has been relaxed in recent years, allowing and encouraging couples to have a second child. However, the parents have become infertile, or

unable to have babies for some families who have only one child now. Meanwhile, some husband and wife do not wish to have a child, let alone a second child. There are also some families who lost their only child. Due to the increasing divorce rate, there are more and more single parent families. China's one-child policy has undermined the safety net that the elderly normally rely on in traditional societies. The change of family structure, separation between parents and family and difficult of family support have an indisputable influence on young people's upbringing and development (Hao, 2015; Hu, 2016).

In 1980, China took drastic steps to limit births with its controversial "one child" policy, upsetting the balance between the sexes and between generations. More recently, it has been realized that family size might affect social skills -- with some evidence that onlies are at a disadvantage, at least early on. While comparing with the children with sibling, only children display many negative personal characteristics, such as being more self-centered and less cooperative, sociable, responsible and able to take care of themselves since their family environments lack peer communication. Many only children have earned the nickname of "little emperors" for the love and treats lavished upon them (Feng, 2002). On the other hand, the life of being an only child has several obvious advantages, such as free from the possible conflicts often found in a big family. But generally speaking, the only child lead to negative impact on kid growing and shaping characters (Wang, 2011).

In the new social environment, women have the same rights as men, so in the same family, wife and husband have equal status in the family. A harmonious family atmosphere can help the children to build up the democracy and equal idea of man and woman. The male-centered culture is being weaken in the new generation. However, urban and rural

comparisons show that men have the final say in family matters in rural areas. For example, sex-ratio imbalances are a growing problem because sons are often preferred over daughters which is particularly prominent in rural areas. The life of peasants needs to fill with contents. In a traditional Chinese village, “carrying on the ancestral line” is a fundamental proposition of peasants’ life contents and values. Sons, no doubt, were preferred – and still are – because only they can carry the family name. When the stereotype of a strong man with a weak woman still dominates many people’s minds, life education will be greatly influenced. Many children brought up in rural areas will be familiar with, and may themselves display, chauvinistic attitudes and behavior (Tang, 2000).

As for the urban child’s education within the family, there are several factors to impact education: the existence of generation gap, parents’ influence, over-high expectation, and the influence of the family emotion environment. Those factors may have bad influences on the child, for example, by confusing the child’s values and ability to choose. For example, lacking communications between generations, some families are upset by the widening generation gap. In the family life, the parents and the child, as a result of the generation gap issue, can produce very many conflicts and problems. Moreover, the “generation gap” began to spread from family to the whole society, and ultimately resulted in the vigorous counter-culture movement.

Communication between school and family is one of the effective ways in enhancing student’s moral education in the new era (Long, 2015). Generally, schools in China have some ways, activities and programs to contact or communicate with parents and families.

However, sending letters by email or post mail to parents is not very effective, the school

relies on contacting them through the phone or home visits. For some trouble-maker students, their parents were required to meet their teachers in school. Parents can also express their opinions of school in Parents' Day or Open Day for Parents. They can learn how to help their child in a Parent's School for parents. However, there are still some communication problems between teachers in schools and parents in family, which cause some negative influence on family and school cooperation. For example, some students can't meet high parental expectation. They have to lie to their parents about their performance in school. Moreover, they in turn convey false information of their parents to teachers that finally cause misunderstanding between school and family.

Examinations, materialism and suicide have significant impacts on Chinese young people (Cheng, 2007). As a passive emotion, examination anxiety seriously affects some students on facticity of examination scores. At the same time, the utilitarianism pays much more attention to the human satisfaction to the material desires than to the students' interests in knowledge exploration. There has been undesirable trend among young people towards materialistic hedonism and the worship of money. And some people tend to lose interest in life, so a lot of people choose to commit suicide annually. As a result, the Chinese government is planning to promote suicide prevention among youth and spread life awareness in society. (Cao, 2004).

1.2.4 Negative Social Phenomena in Mainland China. Recently, with Mainland China's rapid development of the market economy, materialism, individualism, money worship, hedonism and other negative decadent ideas have corrupted the minds of many students. The number of students who commit suicide and injuries on others is taking on a

gradually increasing trend and some students cannot treat their life and understand the meaning of life rationally and maturely (Li, 2007).

Suicide in China has attracted much attention during the past decade. Based on 1990s mortality data, several important features of suicides in China were identified and documented (Cai, 2012):

- (1) Among the direct and indirect causes of suicide, a domestic dispute is the leading cause (more than 50%), followed by mental illness, human relations, and somatoform disorders.
- (2) For the means of suicide, about 95% people tried to kill themselves with a drug overdose. Other means include jumping off a building, hanging, drowning, cutting wrists, and so on.
- (3) Young people aged 15 to 34 were high risk for suicides.

Suicide in China accounts for about a quarter of all suicides worldwide. Every year, Chinese newspapers fill up with tragic tales of students' suicides. Immature students may be unable to cope with the grief and pressure of their life, examinations, and academic stress, may attempt to harm themselves or even commit suicide. Overall, the suicide rate in China is comparatively high (Dubois 2013).

In current China, it is a growing social problem for the suicide of primary and middle school students. However, details and the number of student suicides have been kept secret by the education departments of all levels. It is impossible to obtain the exact number of suicides in a city and all over China.

A report collected and analyzed 79 suicide cases of primary and middle school students

in 2013 (Cheng, 2014). According to this report, it was not a thoughtless behavior for most of students to kill themselves. It was also not a common phenomenon for students to commit suicide with an angry mood or a suicide pact. Most of these cases were due to the drain of their willpower.

Meanwhile, there are many serious social phenomena in violation of public morality. These cases have led to a stormy discussion on the Internet in China.

The first case was triggered by the “Tianyi Li and his trial for rape” (Yuan, 2013). As the only son of a high-ranking Chinese military singer Shuangjiang Li, Tianyi Li, 17, raped a young woman at a Beijing hotel along with four others in February 2013. As a common criminal case, Li inflamed public anger because of his political elite status. People could see the spoilt, reckless and above the law attitude from his family. The failure of prominent families to educate their children could antagonize the public. It is probably no coincidence that a Hangzhou illegal street-racing incident caused people’s anger several years ago (Mao, 2011). When a drunk driver killed a student in Baoding city last October, the driver’s only defense was to proclaim, “My father is Gang Li” -- the deputy director of the local Public Security Bureau. As a government official, Gang Li apparently did not show positive educational influences on his son. As a result, any reference to “Gang Li” has become associated with acting recklessly above the law because of supposed connections to government officials (Xiu, 2010). “My father is Gang Li” was already known, even to some foreigners.

In addition to these juvenile offenders, some university students have showed little concept of respecting life which caused extensive concern to the society, mass media and

people from all walks of life. In 2002, Haiyang Liu, a senior university student of a famous college in Beijing, carried sulphuric acid to the Beijing zoo and poured it on several bears. As a result of this attack, three black and two brown bears that trusted human beings were severely burned. With high scores in the national college entrance examination, Liu showed his success as an excellent student. However, his actions proved that he had failed to learn the basic principles of social conduct from schools and his parents (Shang, 2002). Most recently, Senhao Lin, a graduate student of Fudan University in Shanghai, received the death sentence after he was found guilty of fatally poisoning his roommate with drinking water. His roommate, Yang Huang, also 27, felt sick soon after drinking water from the dispenser on April 1 2014 and later went to the hospital with severe abdominal pains. He died of poisoning two weeks later. Only because of a grudge over “trivial daily matters”, Lin killed Huang in an intentional homicide case which destroyed both families instantly with permanent pains (Liu, 2013).

1.3 Development of Life Education in China and Hong Kong

1.3.1 Life Education Precursor. In the history of contemporary Chinese education, especially since the May 4th New Cultural Movement in 1919, the Western ideas of democracy and science have spread to China. Some modern educators, such as Yuanpei Cai (蔡元培), Duxiu Chen (陳獨秀), Xingzhi Tao (陶行知) and Xun Lu (魯迅), criticized the view of fatality and the feudalistic ceremony in Chinese traditional thought. They advocated the free development of individual life.

Yuanpei Cai threw his energy of the whole life into culture and education course of

modern China. He said: “educationist, means to engage with the affairs of cultivating personality” (教育者, 養人格之事業也). Cai had a profound hatred of the feudal ethics dazzling physical and mental development of children’s behavior. He advocated that the core idea of children’s education is to be children-centered and to follow the laws of the physical and mental development of children. The goal of education is educating people to have complete personalities. Education is supposed to help those being educated; to enhance their ability to develop themselves; and to perfect their personalities, so as to fulfil the duty as a member of the human race. The features of animation for young children in the background of education include educational feature, intellectual feature, visual feature, concise feature and naive feature. Harmonious relationships helps to form the sound school ethos and style of teaching and learning and it is also important for helping students developing their fine personality and spirit of innovation (Zhang, 2005).

1.3.2 Life Education-Offshoot of Moral Education. In China, moral education has been a considerable undertaking across history to the present day. Moral education permeates the whole education system, but its success is doubtful. Moral education in modern China is characterized by the term Daode Jiaoyu (道德教育), which means, broadly speaking, ideological, political, moral, legal and mental education. In modern times, the management and implementation of Daode Jiaoyu has been facilitated by whatever is conducive to political purposes, neglecting the development of the truly personal and creative mind. By an intensive examination of various periods through which Daode Jiaoyu played different roles in the coordination and implementation of political aims (Ye, 2001; Zhu, 2005).

Moral education is always closely associated with politics in China. The term “moral

education” is also called ideological education (Sixiang Jiaoyu, 思想教育) or political education (Zhengzhi Jiaoyu, 政治教育) and/or ideopolitical education, and moral qualities are coined as ideomoral and/or ideopolitical-moral qualities (Sixiang Zhengzhi Suzhi, 思想政治素质) (Cui, 2009; Liu, 1990; Lu, 1991). These three terms are all roughly interchangeable concepts, and are intertwined with one another to reveal the political socialization of moral education. In China, official compulsory education bears the most important function of political socialization. Political socialization is an important aspect of political culture studying and is also an important part of political culture developing. Thought-moral culture is one of thought-politics courses in higher colleges from elementary school to college. As a required course in institutions of higher learning, ideological and political theories play an important role which cannot be replaced by other courses in cultivating talents. Meanwhile, the status and contents of moral education must change with the change of economic political patterns in the world and the needs of development strategy of China (Qi, 2004).

The present “Regulations for Primary and Secondary Students” was enacted by China's education ministry in 2004 as the outline of moral education. Good Samaritan was listed as one virtue of students. However, for young students, it is hard for them to judge whether or not to help others in complex social situations. With the development of the society, the appeal to the removal of Good Samaritan from the Regulations was becoming increasingly strong. As a result, the new version of “Regulations for Primary and Secondary Students” was open to public advices and suggestions on August 1, 2014 and published on August 27, 2015.

In this new version, the clause of “Good Samaritan, dare to struggle, dissuade some

anti-social behavior” was deleted. Meanwhile, several new clauses on life education were added including: protect the environment and health; keep yourself out of danger; control the amount of time spent online; and stay away from drugs. Coincidentally, ten years ago, “Regulations for Primary and Secondary Students (2005)” in Shanghai added “to value life” into its contents (Xiao, 2009; Zhu, 2012).

1.3.3 Implementation of Life Education in Mainland China. Mainland China started late on life education, but has taken a welcome step (Yang, 2005). Major contemporary changes in Chinese societies form the backdrop to current reforms of life education. Over the last decades, Mainland China, in particular, has changed more rapidly than ever before, as indicated in certain trends, identified below, which gave rise to lots of social problems and desires of life education (see Figure 1.1).

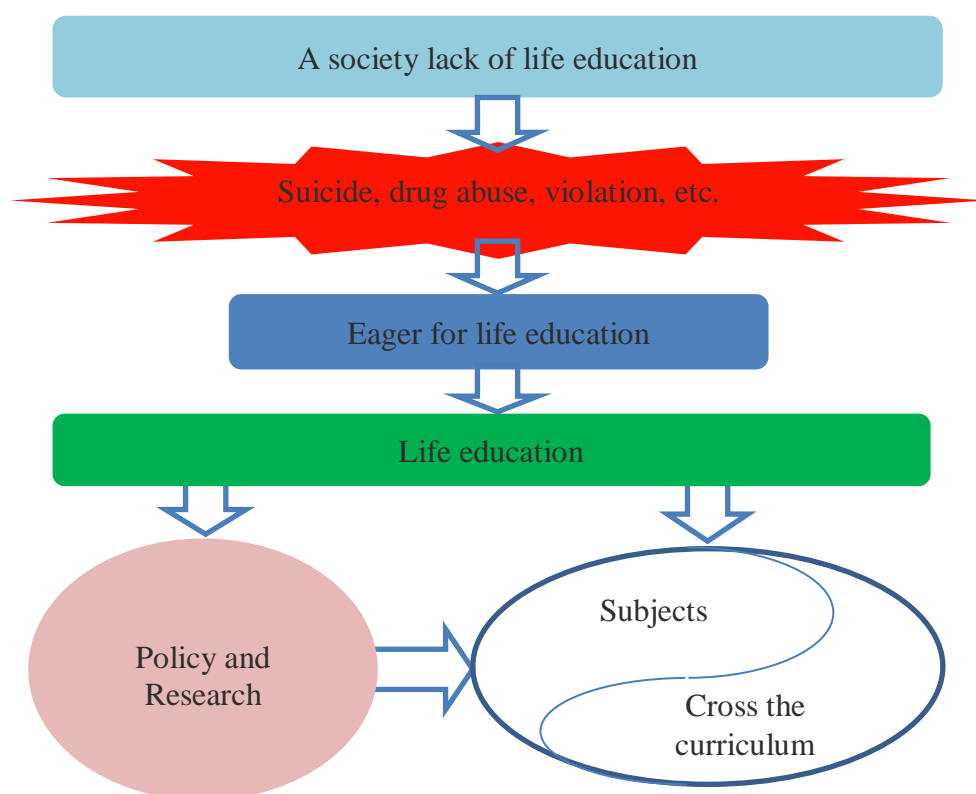


Figure 1.1. The flow diagram of the development of life education.

Following Hong Kong and Taiwan, some provinces in Mainland China, such as

Shanghai, Jiangxi, Heilongjiang, Yunnan, and Jiangsu, also issued some teaching syllabus, decisions and plans. In 2005, the Shanghai Municipal Education Committee constituted and published “The outline of life education in Shanghai primary and middle schools (Pilot)” 《上海市中小學生生命教育指導綱要（試行）》 that emphasized the implementation of life education should follow the following principles:

- (1) life education cognition, experiences and practices combined principle;
- (2) life education development, prevention and intervention combined principle;
- (3) tailoring teaching principle; and
- (4) family, society and school combined effect.

On May 23 2008, the Yunnan provincial committee university union and provincial education department decided to carry out “Sansheng Jiaoyu” (三生教育) throughout the province (Luo, 2009). “Sansheng Jiaoyu” is an essential cause that consists of the internal relations and inseparability of life, living and surviving. Human inner essence decides that “Sansheng Jiaoyu” is based on life, living and surviving must run through people’s whole-life education. It combines education with people’s essence, surviving and developing, reflects and follows the inner rule of education essence. So the nature of “Sansheng Jiaoyu” is a practice activity to perfect life, promote human surviving, living and developing. At present, “Sansheng Jiaoyu” has got obvious achievement in Yunnan schools following which the education of Yunnan has stepped into a scientific developing road with obvious characteristics (Luo, 2009).

Some life education experimental schools and classes have made great achievements and become pioneers and the model of the educational reform. Unfortunately, all these

teaching experiments have created solutions on their own with no uniform national policies from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. The good news is that the government and some life education experts are aware of the problem, and are appealing for education reformation. Consequently, some government-funded research projects and institutions were founded. On 21 April 2010, the first Life Education Research Center in China was founded in Beijing Normal University with a resourceful website, China Life Education. It was assigned a social and humanistic research plan, "Study on the life education theory and practice under the new situation", by the Department of Education. The Center also organized the First Summit Forum on Life Education for University Students in 2001. In November 2011, a research center on children's life and moral education was founded in Capital Normal University, Beijing. However, under the inertia of exam-oriented education, it may need the efforts of several generations to achieve outstanding achievements on life education (Sun, 2012).

Despite all this, the Guidelines of the National Program for Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020) pointed out the direction for the future development of life education in China. In the twelfth five-year-plan, the life education research team of the National Institute of Science Education spent two years to edit some textbooks on life education. Three sets of textbooks have been published by The People's Education Press at the end of 2013; one each for elementary, middle and high-school students (Outline of the China national medium and long term educational reform and development plan (2010-2020), 2010).

1.3.4 Life Education Study in Mainland China. As previously stated, with the whole

society thoroughly changing, the life education in China has developed with both the opportunities and challenges. For example, campus-spirit's cultivation has been influenced by negative factors from marketing economy and impact from foreign cultures. Nowadays there are some defects in the moral integrity of some students due to the ill influence of the prevailing, the negative impact of the social malpractice. A transitional social condition sees a declination in humanistic spirit, which affects people's mind, culture, conviction, and value. When people lost their faith, they puzzled by the radical conflicts between political democratization and authoritarian and hierarchical tradition. Meanwhile, a new family ethic is hard to be built in a family with different structure from last generation. These are all major challenges for life education study (Lin, 2009).

Over the last few years, doing life education for students is becoming a widely subject in China. There has been a consistent and determined investment for academic field of life education which put students at the heart of the education and respect their interests and choices. Life education emphasizes what students need to balance both freedom and responsibility. Students are encouraged to face dilemmas and conflicts in real life, instead of escaping from them. Life education, rooted in the changing social context, suggests that it should meet the needs of social development and people's lives (Zhang 2012).

As regards empirical research, the content of theoretical and academic study of life education is now focusing on its future directions. On the one hand, life education has to face some new topics and problems which are brought up by new technologies, such as life education in internet society (Yang, 2008). On the other hand, Chinese educators have rich experiences on moral education which encouraged them to construct systematic life

education models in China, such as the emotional model (Zhu, 1993) and the activity model (Qi, 1994, 1999). Following these models, educators have designed and developed some life educational ideas, such as humanistic education, student-centered education, activity-centered education, education for democracy and lifelong education. Learnt from Taiwan and Hong Kong, a new life education system was also proposed in Jiangsu a few years ago. These continuous efforts and attempts are seeking their own distinctive path of life education in China (Lang, 2013).

In recent years, the study on life education in China has become one of the foci for educational research academics. From the 1990s, life education has risen in the educational research field, and has caused concern for many researchers. Much research has been conducted on theory exploring and practical application of life education. Related papers have been published in the areas of education. Because the studies on life education are still in the initial stage and with different understandings, there are some various research perspectives, just to mention a few.

In 1992, Professor Lan Ye published a paper and initiated to “Give back the right of developing life to students”, “Allow the class to be vigorous”, which reveals the significance of life education. She thought traditional education simplified the vibrant and volatile classes to a special understanding activity.

Hui Liu presented the concept of “Life moral education” in 2002. It clarified the objectives, content, approaches, and valuation system which aim at the disadvantages of the traditional moral education in schools. As a moral education concept, life moral education consists of two levels: to deal with life and to meet the needs of life. Based on this, moral

education became life moral education (Liu, 2002, 2004).

At the end of 2004, Liaoning Province started the life education project in primary and middle schools. The Liaoning Provincial Committee of Education created a “Special work plan for life education in primary and middle schools”.

In 2005, Xiaojiang Zheng started the development background of life education. Moreover, he introduced the nature of life education which teaches us how to treat the relationship between life and living. We should learn the versatility and richness of our life, recognize the preciousness of life and, thus, find a significant meaning in life (Zheng, 2005).

Chuan Xiao thought there are three levels in life education. For the first level of life education, its primacy significance is to respect every individual life. Schools and teachers are responsible for the quality of students’ whole life. The second level of life education is to chase the freedom and happiness of life. The third level is to penetrate life education to various practical fields of education (Xiao, 2006). Renfu He interpreted four existence forms of human being of Marxism and related them with the theory and practice of life education (He, 2009). He thought Confucianism can help people to keep the basic element of human being which can provide important and direct cultural foundation of life education (He, 2010).

In 2010, the State Council adopted the “National Outline for Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020)”. The publishing of the Outline provided a new chance of life education development. It put forward requirements and developmental targets clearly about the strengthening of life education. In order to implement the Outline, the national commission of life education developed a large national service activity named

Zhihui Gongcheng (致慧工程). Under this project, some life education training bases in 500 counties were set. Some educational research topics were studied widely and deeply.

In 2011, the first “National life education conference” was held in Kunming, Yunnan Province. About 600 representatives attended the meeting. It had a profound impact on life education in China.

The Special Committee of Life Education under National Institute of Xingzhi Tao was founded on December 8, 2013 in Beijing. Xiaoman Zhu was selected as the chairman. Forty specialists from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and the Mainland attended the foundation ceremony. According to the Chinese Outline of Mid-long Term Educational Reform (2010-2020), life education was listed as a theme. Because of the lag and messy situation of life education in Mainland China, The Special Committee of Life Education is beneficial to strengthen and orientate the direction and the way of life education. It built a communication platform for life educators of four-regions of China across the straits.

The second academic annual meeting of The Special Committee of Life Education was held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province on November 1, 2014. The topic was the theory study and practice of life education.

The third academic annual meeting of The Special Committee of Life Education was held during November 19-22, 2015 in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province. At the same time, some key teachers of life education were trained at several workshops.

1.3.5 Life Education Development in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, beginning in 1996, life education was first launched in some middle schools and developed by some religious groups and was gradually accepted by the whole education sector. Some academic centers

were founded in several universities to study life education from different angles. For example, the Centre of Buddhist Studies of The University of Hong Kong was established in September 2000 to promote the study of and research into all aspects of Buddhism and its relevance to the world of today. According to the model of Life Education based on the Concept of Dependent Origination (LEDO), the Buddhist Curriculum was developed by Venerable Hin Hung Sik (Sik, 2006). Furthermore, a completely new set of teaching material for Upper Primary and Lower Secondary was in preparation with some of the new emphases of recent education curriculum development. Through a fundamental understanding of Buddhist teachings, the new teaching materials enabled students to develop better mind and life-management skills: (1) enhance students' ability to comprehend and understand life and themselves; (2) enhance students' ability to manage life and incidents or problems faced in daily life; and (3) enhance students' ability to cope with emphasis in life, and (4) develop positive and desirable attitudes and values of students in accordance with Buddhist teachings.

To implement the educational thought of Christian religion and to build a good life, the Centre for Quality-Life Education in Divinity School of Chung Chi College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, was founded in 2009. Some research projects on life education and religion are on-going with several Christian primary and middle schools. They have run yearly training programmes to train teachers of these schools and to make appropriate life education programs with the support of the Education Bureau (Wong, 2012; 2013a).

In order to analyze the implementation of life education in the cross straits' four places, some educators in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and the Mainland have cooperated for collaborative research (Wu, 2007). Dr. Sui Wai Wu, from The Education University of Hong

Kong and Xinsheng Liu, from the Education Research Centre of Shenzhen's Nanshan District, used surveys to compare the views on life education of Hong Kong and Shenzhen's primary school students. Based on both quantitative and qualitative information obtained from more than 1,200 questionnaires, as well related literatures, they reported the different life stories and life objectives of primary students in both Hong Kong and Shenzhen. According to the differences and commonalities in the understanding of the implementation of life education, they put forward some valuable suggestions (Wu, 2010, 2012).

In recent years, although life education is still not an important part of Hong Kong education policy, it has gained some good results and is going smoothly with the joint efforts of religious groups, researchers and the whole society. After several years of efforts, some schools have introduced life education to their curriculum. More and more principals and teachers are willing to take part in life education lectures. Some schools even feature life education as a selling point to attract students. On the one hand, this sort of behavior affirms the positive image of life education with the public. On the other hand, while the life education is using as a selling point, the meaning of life education is somehow being misrepresented.

Dr. Ping Ho Wong reviewed the number of primary schools with life education (Wong, 2013b). It showed that only 93 carried out life education among a total 517 primary schools in 2013. Moreover, most of the primary schools (75) with life education were religiously affiliated. None of the 34 government primary schools had life education.

I reviewed the information of all primary schools according Primary School Profiles 2015 and 2016 (Committee on Home-School Co-operation). In 2015, there were a total of

572 primary schools in Hong Kong. Among them, 106 (18.5%) mentioned life education in their School Management, Learning & Teaching Plan, Student Support, Home-school Co-operation, or Future Development. Compared to 93 primary schools with life education in 2013 (Wong, 2013b), 13 more schools took part in life education in 2015. Among 106 schools with life education, 84 schools were run by religious groups (81.5%). In 2015, there was still no government primary school that mentioned life education. However, there was one government primary school, Yuen Long Government Primary School, who mentioned “Life education” in its future development – To cultivate positive values through life education. It should be a progress to push life education into government primary schools.

Based on these statistics, I found that the number of primary schools with life education increased year-by-year, although they are currently still in the minority. For all public schools run by the government, they do not pay much attention on life education. It shows that the Education Bureau of Hong Kong does not encourage schools to promote life education (Wong, 2013b). Moreover, most of the primary schools with life education have a religious background which is caused by the special history of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong government employed a non-intervening religious policy, though Christianity had replaced traditional Confucianism in playing a major role in society by dominating the political system, social establishment and education. Nearly half of all schools are Christian based. Mono-religious education has been offered in religious schools but not in government or aided schools. For these religious primary schools, they are playing a positive role in promoting life education in Hong Kong. This also was proved by the number of primary schools which took part in the “Programmes on Planning Life Education in Primary Schools”

run by the Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education of The Education University of Hong Kong. The number of religious schools is about 4-5 times the number of non-religious schools (Wong, 2013b).

Although some research reports have summed up the new achievements made in life education in Hong Kong, most of them share of ideas and experiences about life education.

There are only a few researches on life education theory that can be used as the guideline of practice because of the complexity of educational background as it requires higher level cognitive performance of life education (Wong, 2013b).

The detail of life education in Hong Kong will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Theory and Practice of Life Education

2.1.1 The Curriculum of Life Education. After nearly 40 years of development, the greater Chinese region, especially in Taiwan, has been making great progress in life education, both in theory and in practice. Inspired by the theory of holistic life education, some educators in Taiwan thought that the meaning and value of life lie in four basic relationships (Lin, 2004):

1. People and the religious domain, philosophy, and ultimate soul (the Creator or the Transcendent);
2. People and social relationships, culture and history (Humanity or the Community);
3. People and the physical world and the biological world (the Entire Creation or Nature);
4. People and their own individual self.

All these four relationships are important which reflect four human being's properties: naturalness, human rationality, virtue and sociality (Liu, 2003; Qiu, 2002). None of them can be ignored. A "people" can be cultured among these four relationships. In order to create a positive, happy and satisfied life, we must achieve a balanced development among these relationships. Furthermore, four religious quotients were related to these four relationships, including God Quotient (GQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), Knowledge Quotient (KQ) and Intelligence Quotient (IQ) (Figure 2.1) (Leung, 2016; Lin, 1998).

In Taiwan, life education has become gradually important for general education in some universities. For example, the General Education Center of Chung Yuan Christian University develops more than 130 courses comprising more than 300 classes for general education. Students have to complete 34 credits before their graduation. In every category, students must have two to four course credits in the required courses and take at least two extended, elective courses from courses in each area. These courses help students to balance their bodies, minds, and spirits. With a better balance between their professional knowledge and their knowledge in general education, the students should become the qualified talent of high quality of morals, intelligence and the physics overall development. The General Education Center designs life education curriculum in four areas: the Creator, Humanity, the Entire Creation, and the Individual Self (cge.cucy.edu.tw).

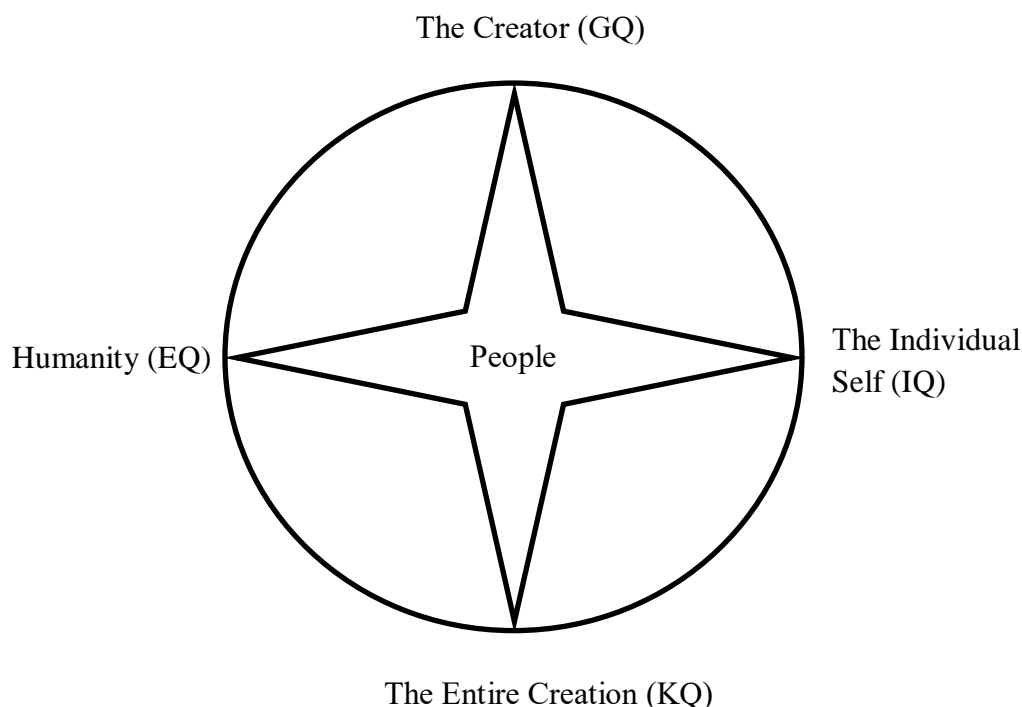


Figure 2.1. The balanced relationships among the Creator, Humanity, the Entire Creation and the Individual Self (Lin, 2004).

Area 1: “the Creator”

Students study topics focused on the “meaning of life” and “value judgment”.

Specifically, the topics cover faith and religion, spiritual nourishment, the meaning of life, and valuable judgment, and courses in other areas (e.g., religious philosophy, life philosophy, valuable judgment and analysis, and models for life and character) (cge.cucy.edu.tw).

Area 2: “Humanity”

Students gain an understanding of group phenomenon and the interactive principles of human social behavior. The courses show a concern for fundamental concepts, such as civic literacy, social care, historical thinking, and multiculturalism with courses covering topics in life sociology, contemporary human rights issues, legal and modern living, and cultural history of ideas (cge.cucy.edu.tw).

Area 3: “the Entire Creation”

Classes focus on individual scientific capacity for critical thought and sustained care. The classes emphasize the fundamental concepts of nature and science, and science and civilization, with courses such as Introduction to Natural Science, Interdisciplinary Technology, and Sustainable Development (cge.cucy.edu.tw).

Area 4: “the Individual Self”

In the category on the Individual Self, students’ individual subjective experiences contribute to the development of a deep meaning in life. We are committed to affection, aesthetic emotions, communication, and expression. This category includes a variety of courses, such as literary classics reading, language and rhetoric, art appreciation, and self-management (cge.cucy.edu.tw).

According to the life education frame of the curriculum syllabus of Taiwan primary schools, it divided life education to four dimensions: People and oneself, People and others, People and environment (nature), People and heaven (universe) (Ng, 2002). They are another expression of the Creator, Humanity, the Entire Creation and the Individual Self (see Table 2.1)

Table 2.1 *Life education frame of Taiwan primary and secondary school*

		Contents
Transcendent	the Creator	1. Pursue the meaning of life;
	(People and heaven)	2. Thoughts and characters
Community	Humanity	1. Be compassionate;
	(People and others)	2. Appreciate and accept others; 3. Respect and love others; 4. Forgive and tolerant others.
Nature	the Entire Creation	1. Appreciate and protect the nature;
	(People and environment)	2. Keep the nature developing forever.
Self	the Individual Self	1. Understand oneself;
	(People and oneself)	2. Appreciate and accept oneself; 3. Enrich oneself; 4. Develop oneself.

Ng analyzed the guidelines of the basic ideas and curriculum aims of several primary and secondary schools in Taiwan. He integrated life education with the fundamental competences and interpreted them systematically (Ng, 2008). He proposed that “Spiritual

education is the core concept of Life education” abased on three significant components:

Holistic education: the concepts of promoting life education;

Holistic development: the process of implementing life education;

Holistic Health: the effects of delivering life education.

The findings presented that Spiritual Education is relevant to every subject in school learning. In particular, it is related directly to “Human being and Universe” which is one of the four approaches of life education. The idea of Human being and Universe helps students to understand the meanings of life and the values of existence. In addition, Spiritual education is also relevant to the other approaches of life education to some extent: Human being and oneself, Human being and others, and Human being and environment.

There are several translations of the four basic relationships of life education in Taiwan. Most Hong Kong educators use the Transcendent, the Community, the Nature and the Self. Therefore, I also use them in this thesis.

2.1.2 Life Education Teaching. Although Taiwan, Hong Kong and Mainland China have different social systems, they have the same cultural background. Chinese culture has a long history and is profound. It is hard to be replaced or eliminated by other cultures; even Taiwan and Hong Kong were invaded and ruled by other countries for a long period. Chinese people in these areas also have similar moral standards, the way of thinking and mode of behavior. Their perception and experience of life is the same single root.

For the implementation of life education, it has four dimensions: Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional and Practical (see Table 2.2) (Huang, 1991; Huang, 2005; Ng, 2008).

Table 2.2 *The implementation levels of life education*

Level	Content
Intellectual	Know the basic concept and knowledge of life
Emotional	Have good life emotion and spirit
Volitional	Awareness of good life attitude and manners
Practical	Practice the up three levels

While the students learn the basic concept and knowledge of life, they can reach the first level. It is the easiest state to achieve for most schools. The first is the basis of the other three levels, however, life education cannot stay at the first level. Students must enhance their level with the help and guidance of teachers and parents. Generally, the learning order follows Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional, and then Practical. But it is not fixed. Sometimes, an inversed order can achieve better learning results (Shih, 2009).

In addition to the imparting of knowledge, life education should pay more attention to students' emotional experience in real life. Moreover, students should be encouraged to practice and implement what they learn in their daily life. This should be concerned by all life education experts and educators.

Life education program is a highly independent discipline as is arts and humanities study; its integrated courses should not be limited to one single teaching discipline only. Life education may be integrated in all teaching disciplines that primarily involve life experiences when the timing is right, such as natural science, language, health and physical education. Shih has discovered that the aesthetic experience derived from the exploration of life and creative expression of arts and humanity may produce resonance of life activities among

students in their general living environment encouraging them to live a more poetic life. This study explored the result and meaning of the integration of life education into arts and humanities in elementary schools through a literature study on the life education program and arts and humanities study at the elementary level and a case study on the teaching and analysis of teaching material.

The results of the study and actual cases were:

(1) Embedded learning and self-guided learning

According to the literature study, life education theoretically consists of reception, practice and affectivity in its context. Its theory is taught through the traditional placement method by way of knowing, practicing and thinking. In the cases, students are given a chance of self-guided learning and the method used is different from the theory; it emphasizes on the exploration of life phenomena through practicing, followed by the internalization process for reception, and finally the expression of affectivity such as humanism. The pattern follows the order of practicing, knowing and thinking. Films, movies or drawings are used as teaching material to explore the meaning of life through an event or story and the students undergo insight learning followed by actions in the pattern of thinking, knowing and practicing.

(2) Paradox between current doctrine and practical research

The theory of life education emphasizes that both the teachers and the students must understand from within the meaning and value of life education, fulfilling the meaning through external actions and practice inside out and both philosophically and physically so that life will be what it is meant to be. The cases adopt the pattern of practice outside-in because the beauty of life cannot be acquired entirely through learning and teaching; only by

way of observation and experience may the students profoundly comprehend and appreciate life. It is also the core context of the external doctrine development and it is how life education may prevail in the new century.

(3) Realization of life education discourse in practical teaching

Theoretically the context of life education consists of four aspects: the Creator (Transcendent), Humanity (Community), the Entire Creation (Nature) and the Individual Self (Self); it coincides with the three major subjects in life education programs: people and nature; people and society; as well as people and oneself. Finally, Shih recommended based on the findings of this study that the life education program should be randomly integrated in different disciplines to allow students to accumulate their resonance of life bit-by-bit through constant and repetitive experiencing and thinking and one day, they shall become a generation that can think feel and create.

2.2 Life Education in Jiangsu

2.2.1 Background of Jiangsu. Jiangsu borders Shandong in the north, Anhui to the west, and Zhejiang and Shanghai to the south. Jiangsu has a coastline of over 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) along the Yellow Sea, and the Yangtze River passes through the southern part of the province. Since the initiation of economic reforms in 1990, Jiangsu has been a hot spot for economic development, and now has the second highest GDP per capita of all Chinese provinces in 2015. Jiangsu is home to many of the world's leading exporters of electronic equipment, chemicals and textiles. It has also been China's largest recipient of foreign direct investment since 2006.

Jiangsu strives to develop educational, scientific and cultural programs, carry forward the fine traditional culture of the Chinese nation. As a famous historical and cultural area with long history, Jiangsu has distinctive rich and varied historical cultural heritages. Jiangsu became the birthplace of the current National School System; the first textile school, the first embroidery school, the first school of opera education, and the first school for the deaf and dumb in China.

Current nine-year compulsory education in China spans primary school through junior high school in a planned way. Presently, 91% of China's populations have access to primary education. The values of the primary education guaranteed the national quality assurance. After primary school, they go to the closest junior middle school in the students' proximity without having to pass any exams. However, if students want to attend some better schools, they have to pass more rigorous entry examinations and meet some high requirements. In addition to public primary schools, there are also some private schools and international schools which have high quality teaching and excellent facilities. However, the living cost and tuitions of these elite schools are very high which is not affordable for most of ordinary families. All public and most of private schools follow the national teaching guideline. But for some international primary schools, they have their own teaching plans.

In recent years, Jiangsu has insisted in giving equal priority to the development of all types and levels' education, which has resulted in rapid yet sustainable development (Wang, 2008). However, high-quality education resources cannot meet demands which are influenced by the imperfect education system and low educational vitality in Jiangsu. In order to match its education with its fast economic development, Jiangsu Province paid great effort to

improve the level and quality of education. In 2010, “Mid-and Long-Term Guidelines of Educational Reform and Development Planning 2010-2020” were published by Jiangsu Education. In these Guidelines, Jiangsu will focus its efforts on building a province that aspires towards providing the very highest levels of education and leading the nation in educational modernization (Xin, 2010).

According to these guidelines, Quality Education will be fully implemented to achieve the following aims:

- (1) Adhering to the principles of moral education and the focus on capability and comprehensive development;
- (2) Establishing a unique curriculum for Jiangsu;
- (3) Creating an innovative personnel training model;
- (4) Reducing students’ academic workload; and
- (5) Formation of a joint effort to promote Quality Education.

2.2.2 Life Education Implementation in Jiangsu. In 1996, Jubo Qian put forward the “Study of life education in primary schools” which was based on his studies and thoughts on the situation of primary and secondary schools. It was approved by the Jiangsu Education Society in the next year. For four years of exploration, some single life education practices showed the attractive features and future. In 2001, Qian applied the “Study of life education theory and practice in primary schools” which was approved as a key project of the Jiangsu education reform (Qian, 2013).

Started in September 2002, the primary school attached to the Extension School of Sihong County, Jiangsu Province carried out life education activities and achieved good

effects. Its school-based textbooks, “Live life-the practice and exploration of life education in primary school”, were edited in 2003. After the textbook was piloted in six primary schools for two years, it was published as “Love life” by Educational Publishing House of Jiangsu in 2005.

After several years exploring and practice, the school-based life education programs had great social influence and effect (Qian, 2013):

1. The life quality of students was improved.
 - a) Improved their life moral level
 - b) Enhanced their security awareness and self-protection
 - c) Deepened their understanding of the meaning of life
 - d) Increased their ambition-level
 - e) Promoted their independent development capacity and the quality of learning
 - f) Expanded their thinking angles and practices
 - g) Developed their interpersonal skills and team spirit
2. The career quality of teachers was also increased.
3. The education reform was pushed forward.
4. The social influence of this project was huge.
 - a) The study results were appreciated and won praise from some consultants, specialists and experts.
 - b) The study results got attention of some life educators.
 - c) The life education experience was used and referred by some researchers.

In 2005, Changzhou Jiangsu decided to comprehensively promote well-rounded

education in order to improve the life quality and environment of young people. Life education experiments were carried out in some primary schools with a target to create a band of life education to the whole area (Hu, 2008). The second week of every March is set as “Life education week” for all primary and secondary school students in Changzhou. There are some life education activities including: heroic deed reports, dialogues about “Life responsibility”, shows of “Life paean”, photo exhibit of “Life and health”, forms on “Value of life” and “Education and life”, “Psychological counselling” (Yuan, 2015). During the summer vacation, the “Happy growth” summer camp offers programs and activities for students to explore life, to challenge life, to help each other, and to activate life. These activities enrich the students' lives and make the students' life sense towards wideness, deepness, beauty and keenness.

In recent years, about 130 schools in Changzhou have created life education programs (Yuan, 2015). Although all experiment primary schools could actively implement life education and reached the set targets, some weak points were exposed out as well (Hu, 2008).

1. The consciousness of life education needs to be further strengthened. Some schools lack a favorable environment for life education.
2. The life education level of some educators has yet to be improved. Although some training courses and workshops have been held for teachers, the effect was unsatisfactory. The quality and strength of school-based of course construction had yet to be improved.
3. The working mechanisms of life education needed to be improved. It was not enough to carry out life education only with several lessons and activities. Schools

should make a systemic and long-term plan for life education.

In some Suzhou primary and secondary schools, life education was carried out both as an “explicit course” and “implicit course”. At the same time, life education was also run through some special education activities. Among primary school curricula, Science, Moral education and Society are the explicit courses for life education. Meanwhile, Chinese, Music, Biology, Math and Art classes contain the rich content of life education (Liu, 2004; Zhang, 2012). According to the teaching contents, teachers can teach students how to recognize life, to cherish life, to respect life, to love life, and to improve living technology and life quality. Furthermore, some special education themes about psychological, safety, health, environment, anti-drug, law, etc were also used as effective ways to instill life education to students.

In some Wuxi primary schools, life education stepped into the campus. Firstly, the life consciousness of teachers was improved which was a precondition for better life education to students. Secondly, life education was mainly penetrated into ideological education classes. In some practical lessons, students were guided to nature, society and then they learnt how to care about other people, society, and nature. Thirdly, the experiencing and practical teaching methods were used to feel real life. Meanwhile, some special theme activities, such as safety education, expanding training, frustration education, were held to teach students how to protect themselves. More importantly, the schools involved families into life education and help parents to be the first life education teacher of students.

Xin and Yun recorded the life education in Jiangdu Shuanggou Middle School (Yangzhou) which gave a wonderful life to each student (Xin, 2010). This school has insisted on “care of life” as its educational idea. “Care of life” means “respecting and loving life”

with radiance. And, to train the students to learn personhood, learning to live, learn to study and learn aesthetic qualified add specialty.

From 2006, some primary and secondary schools in the new education system launched life education as a separate course. “Life lessons - a required course for students” was chosen as the nation’s first textbook on life education which was written by Weixing Yuan of the Suzhou Education and Research Institute, published by Tianjin Education Press (Yuan, 2006). Xiaoman Zhu, a life education expert at Nanjing Normal University, prefaced Yuan’s book and had a great opinion of him. It is worth mentioning that the concepts and connotation of life education infiltrated into the Chinese textbooks of primary schools were published by Jiangsu Education Press (Yang, 2012).

In addition to the implementation of life education, there were also some life education workshops and seminars held in Jiangsu to share the theory and experience of life education. In April 2009, an annual meeting of “Life education theory and practice of primary and secondary school” were held in the Guannan Experimental Primary School, Lianyungang. In April 2011, the Summit Forum for life education was held between China and Taiwan in Shimei Primary School in Changshu, Jiangsu. In November 2012, the first competition of life education teaching and the Summit Forum on life education were held together in Wuxi. In November 2015, the third annual meeting of the China Xingzhi Tao Life Education Institute was held in Suzhou 10th Secondary school.

2.2.3 Life Education Research in Jiangsu. In Mainland China, there are also some researchers who have paid their attention on life education and moral education of primary schools and published some research papers and books (Cheng, 2001). Since 1992, Professor

Lan Ye, a famous basic education reformer at East China Normal University, published several papers of life education on some important academic journals, such as “Educational research” (Ye, 1997). She pointed out what life education pursued was the freedom of life.

Jianjun Feng is a professor of Nanjing Normal University whose research results have helped some primary schools to set up life education courses (Feng, 2004, 2006, 2007). He thought that human being is a unity of triple life: physical life, spiritual life and social life. Accordingly, all-round education includes physical life education, spiritual life education and social life education. Moreover, all of them are relatively independent and are opening up to each other which constitute a complicated educational system (Feng, 2004). Furthermore, life education directly faces the life of a human being at the beginning. During the process, life education follows the nature of life through human life. As a result, life education enriches the human mind and improves the quality of life. All three aspects should work in harmony to show the nature of life. This is also the connotation of life education (Feng, 2006). Therefore, the design ideas of life education courses involve three levels (Feng, 2007):

1. Recognize life: learn the nature of life, the developing rules and growing conditions of life;
2. Cherish life: establish a sense of life, master skills on life protection and life-saving interventions; and
3. Develop life: keep mental and emotional health, promote the sound development of society.

Currently, education in China only pursues the coordination with reality which weakens, in some extent, its leading and improving functions. Under such circumstances, the New

Educational Experiment was promoted by Prof. Yongxin Zhu in 2000 (Zhu, 2008). It starts with the development of teachers. Its core idea is to improve the sense of professional satisfaction and happiness of teachers, making them have a happy and perfect career. In order to reach this goal, a new educational system has been proposed based on life education in 2015 which has three principles (Zhu, 2015):

1. respect life, attach great importance to happiness and integrity;
2. live a happier and healthier life, attuned to the rhythm of life; and
3. grow together between teachers and students, schools and families.

Based on Zhu's New Education theme, Jianjun Feng defined the "new life education". Its core concept is having a happy and perfect educational life. It is a life-centered teaching strategy to guide students to love their life, to have a happy life, and to improve individuals' social value. It can extend the dimensions of life through the education of natural, social and spiritual life. It is expected that every person can get maximum achievement during a limited life. Every life becomes the best one.

New life education has its value and meaning.

1. New life education mixes some education branches as intellectual education. It resonates with knowledge, living and life.
2. New life education tries to recover the awe of life and create a meaningful existence. People can have a sustainable future.
3. New life education reproduces the original meaning of education, cultures the real person.
4. New life education bridges the separation and gaps of life to create a happy and

perfect life.

There are several principles for the new life education.

1. People oriented, prevention
2. Based on the developing rules of children
3. Step and step, improved gradually
4. Infiltrated in lives
5. Cooperation with various resources

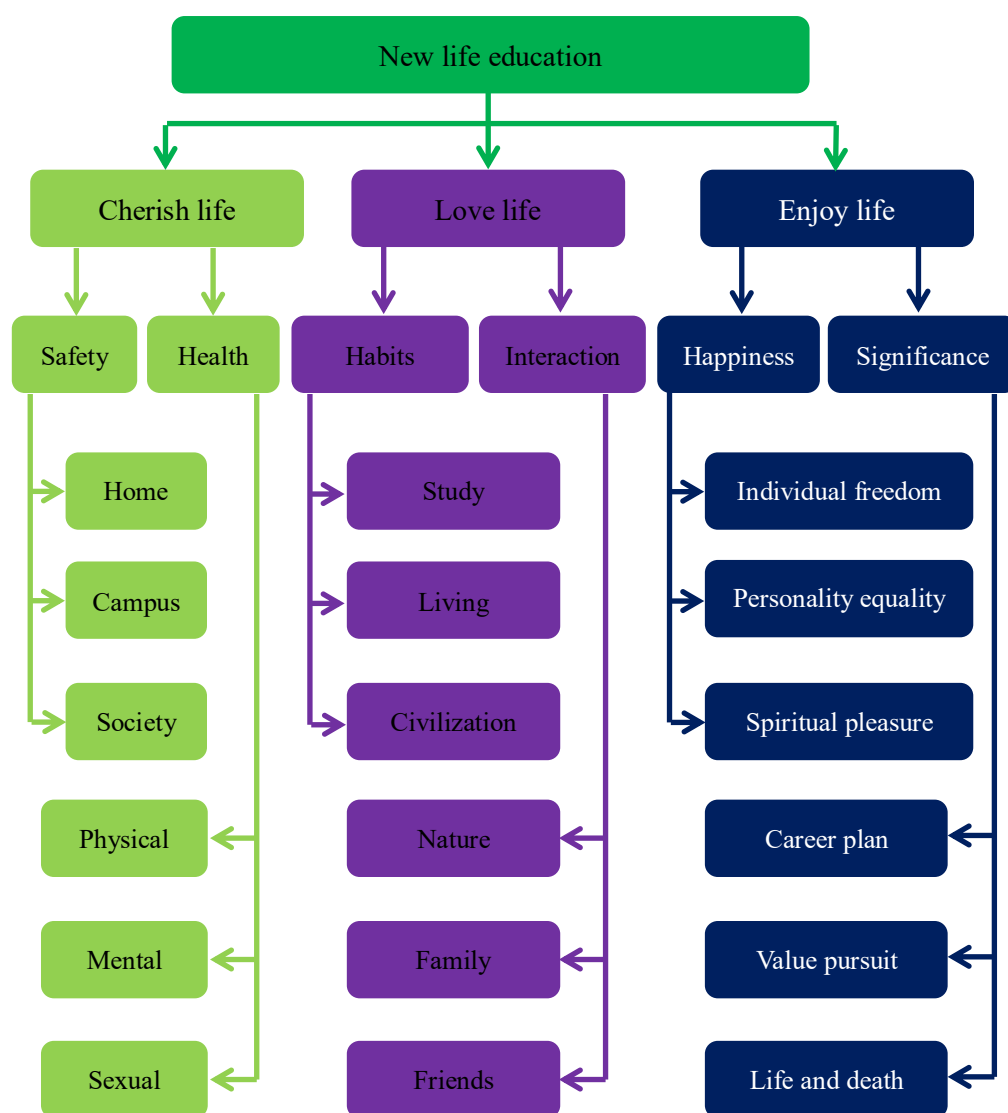


Figure 2.2. The contents of new life education.

The content of new life education includes three parts: cherish life, love life and enjoy life (Zhu, 2015). It is further divided into six fields: life and safety, life and health, life and habits, life and interaction, life and happiness, and life and significance. Then, each field is refined to be three learning modules. The total eighteen modules have different class themes corresponding to the characterizations and needs of children at different ages (see Figure 2.2).

By now, New life education has been being carried out in several Jiangsu primary schools, including Haimen Experiment Primary School, The Fourth Primary School in Huaikou, and Jihou Primary School in Huaian. These primary schools offer programs and activities that improve students' understanding about life and safety, life and health, life and living, and so on (Zhu, 2015).

2.3 Life Education in Hong Kong

2.3.1 Background of Hong Kong. Situated at the south-eastern tip of China, Hong Kong has evolved from a harbor village to become a densely populated, modern, multiethnic city and business center. With a total area of 1,103 square kilometers, Hong Kong comprises Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories, including 262 outlying islands. The location of Hong Kong and its status as a commercial port have been significant for its history. In 1842, the Opium War forced Hong Kong Island and adjacent islands at the mouth of the Pearl River on China's south-eastern coast to be ceded to Britain. Subsequently, parts of the mainland were added to the British colony: Kowloon Peninsula in 1869 and the New Territories in 1898, the latter on a 99-year lease. The expiration of that lease in 1997 led to the return of Hong Kong to the sovereignty of China.

As at end of 2014, Hong Kong's population was 7.26 million (Hong Kong SAR Government Government Information Centre. According to the Government statistics of the Census in 2001, of the then total population of 7,264,000, the overwhelming majority of Hong Kong people are of Chinese ethnicity (94.9%). People of other ethnic backgrounds living in Hong Kong include: Filipino (56.6%), followed by Indonesians (14.4%), and others of several ethnic backgrounds. In terms of language spoken, 89.2% of Hong Kong people (aged five and over) speak Cantonese; 5.5% speak other Chinese dialects; 3.2% speak English; 0.9% speak Putonghua; and 1.2% speak other languages. Thus, the great majority of Hong Kong's population is Chinese who speak Cantonese.

Prior to 1997, as Morris (1991) described: "The structure of the education system in Hong Kong broadly reflects the old grammar school system in the United Kingdom" (p. 119) and "Anglo-Chinese schools take 90% of pupils and officially teach in English" (p. 120). Curricula and examinations have also been oriented towards, and dependent on, British experiences and experts.

The Government's policy objectives are to (Education Bureau, Hong Kong, <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/primary-secondary/primary/overview/index.html>):

provide nine years' free and universal primary and junior secondary education to all children attending public sector schools. Starting from the 2008/09 school year, senior secondary education is provided free through public sector schools. In addition, with effect from the 2008/09 school year, the Government provides full subvention for full-time courses run by the Vocational Training Council for Secondary 3 leavers to offer an alternative free avenue for senior secondary

students outside mainstream education;

provide a balanced and diverse school education that meet the different need of our

students; and help them build up knowledge, values and skills for further studies

and personal growth;

enhance students' biliterate and trilingual abilities;

enhance teaching quality and effectiveness in learning;

improve the learning and teaching environment;

help newly arrived children from the Mainland integrate into the local school

system as soon as possible; and enhance the quality, flexibility and accountability

of school administration.

In the 2014/15 school year, there were 571 primary schools. Behind the numbers, there exists an interesting feature of the Hong Kong school system in that the majority of schools are publicly funded but privately run, operated by “school sponsoring bodies”, among which more than half are religious organizations. Partly on account of the funding system, schools in Hong Kong are differentiated into several kinds: government, aided, direct subsidy scheme (DSS); English School Foundation (ESF); and private schools (including the international schools).

As I mentioned in Chapter One, Hong Kong people have enjoyed religious freedom, and most major Chinese religions and rituals are still practiced within the Chinese community. If the influence of religion on schooling is considered, then the following data indicate another side of the story. Of the total number of 571 primary schools in Hong Kong in 2014/15, 56.6% were religious schools, 49.8% being Christian schools. Some 88.1% of all

religious schools were Christian (Protestant 60.9%, Catholic 39.1%) with relatively small numbers of Buddhist (44), Taoist (17), Confucian (4), Muslim (3) and other religious schools (12).

This background information shows that about half of primary schools in Hong Kong run by Christian organizations. Although education has been changed and reformed since 1997, British colonial ethos still extends its influence in the beliefs and values of ordinary people. However, most of Hong Kong families are living in a Confucian cultural heritage. Therefore, half of them have to send their children to Christian schools. Take, for example, the concept and practice of justice. Those educated in Hong Kong may have been introduced to various conceptions of justice in their upbringing, schooling and social life: the Confucian view of justice as ethically balanced; the Christian view of justice as equality between human beings; and the liberal view of justice as fairness. This may give rise to possible tensions in relation to action against injustice. Chinese influenced by Confucianism tend not to confront authority in public while activists for social justice, some of a Christian background, may take proactive, even seemingly confrontational, approaches. Yet two massive demonstrations in Hong Kong, each of half a million people, on 1 July 2003 and 1 July 2004, have occurred. When entering the post-1997 era, the safeguarding of justice in the legal system increasingly becomes the focus of public concern in relation to the implementation of the Basic Law by which Hong Kong is now governed as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

2.3.2 Life Education Policy in Hong Kong. In 2001, the Hong Kong Education and Manpower Bureau implemented the curriculum reforms to set “Moral and Civic Education”

as one of four key projects to nurture students' positive values and attitudes (Hong Kong Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004). Some recommended primary nurture values included: perseverance, respect for others, responsibility and national identity. Moreover, it suggested using "life events" as the main learning contexts to show students how to understand and practice positive values. Since 1 July 2010, the Education Bureau of Hong Kong renamed Moral and Civic Education Section as Moral, Civic and National Education Section which has gained wide support from the education sector.

In 2007, Mr. Cheung Wing-Hung, an officer of the Hong Kong Education and Manpower Bureau Curriculum Development (Moral and Civic Education), also mentioned four learning levels of life education (understanding life, appreciating life, respecting life and exploring life) in his paper "Strengthening resilience ability to cultivate a positive attitude towards life - the brief introduction of life education in Hong Kong" (Cheung, 2007) (see Figure 2.3).

The Education Bureau of Hong Kong defines Life Education in quite a similar way to the Australia Life Education Centre in that both emphasize the implementation of life education in helping young people to develop positive values and attitudes towards life and make the best choice when facing difficult situations, in the interest of having a happy and healthy life.

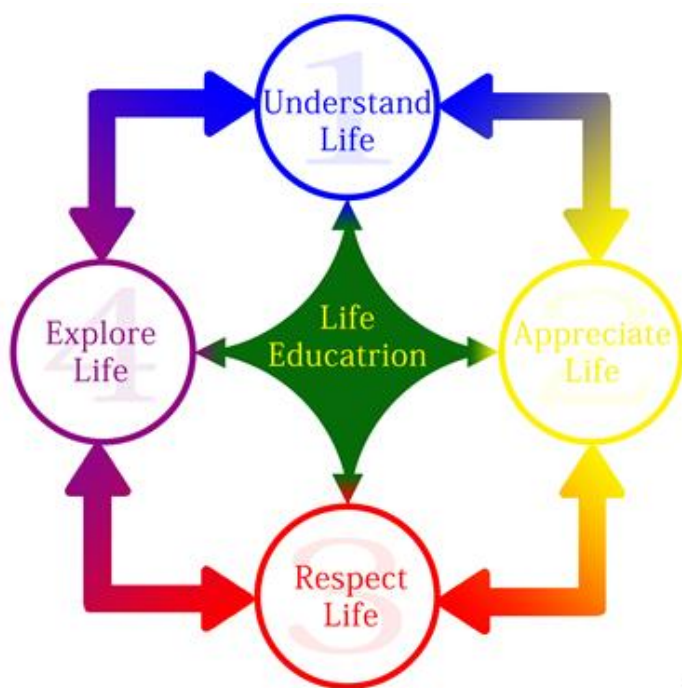


Figure 2.3. The four learning levels of life education: (1) Understanding life; (2) Appreciating life; (3) Respecting life and (4) Exploring life.

The Hong Kong Education Bureau states that:

The first and foremost objective of schools to implement life education is to help students develop their positive values and attitudes towards life, and know how to deal with their emotions when facing different situations. Besides, life education should also enhance students' problem solving skills, equip them to learn how to get out of adversities, and guide them to explore and search for the meaning of life in order to have a happy, fulfilling and meaningful life (Life Education, 2007, para.1).

From 2008, the Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework has been revised and enriched to foster students' positive values and attitudes, to develop students' ability to analyze and judge issues relating to personal, family, social, national and global issues at different developmental stages, and to enhance their willingness to make commitment and

contributions. In response to rapid societal changes and the public's expectations of the young generation, the Education Bureau divides the framework of Moral, Civic and National Education Section into ten domains, including: Moral Education, Values Education, Health Education, Sex Education, Human Rights Education, and Life Education.

As one of the ten domains, life education is assigned to help students develop their positive values and attitudes towards life, and dealing with their emotions when facing different situations. Besides, life education should also enhance students' problem solving skills, equip them to learn how to get out of adversities, and guide them to explore and search for the meaning of life in order to have a happy, fulfilling and meaningful life.

After the role of life education was established in the Moral, Civic and National Education Section, the Education Bureau developed some professional development programs, learning materials and additional "life event" exemplars:

- (1) to enhance participants' understanding of the concepts and issues related to the promotion of life education in primary schools;
- (2) to enhance participants' pedagogical skills in teaching related values and attitudes; and
- (3) to help participants master the life-event approach to implement the moral education curriculum of primary school.

For the first time, the Hong Kong Education Bureau offered extensive professional development for teachers in primary and secondary schools in the teaching of life education in November, 2010. The first round of training lasted for nine months until July, 2011 and a second round of training started in September, 2012. The Education Bureau commissioned

the Centre for Religious and Spiritual Education of The Education University of Hong Kong to provide extensive professional development for 20 primary schools in designing school based life education lessons (<http://www.ied.edu.hk/crse/201011lifeedu/phase3.html>). The Education Bureau also commissioned the Faculty of Education of The Chinese University of Hong Kong to assist 20 secondary schools to design school based life education lessons. (http://www.cpr.cuhk.edu.hk/en/press_detail.php?id=1063). It is hoped that through these training programs, the schools will plan for life education programs using a whole school approach. Through this training, teachers will acquire teaching strategies and skills for teaching life education and students will learn how to build positive values and attitudes. Furthermore by participating in a study tour, the teachers will also be able to have firsthand experience of teaching life education in various schools in Taiwan, which is a pioneer area in teaching life education.

2.3.3 Life Education Implementation in Hong Kong. As mentioned in sub-section 1.3.5, life education was first offered to Hong Kong teenagers in 1996 when Hong Kong Tin Shui Wai Shap Pat Heung Rural Committee Kung Yik Secondary School implemented “life education course”. According to a book written by Dr. Wai-Yin Chow “Life education: cultural background, education reform and practice direction”, the content of “life education course” was similar to that of life education (Chow, 2002).

More and more schools in Hong Kong are offering programs and activities that help develop students’ life education, but only one fifth of primary and secondary schools are organizing life education courses to teach children the understanding and meaning of life. Moreover, most of them are schools with religious background and promotion. Since the

colonial days, more than half of “subsidized schools” have been operated by religious bodies, which are given almost complete freedom in the provision of religious education. The majority of these religious schools are Catholic and Protestant, with also a significant number of Buddhist schools, followed by smaller numbers of Daoist, Confucian and Islamic schools. Although these religious schools are free to teach religious education, they also run spiritual and life education programs, sometimes in conjunction with, sometimes in parallel with their religious education curriculum, rather than offering just religious education to their students. This shows that it is difficult, if not impossible, for religious schools to achieve the goals of spiritual and life education solely through religious education (Wong, 2013a).

In the current situation, the religious groups and researchers are the main force to promote life education (Wong, 2013a). Although different religious schools use several different terms, for example, moral education, spiritual education, holistic education and life education, they cover roughly the same terrain and aim at the same ultimate goal of promoting the truly good life. It is even to mix these terms together both in theory and in practice in Hong Kong. For example, the Association for Holistic Life Education was established in 2011 by a group of academics and education practitioners to promote life education in Hong Kong. As the chairman of the Association for Holistic Life Education and the principal of Stewards Pooi Tun Secondary School, Dr. Kam-Bor Leung carried life education in middle school students from 2002 (Leung, 2007). He established a blue print of secondary students (see Figure 2.4). Life education can make students be aware of the value, respect and love of life, learn how to keep harmony with themselves, others, society and nature.

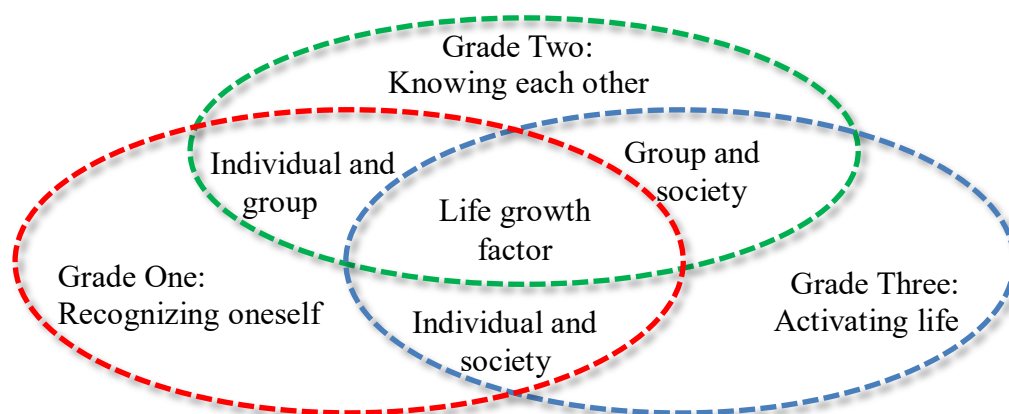


Figure 2.4. The blue print of life education curriculum in Stewards Pooi Tun Secondary School.

Beginning in the 2011-12 academic year, the Hong Kong Anglican Church has organized a “Life, Spirituality, and Values Education” program for its primary schools.

As for the government schools, the government seems not to be enthusiastic about carrying out life education because it is only on the marginal positions of the overall education structure. Although the Hong Kong government is beginning to provide support for life education with some policies, the level of support is still on the initial stage (Wong, 2013b). The life education elements in Hong Kong are shown in Figure 2.5.

Non-government organizations and several academic institutions are the initial and main force to implement life education in schools with a religious background. While the Hong Kong government realized the importance and benefits of life education, its educational department began to make policy to guide life education in some non-religious schools. Although the promotion and implementation of life education by government level is not adequate, it is a good start.

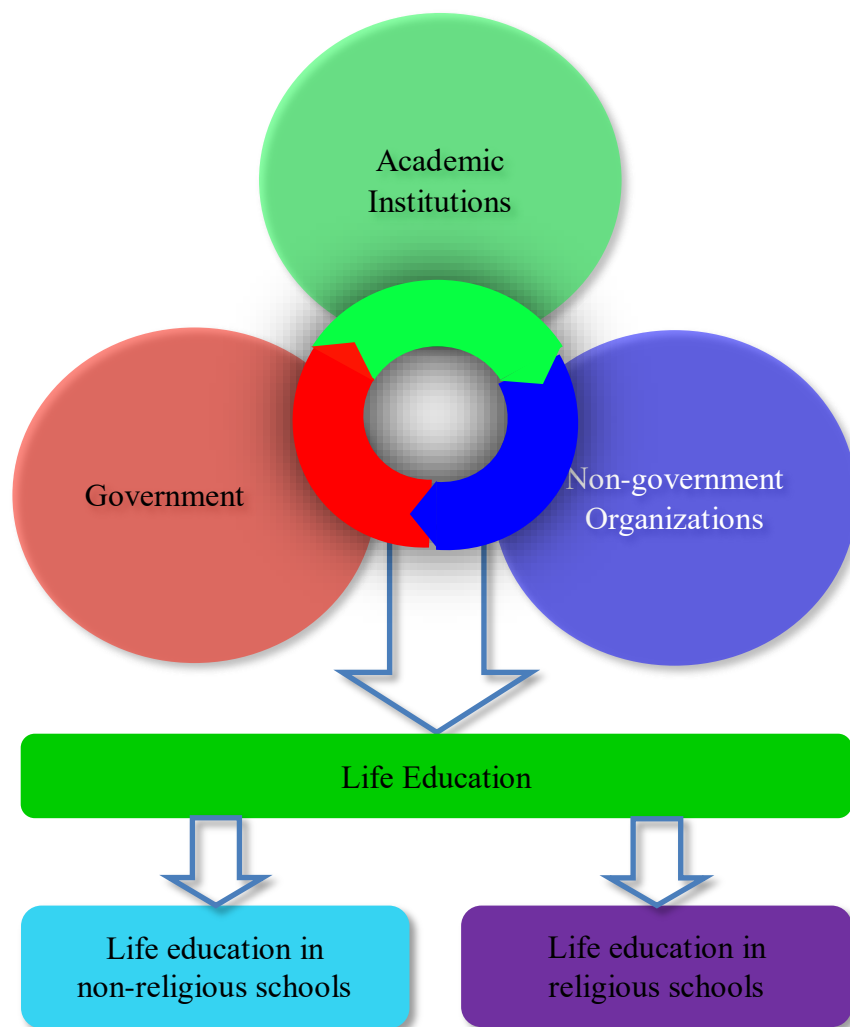


Figure 2.5. The elements of life education developed in Hong Kong.

As a leading research organization on life education in Hong Kong, the Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education (CRSE) of The Education University of Hong Kong was established in 2006 with generous donations from five school-sponsoring religious organizations: Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Ching Chung Taoist Association of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, Sik Sik Yuen and the Hong Kong Buddhist Association. In 2008, CRSE also received another donation from the Confucian Academy to support the Centre's development. From 2010, the CRSE was authorized by the Hong Kong Education Bureau to help some primary schools to set plans of the life education for 3 semesters

continuously. Under the leadership of Prof. John C. K. Lee, Vice president (Academic) of The Education University of Hong Kong and Dr. Wong Ping Ho, the Chairperson of the CRSE, this project has been implemented in 21 primary schools in Hong Kong, including: Yan Chai Hospital Choi Hin To Primary School; Toi Shan Association Primary School; Ta Ku Ling Ling Ying Public School; C&MA Sun Kei Primary School, SKPS, and S.K.H. Yat Sau Primary School. Based on the specific conditions of each school, this project made overall plans on life education to help students to develop a positive system of values and attitudes, and to improve teachers with better teaching skills and assessment methodology. If needed, some teachers will be sent outside Hong Kong to exchange education ideas and to learn life education experience in various areas. Meanwhile, some education experts go into schools to support the implementation of life education plans (Wong, 2013b).

In 2002, sponsored by the Jockey Club, the Life Education Centre of The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong was founded to promote the message of suicide prevention and life cherishment to the general public through its outreaching service. One of its characteristics is using schools as the point of intervention to deal with the problem of suicide through talks and training for peers on life cherishment and suicide prevention. Its ideas include understanding oneself, a person and others/community, spiritual development and exploring the issues of life. The Life Education Resource Library has a wide collection of books and CD-ROM on life education, life & death education, and counselling, as well as picture books for children. So far, 25 primary schools have participated in its life education projects and activities (The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong).

2.3.4 Life Education Research in Hong Kong. In addition to the Education Bureau,

some academic centers were founded in several universities to study life education from different angles. For example, the Centre of Buddhist Studies of The University of Hong Kong was established in September 2000 to promote the study of and research into all aspects of Buddhism and its relevance to the world of today. According to the model of Life Education based on the Concept of Dependent Origination (LEDO), the Buddhist Curriculum was developed by Venerable Hin Hung Sik (Sik, 2006). Furthermore, a completely new set of teaching material for Upper Primary and Lower Secondary is in preparation with some new emphases of recent education curriculum development. Through a fundamental understanding of Buddhist teachings, the new teaching materials will enable students to develop better mind and life-management skills:

- 1) enhance students' ability to comprehend and understand life and themselves;
- 2) enhance students' ability to manage life and incidents or problems faced in daily life;
- 3) enhance students' ability to cope with stress in life; and
- 4) develop positive and desirable attitudes and values of students in accordance with Buddhist teachings.

The Centre for Quality-Life Education in Divinity School of Chung Chi College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, was founded in 2009. Some research projects on life education and religion are on-going with several Christian primary and middle schools.

Some educators in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and the Mainland cooperated for collaborative research to analyze the implementation of life education in the cross straits four places (Wu, 2007). Dr. Sui Wai Wu, from The Education University of Hong Kong and

Xinsheng Liu, from the Education Research Centre of Shenzhen's Nanshan District, used surveys to compare the views on life education of Hong Kong and Shenzhen's primary school students. Based on both quantitative and qualitative information obtained from more than 1,200 questionnaires, as well related literatures, they reported the different life stories and life objectives of primary students in both Hong Kong and Shenzhen. According to the differences and commonalities in the understanding of the implementation of life education, they put forward some valuable suggestions (Wu, 2010, 2012).

With the joint efforts of religious groups, researchers and the whole society, life education is operating smoothly in Hong Kong. After several years of efforts, more and more schools want to introduce life education to their curriculum. Some school principals and teachers are willing to take part in life education lectures. However, although some research reports summed up the new achievements made in life education in Hong Kong, there are few researches on life education theory that are qualified as the guideline of practice because of the complexity of educational background. It requires higher level cognitive performance of life education.

However, although some research reports summed up the new achievements made in life education in Hong Kong, most share ideas and experiences about life education. There are only a few researches on life education theory that are used as the guideline of practice because of the complexity of educational background because it requires higher level cognitive performance of life education (Wong, 2013a, 2013b, 2015). Among them, four can be regarded as academic monographs:

- 1) Chow, Wai-Yin and Yeung, Kwok Keung (2002) "Life education: cultural

background, education reform and practice direction”, Hong Kong: Religious Education Centre.

- 2) Ng, Peter Tze Ming (2004) “From religious education to life education”, Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council.
- 3) Ng, Shu Sum (2008) “Spiritual Education: the Key Concept of Life Education”, Occasional Paper Series No.5, Hong Kong: Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education, The Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- 4) Kung, Lap Yan (2013) “Life source and cultural tour: life education exploration”, Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council Ltd., Hong Kong.

The good news is that some researchers continue to make unremitting efforts in life education. In 2012, the Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education of The Education University of Hong Kong held a conference “Life Education: Its Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional and Practical Dimensions”. Some life education researchers, principals, teachers and frontline educators were invited to discuss and share their educational thoughts on life education. In 2015, under the concerted efforts of Professor PH Wong and some colleagues, the proceedings were published as a fruitful result of this conference (Wong, 2015). I believe that the ideas and theories in this book will guide the developing direction of life education in Hong Kong and China.

2.4 Life Education Strategies in Hong Kong and Mainland China

Life education is a holistic education, and aims to promote the physical, psychological, social, spiritual comprehensive and balanced development of students. In the primary stage,

life education helps and guides the students to understand the nature of the phenomenon of life, their own bodies, the awareness of gender, and to develop healthy habits. Education must meet the student's age, physical and psychological characteristics. Students in the lower grades must first have the understanding of the life phenomena of nature. They should grasp initially the knowledge of road traffic safety, and the prevention of drowning. They have to improve their knowledge about food safety, gas and electricity safety, and other self-protection. Students in the higher grades will have to understand body growth; to learn the necessary skills to protect themselves; and to enhance the safety awareness and self-rescue ability (Li, 2014). Life education is basically a kind of virtuous and valuable education. Therefore, life education must vary from person-to-person according to different personalities, experiences, interaction and practice (Zheng, 2009). How can schools and teachers focus on life education with better effectiveness, objectiveness and quality? In some schools, the following education strategies were studied and summarized.

2.4.1 Permeate Life Education into Other Subjects. While teaching in the classroom, teachers need to achieve the unity of subject and education at the right moment and in an appropriate amount, to deal well with the relationship between imparting knowledge and life education at the best time (Morris & Cogan, 2001). Life education should perfectly complement other subjects, but cannot attract much attention. Students will be imperceptibly influenced so as to improve their personality, achieve perfection, and enrich their understanding of life. On the basis of systematic examination, the Jiangsu Educational Committee summarizes the life education in the textbooks of morality and society that provides a strong basis to penetrate life education during morality and society courses. In

addition, some subjects involve rich contents of life education, such as Chinese, English, Mathematics.

2.4.2 Build Humane Classroom, Experience the Warmth of Life. Students can feel the teachers' love and care in the classroom; get recognition and appreciation, etc. Moreover, students can extend this kind of “love” to relatives, classmates, friends and even nature and society, and gradually form a love of life.

The school reforms the way of class administration, makes each class more lively and students more actively participate. Through the construction of new democracy and equality of teacher-student relationship, teachers can approach students to listen to their heart. Both sides of teaching and learning hold positive communication and cooperation. We should cherish the uniqueness of student life.

2.4.3 Explore and Penetrate Life Education in Textbooks. Textbooks contain rich life education resources. Teachers need to discover and experience these elements during the pre-course preparation. Then they can mine and integrate reasonably life education with morality education during the teaching process. Students are exposed to life education and enjoy the process of learning which will help them gradually to recognize and love life. Some lessons are relatively directly related to life education. So teachers can definitely guide students to learn life concepts from these lessons. However, for some lessons without direct relationship with life education, they need to be combined with other subjects to meet the requirement of life education. In these courses, teachers need to invest more time and energy to discover all possible clues on life education. Otherwise, students are not conscious of life education. According to their own teaching ideas, teachers should adjust their teaching plans

to activate the initiative thinking of students.

Therefore, it is high time that they constructed a new type of classroom practice model, which embodies the tenet of life-oriented education and the new curriculum.

2.4.4 Integrate the Educational Resources. Teachers need to digest and combine fully the teaching resources in real life and in the textbooks, to find out the students' recent developing area as much as possible during teaching and lead them to achieve their self-development by adopting reasonable teaching methods. Only one book is not enough and many other resources should be used to help the students to fully understand. Especially, the resources must closely connected with student's daily and social life. We should show great concern for the child's interests and willingness to search and find useful resources for life education.

2.4.5 Multimedia Teaching on Life Education. Traditional educational concepts and teaching modes can no longer keep pace with economic development and social needs and must be reformed through modern educational techniques. Modern education technology is a completely new education conception and teaching design idea. With the in-depth development of educational reform, modern educational technology is increasingly and widely accepted and used. The rapid development and wide application of information technology provide favorable conditions for the development of modern educational technology. In such technology, the use of multimedia software and the internet in the field of teaching can bring about more satisfactory results (Large, 1998). With the development and popularity of modern education technology, textbook design breaks the traditional mode and is combined with network or multi-media technology. Students can see vivid pictures and

they are easy to pay attention to the contents and their thirst for knowledge can be realised. At the same time, the application of modern educational techniques requires teachers to have higher qualifications.

Intuitive methods of teaching have a long history. Today, in the age of information, intuitive means of teaching are becoming more and more diverse. In this way, students can comprehend the course contents more easily and, therefore, the teaching effect can be improved.

2.4.6 Task-driven Approach in Life Education. Task-driven course design is being applied by teachers in schools (Rovai, 2002). The task-driven approach is based on a constructivist theory of teaching on the basis of effective student-centered teaching methods. In practical applications, it has made good teaching effect of the life education mode, promoted by the reform. The key of the task-driving method lies in the design of the task. It must be interesting, real, suitable and practical with some degree of challenge (Guan, 2012). In teaching, teachers propose mission requirements. While the students complete the task, they understand the perception and experience of life. This teaching method is suitable to some students who have a vague idea on life education.

2.4.7 Ecological Teaching. Ecological classroom teaching has some basic characteristics, including integrity, openness, dynamic balance and sustainability (Steinitz, 2014). As for the education of moral character, we know from this teaching method that we should involve the regulations with love, think highly of process and use praise and motivation methods. Paying attention to emotions on life means that education should respect the physical body and feelings of individuals. Life teaching needs to cope with many high

goals. But it is not enough that we only pay attention to life, sensibility experience and communication between teachers and students. The manifestation of human spirit can only be achieved with the prerequisite of caring for human beings, respecting individuals and attaching importance to the human inner world. Ecological theory advocates the respect for individual differences and the diversity of life in teaching; it intends to set up the classroom environment to help students smoothly develop.

On the basis of children's life experiences, learning spaces should not be confined to the classroom. The students' morality will be developed in life. Life has important implications for students' social development. We organize activities to return students to life. We guide students to experience life, to raise awareness and cherish life, to enhance confidence and motivation to learn.

2.4.8 Evaluation Implementation of Life Education. Evaluation strategy includes the aim of exciting evaluation. Content evaluation is all types including standard science evaluation. Teaching evaluation work is a course reform, while the classroom teaching is the core of school education work. Classroom teaching is the main channel of carrying out new curricular, while the teaching evaluation system has a directive function of classroom teaching. Teaching evaluation is an important component in the process of the curricula and teaching reformation, and guides and monitors the whole process. Teaching innovation is the heart and key to education innovation which includes the innovation of teaching conception, teaching content, teaching method and teaching evaluation. The core idea of a new curriculum is to promote the development of each student, teaching assessment, the vital part of teaching, and also aims at the development of each student. As far as teaching is concerned,

we can implement an individualized education by changing teaching experiments, teaching researches, teaching modes, and teaching evaluation.

From the point of view of life education, some teachers have pointed that it is quite difficult to evaluate life education. We had better update the evaluation methods and contents of the morality and society course according to the development of the students' learning actuality. To different contents, assess and demonstrate different characteristics, assessment methods and function assessed adopted are different to some extent. The design of an evaluation system must include the principles, contents, the evaluation methods and the problems needing attention in the evaluation process. The target of teaching evaluation is to improve the learning quality of the student. Meanwhile, a student-based internal management system and a curriculum system should also be set up. Under the new curriculum of strong practice, we need teachers to change their concepts, reflecting on student-oriented. In the classroom teaching, students should be made to practice independently, truly showing that they are the masters of the classroom and of learning activities. In order to achieve an effective evaluation of classroom teaching quality, we must have a scientific evaluation perspective and build up a student-oriented classroom teaching quality evaluation system, such as subjective evaluation, comprehensive evaluation, and practical evaluation.

2.5 Life Education Difference between Hong Kong and China

In Hong Kong, after accumulation of years of historical accretion and culture inherited, urbanization development entered a mature period, society and economy reaching a stable state (Li, 2009). Consequently, the whole society can teach students correct values and vision

for humanity. Parents and teachers have a wealth of teaching experience on life education. By contrast, Jiangsu, with its rapid economic development, is going through the pains of the loss of morality, belief collapse and individual credit bankruptcy. Although life education has already been implemented for many years, there is a large gap between Jiangsu and Hong Kong in terms of the level of life education.

Life education has been promoted to the front of education within the global context of life education in some primary schools in Hong Kong. Many schools have offered courses named “Life Education” while some still retain “Moral Education”. With the development of life education practices, life education theory was initiated by some researchers.

Despite Jiangsu playing a leading role on life education in much of Mainland China, its theory and teaching level are still at an early stage. Most of the life education concepts, teaching models, and even teaching cases were learnt from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Even so, almost all of them are only on paper.

In order to prepare children for their life and to shape their future, parents, schools and the whole society must pay much attention on life education. Primary schools can help students to learn age appropriate knowledge of life education to support informed health choices; to develop and practice skills and strategies to act upon individual decisions; and to recognize the values and attitudes that may influence lifestyle choices and behaviors. If children can develop positive self-esteem, self-image and a feeling of uniqueness as early as possible, they should make positive healthy choices later in life.

Although there are different cultural and religious backgrounds in Hong Kong and Mainland China, all parents hope their children will have a better life. However, under

different governmental structures, the governments play different roles to promote life education. In Hong Kong, some schools can arrange their own life education syllabus and contents without government approval. On the other hand, although the government can adopt and replicate the successful experience on life education to all Hong Kong non-religious schools, there is still a large gap before the appropriate changes and revisions. In the Mainland, educational plans are designed by the educational administrative departments. Schools, as only a performer of the education policies, lack independence to make educational policies. Even when some research institutions and schools tried to carry out some educational exploration and practice, the examination and approval procedures in the government were a crippling bureaucratic process. The research results and suggestions can only be published on paper. On the other hand, exam-oriented education has often outpaced life education and some educational plans are poorly enforced or ignored. A gap between theory and practice needs to be eliminated by the joint efforts of the whole society.

2.6 Research Questions

The examples previously discussed have made parents and teachers realize that life education and intellectual education are interconnected. The two aspects should coexist in harmony. It is a pity that the major concern of most schools and parents is forcing students to pass each examination with a high score and finally to enroll in a good university or college in Chinese societies. In the educational process, the moral and physical health of students is inevitably ignored. Since parents are the first teachers of their child and the family is the first school a child attends; they play an important role in children's life education. Unfortunately,

due to the lack of life education to the whole society, few parents and families possess enough knowledge about life education to guide their children. Suicide, drug abuse, violation and other behavior problems become common childhood problems. So it is a long and arduous task to implement life education.

Life education is needed to guide students and even the whole society to recognize and respect life. Therefore, some education researchers hope to enhance the students' awareness and the value of their life, students' self-protection ability, and respecting life through education. Through comparing the situation of life education in Hong Kong and Mainland China, it may find some effective ways and means to implement life education in both areas. Moreover, it is also good for learning from each other. In addition, it may improve the speed of the development of life education. However, insufficient comparative research greatly influences the development and exchange of life education between Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Although there are different social backgrounds in Hong Kong and the Mainland, they have the same life education aim to their students. However, under different governmental structures, the government plays different roles to promote life education. In Hong Kong, some schools can arrange school-based life education curriculum and contents without government approval. On the contrary, although the government can adopt and replicate the successful experience on life education to all Hong Kong non-religious schools, there is still a gap before the appropriate changes and revisions. In the Mainland, educational plans are designed by the educational administrative departments. Schools, as only the implementer of the education units and policies, have no enough autonomy of education. Even when some

research institutions and schools have tried to carry out some educational exploration and practice, the examination and approval procedures in the government were also a crippling bureaucratic process. The research results and suggestions can only be published on paper. On the other hand, exam-oriented education has often outpaced life education and some educational plans are poorly enforced or ignored. A gap between theory and practice needs an all and social joint effort. I hope that this proposed study will fill the gap of the former researches.

Jiangsu is an early start province in life education in Mainland China. Some researchers in Jiangsu took the lead in studying life education and published articles about life education. Several primary schools implemented life education as early as 1997 (Qian, 2013). I have studied in Jiangsu, and some of my friends are working in some Jiangsu education organizations. Therefore, I am familiar with the education status in Jiangsu.

In 2005, I arrived in Hong Kong and have lived there for more than ten years. From 2008, I worked in a primary section of a private school on Hong Kong Island. As a frontline teacher and teaching group leader, I am quite familiar with the operation flow of a Hong Kong primary school, including the teaching method, schedule, curriculum design, etc.

However, I felt that my knowledge was not enough to handle all educational problems. So, I got another Master degree of Putonghua Education in The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2010. Although I learnt a lot from these educational programmes, I intended to study the meaning of education. Therefore, I applied for EDD at The Education University of Hong Kong and was interviewed by Dr. Wong Ping Ho. He introduced the concept of Life Education and I thought it was interesting and meaningful. I decided to study the level and

situation of life education in both Hong Kong and China. To attain this objective, the following research questions were studied in my study:

- 1) How do Hong Kong and Jiangsu primary schools compare with regarding to the implementation of life education?
- 2) What are the life education curriculum settings and their scope in the selected schools?
- 3) What is the teaching of life education and its dimensions in the schools? and
- 4) What are the gaps between life education theory and practice in Hong Kong and mainland China, especially in Jiangsu?

The teaching level and status of life education as a subject were observed and interviewed from a variety of perspectives, including principals, teachers and students. Their performance and feedback outlined the development profiles of life education in the broadest sense.

From what I have previously mentioned, I chose Jiangsu Province in China as my subject to compare with Hong Kong. In my study, two primary schools with and without life education in Jiangsu were invited as objects of the case study. Accordingly, two primary schools in Hong Kong were compared with them.

Their textbooks, teaching models and objectives, curriculum, annual plans and evaluation criteria of life education were reviewed for these schools. I joined the school life as a bystander. Through observation, discussion and interview with students, teachers and principals, I obtained the general information and situation of life education in these schools.

The following targets were reached:

Target 1: Interviewed principals or delegates and collected the syllabus of life education;

Target 2: Interviewed classroom teachers of life education and collected teaching plans;

Target 3: Viewed life education lessons or activities (two hours), took photos or video;

Target 4: Interviewed students about learning results.

In this research, the level and situation of life education in selected primary schools of both Hong Kong and Jiangsu Province have been studied and compared. The whole structure of my thesis also includes: Literature review of life education in Chapter 2 and the research methodology (Case study) in Chapter 3. In Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, I observed and recorded the life education situations in two Hong Kong primary schools and two Jiangsu primary schools. In Chapter 8, I have analyzed and compared the differences and similarities of life education at four schools. Their curricula, teaching methods and materials of life education were also examined. Moreover, the gaps between life education theories and practices were discussed. Based on my observation and analysis, the problems and solutions of life education were listed in Chapter Nine.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In Chapter Two, the basic situations of life education in Jiangsu and Hong Kong were introduced. This chapter addresses the research design and the research methods used in this study. Furthermore, it outlines the institutional approval process, and the analysis of interviews.

3.1 Study Aims

In this project, the level and situation of life education in selected primary schools of both Hong Kong and Jiangsu Province were evaluated and compared. To attain this object, the following issues were studied in my study:

- 1) Comparison on the implementation of life education in Hong Kong and Jiangsu primary schools;
- 2) The life education curriculum setting and its scope related to the Transcendent, the Community, the Nature and the Self in the selected schools;
- 3) The teaching of life education and its dimensions related to Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional and Practical dimensions in the selected schools;
- 4) The gaps between life education theory and practice in Hong Kong and mainland China, especially in Jiangsu.

The teaching level and status of life education as a subject were observed and interviewed from a variety of perspectives, including principals, teachers and students. Their

performance and feedback outlined the development profiles of life education in the broadest sense.

3.2 Case Study Plan

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context in the social and life sciences. It can include quantitative evidence, can mean single and multiple case studies, relies on multiple sources of evidence, and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. The information of a case study can be obtained from different sources, such as: direct observation, files records, documents, participant observation, interviews and physical artifact.

Due to the complex history of education and the opening-up of the education policy, there are several kinds of schools in Hong Kong, including: government schools, aided schools, private schools, and direct subsidy scheme schools. Some schools are supported and run by different religious groups. In different schools, their teaching methods and courses are obviously different from each other. According to my plan and resources, I chose and contacted two primary schools in Hong Kong with and without life education as my case study subjects, respectively. In Jiangsu province, the development degrees of life education in various areas were different during this study. Only a few primary schools have some lessons and activities of life education. Most primary schools have no life education. Meanwhile, the implementation of life education in some areas is not so good. According to the present educational policy, all primary must have moral education. Therefore, one school with a life education theme and one school without life education were selected for case study in

Jiangsu.

3.3 Case Study

In the social sciences and life sciences, a case study is a research method involving an up-close, in-depth, and detailed examination of a subject of study (the case), as well as its related contextual conditions. Although no single definition of the case study exists, case-study research has long had a prominent place in many disciplines and professions, ranging from psychology, anthropology, sociology, and political science to education, clinical science, social work, and administrative science (Mills, 2010; Robert, 2014).

Thomas offers the following definition of case study (Thomas, 2011):

Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more method.

The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame - an object - within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates (p. 511).

According to Creswell, data collection in a case study occurs over a “sustained period of time” (Creswell, 2013, p. 241).

One approach sees the case study defined as a research strategy; an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context. Case study research can mean single and multiple case studies, can include quantitative evidence, relies on multiple sources of evidence, and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. Single-subject research provides the

statistical framework for making inferences from quantitative case-study data
(Mills, 2010).

3.4 Research Design

In the case study, the teaching objectives, curriculum, annual plans and evaluation criteria of life education were reviewed for the selected schools with life education. After the historical analysis of curriculum and ways of viewing current educational curriculum and policy decisions, the view of life education curriculum were inspected. Through observation, discussion and interview with students, teachers and principals, I obtained general information and situation of life education in the selected schools.

The following targets were reached:

Target 1: Collected information of school management, teaching and learning plan, student support, etc;

Target 2: Interviewed principals or delegates and collected the syllabus of life education;

Target 3: Interviewed classroom teachers of life education and collected teaching plans;

Target 4: Observed life education lessons or activities (two hours), took photos or video;

Target 5: Interviewed students about learning results.

3.5 Research Methods

3.5.1 Selection of Schools. To make this study manageable within the time period, the

target primary schools were two schools in Hong Kong and two schools in Jiangsu. Two schools with and without life education were invited as subjects to participate in this study.

Convenience sampling was used to select the schools since it is much easier to collect data from a readily available group. It was difficult to find schools interested in doing the study and this is particularly so in the case of schools without life education.

Based on the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System of Hong Kong, there are two stages for primary students enrolling in a secondary school: Discretionary Places (DP) and Central Allocation (CA). DP application is not subject to restriction on districts.

Schools may admit suitable students according to their educational philosophy and characteristics. However, they must make public the admission criteria and weightings prior to admission. Schools may arrange interviews, but no written test should be conducted. For the CA stage, it is based on a student's allocation band, parental choice of schools and random number. Students' internal assessment results will be used for the calculation of allocation bands and other education-related purposes. Students' internal assessment results at the end of Primary 5, and both mid-year and at the end of P6 are standardized. The average of the sampled results of the Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test 2012 and 2014 are used to scale students' internal assessment results. The scaled marks of all students in the territory are put into an order of merit. Then, the students are equally divided into three Territory Bands, each consisting of 1/3 of the total number of primary students in the territory. Territory Bands are only for allocation of places for unrestricted school choices (www.hoyu.edu.hk).

From the SSPA system, it can be seen that primary school students need to have good records in order to enter a good secondary school. Therefore, all primary schools in Hong Kong busily and anxiously prepare their students to enter a good school, and they will be most unwilling for any time to be taken away from their normal class work. In this study, if the interview was conducted after school hours, students were not willing to stay behind since many schools have extra-curricular activities after school. Also, it is very popular for students in Hong Kong to attend tutorial classes for extra help after school in order to prepare for their homework and examinations.

It took quite some time to seek out two schools with and without life education who were willing to participate in the survey. Dr. Wing Hon Ho, a project and centre manager of the Centre of Religious and Spirituality Education, recommended two schools to me. I wrote to the two principals to state my study plan and asked for their cooperation. Unfortunately, both schools declined my requirement due to their busy schedule. Then, Dr. Ho recommended two other schools to me. One of the schools was very concerned about promoting life education among their students, therefore, this school was very keen to participate in my study (named School 1). Another school placed a lot of emphasis on quality holistic education, and they were also keen to join this study (named School 2).

During this study, it was rather difficult to determine the two schools with and without life education in Jiangsu. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the economic development of Jiangsu is imbalanced although its overall economy is doing quite well in China. Especially, huge gaps persist in economic growth and income distribution between the urban and rural population in the southern regions of Jiangsu and the northern areas. When these factors were

considered, I decided to choose one urban primary school in the southern region and one county primary school in the northern region, respectively.

However, few of the primary schools in Jiangsu are implementing life education. In China, the curricula in schools are strongly supervised and strictly controlled by the Education Department. Therefore, the schools are not authorized to design their own curricula although they are interested in some special or extra subjects. However, the increasing demand and practices for life education in China urge the education experts and schools to think and value life education. In this case, a series of life education textbooks have been published. As one of them, “Life education before twelve years old” was published by Nanjing Education Press. Prof. Jianjun Feng, Nanjing Normal University, wrote the preface to this textbook. Prof. Feng recommended Mr. Shuangjin Sun who was the chief editor of “Life education before twelve years old” and the principal of a primary school with life education in Nanjing City (named School 3). So School 3 was chosen as the one subject in the southern regions of Jiangsu. With no exception, this school has to set moral courses according to the educational policy, but it did have the life education textbooks in the campus. Moreover, some teachers in School 3 were involved in writing them. Students can read these textbooks if they want to. Hence, School 3 could represent the high level of life education in Jiangsu.

For the county primary school in the northern regions, I chose my alma mater located in Jinhu County, in the northern part of Jiangsu (named School 4). Because I knew some officials in this school and the local education department, it was quite easy for me to confirm this school as School 4.

With the help of some life education experts in Hong Kong and Jiangsu, four primary schools were finally confirmed as my study objects. And the principals approved my study timetable and plan through communication and coordination. I was able to collect some information and materials in these schools without impacting their normal teaching order.

3.5.2 Selection of Teachers. The life education teachers in the school with life education were the first choose to take part in my interview. In schools without life education, the moral education teachers and the class teachers were invited to my interview.

3.5.3 Selection of Students. The target population for this study were students in Hong Kong and Jiangsu primary schools. Students from Grades Three, Four to Five were selected from the four schools for the survey. Students in Grade Six were excluded because they had examinations, so were not available for this study. As mentioned above, convenience sampling was used to select the schools.

3.5.4 Sample Size. There is no clear cut answer for sample size because the correct sample size “depends upon the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). A sample size of thirty is considered by Cohen et al. (2007) as a minimum for study in order to produce statistically relevant results but they would advise a considerably larger sample size. Instrument development experts suggested that there should be at least five times as many participants as items or at least 200 to 300 participants, whichever is greater, so as to reduce the probability of misleading results based on chance (Crocker & Algina, 1986; Ferketich, 1991; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Burns and Bush (2000) state that usually when the size of the sample is smaller; the lower will be the accuracy but they also point out that representativeness is more important than

size. For the interview group, there are generally 4-6 students. It also depends on the school's size and the total number of students.

3.5.5 Interviews. This study aimed to identify the status and situation of life education in Hong Kong and Jiangsu schools. Because the first principle of my study had to fit the students' study schedule and not interrupt their routine study, the interviews were carried out at break time after lunch.

The interview sheets for students, teachers and principals were passed on to each school to be distributed to interviewees. Open, semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals or vice-principals, school chaplain and the panel head of the religious studies department (with life education schools) and those responsible for moral, civic education or spiritual education (without life education schools).

3.5.6 Focus Group. Focus group may be defined as “a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. Each group is conducted with six to eight people by a skilled interviewer. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comment of others” (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 5). Hennink (2007) stated that focus groups differ from other qualitative methods in “its purpose, composition and the process of data collection” (Hennink, 2007, p. 4). Focus group research enables the identification of a wider range of different views around the research topic from the perspective of the participants themselves in a single session than would result from one-to-one interviews (Hennink, 2007). Focus Group interviews were conducted with students, with four to six in a group.

3.5.7 Classroom Observation. It was advantageous to observe life education lessons.

For schools without life education, I aimed to observe some other lessons and activities with life education elements. But this was not mandatory because I knew that the classroom observations would bring teachers and students extra pressure. If the principal did not want to put more burdens on teachers, the classroom observations were cancelled.

3.5.8 Collect Textbooks, Lesson plan and Year plan. Textbooks and lesson plans included the framework and main contents of life education. The year plans are the overall design of life education for students during an academic year. Therefore, by comparing these materials, the differences and similarities could be found. For schools which had life education textbooks, I tried to purchase the same textbooks in bookstores. However, some textbooks were not sold in the bookstores because their sales were very limited. Therefore, when required, I borrowed them from the primary schools or university libraries. I copied the lesson and year plans in the schools after consent was obtained.

3.6 Institutional Approval Process

Ethical approval was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee and the studied primary school prior to commencement of the study. A letter was sent by the principal to all parents of the primary school students, explaining the purpose of the study and giving them an assurance of confidentiality. Parents were requested to sign a consent form to give consent for their adolescents in the fourth and fifth grades (aged 10-12) to participate in the study.

In Hong Kong, parental consent needs to be obtained for children under the age of 18 to participate in research studies. Parental consent can override the minor consent in the legal

system. In the school setting, parental consent plays an important role enabling parents to advocate for their adolescents. There was no need to seek minor consent from the adolescents, as long as they were willing to complete and return the questionnaires to the teachers on a voluntary basis. If the parents did not sign the consent form and return it to school, their adolescent children were not be asked to participate in the study. An information sheet describing the aim of the study and explaining that participants could withdraw without any penalty were attached to the questionnaire and distributed to the students.

During October 2014, approval was sought and granted to undertake the study from the Human Research Ethics Committee of The Hong Kong Institute of Education (now The Education University of Hong Kong).

Letters were sent to the principals of the schools who agreed to do the study together with the questionnaires for the students to complete. A letter asking for the parents' permission for their children to participate in the study was also attached.

Interviews were conducted with principals or vice-principals. Permission was given from the principals or vice-principals to approach the respective personnel from the school, who agreed to be interviewed.

Pictures, audio and video information were authorized by the principals and parents and could only be used in this study.

The Focus Group was conducted with students and staff. For students, it was with six to eight in each group and for the staff, it was usually with two or three teachers. The research student conducted the interviews personally to ensure interviewees' confidentiality and with utmost sensitivity towards the interviewees so as not to cause any emotional or psychological

ill-effects throughout the interview.

The student surveys did not contain any identifying details and were anonymous. A process for managing the separation of personal information from the data was put in place before the collection of the data. For example, numbering interviews and keeping a record of actual names of the school in a secure and separate location that could only be accessed by myself. I kept a record of the actual names of the participants' schools since there was an agreement to look through the transcript and to enable follow-up interviews if necessary. During analysis and the writing up of the thesis, all data were well-organized and kept secure at my home in a lockable filing cabinet and in a personal password protected computer which was kept strictly confidential and no- one apart from myself had free access to the information.

3.7 Instruments

This study aimed to identify the status and situation of life education of Hong Kong and Jiangsu. The interview sheets for students, teachers and principals were passed on to each school to be distributed to interviewees.

For each school, there were three main participants who participated in life education. School leaders were responsible for the overall design of lessons and activities, teacher development, resource allocation, etc. Teachers made the teaching plans based on the syllabus and implementation teaching. As the recipient of life education, student's understanding on life education is the final goal of teaching. Therefore, different questions were designed for the three participants. The teaching situations in schools were reviewed from their different

perspectives.

For each school, teachers who took charge of life education or moral education were the best interview subjects. Generally, the school arranged the suitable teachers to meet me as the researcher. Moreover, the students were also selected by the teachers. I just let the school know my requirements about the teachers and students. However, I had no right to select them.

There were no potential risks of physical, psychological, or social harm in relation to the interviewees involved in answering the questionnaires. They only needed to spend about 10 to 15 minutes to answer the questions. All participants would think about their own situation since they needed to fill in the interview form which asked about ideals for life education, and how they felt/what they experienced in the areas of their relationship with life. The interview sheets for the students, teachers and principals were passed on to each school to be distributed to the interviewees. To this end, the focus of this project was on the following interview questions.

3.7.1 School with Life Education (Principal or Delegate).

- (1) How much students in different grades retain knowledge on life education?
- (2) The necessity to set a life education course?
- (3) The teaching power and teacher training on life education;
- (4) The status of life education, student numbers and teaching time every week;
- (5) The teaching plans, syllabus, relevant teaching materials and assessment method(s);
- (6) The characteristics on teaching methodology and modes for life education;

- (7) The teaching difficulties on life education;
- (8) The disadvantages and the problems which should be improved on life education;
- (9) The exchange and sharing of teaching experiences with other schools and educational institutions.

3.7.2 School without Life Education (Principal or Delegate)

- (1) How much students in different grades retain knowledge on moral education?
- (2) The necessity to set a moral education course?
- (3) The teaching power and teacher training on moral education;
- (4) The status of life education, student numbers and teaching time every week;
- (5) The teaching plans, the syllabus, relevant teaching materials and assessment method(s);
- (6) The characteristics on teaching methodology and modes for life education;
- (7) The teaching difficulties on moral education;
- (8) The disadvantages and problems which should be improved on moral education;
- (9) The exchange and sharing of teaching experiences with other schools and educational institutions.

3.7.3 School with Life Education (Teachers).

- (1) Do you think if it is necessary to introduce life education lessons? Why?
- (2) What are your lesson plans and teaching materials?
- (3) How much time did you spend on preparing your teaching plans and materials?
- (4) What kind of life education textbook do you use?
- (5) Is the textbook suitable and enough? Why?

- (6) Do you need to prepare some other additional teaching materials? If yes, what materials?
- (7) What are the advantages and disadvantages of life education in your school?
- (8) How to improve or enhance life education in your school?
- (9) What is the students' response in classroom instructions?
- (10) How to arouse the interest of students and improve the quality and efficiency of teaching?

3.7.4 School without Life Education (Teachers)

- (1) What are your lesson plans and teaching materials?
- (2) How much time did you spent on preparing teaching plans and materials?
- (3) What kind of textbook do you use in teaching student moral or life education?
- (4) Is the textbook suitable and enough? Why?
- (5) Do you need to prepare some other additional teaching materials? If yes, what materials?
- (6) What are the advantages and disadvantages of moral education in your school?
- (7) How to improve or enhance moral education in your school?
- (8) What is the students' response in the classroom instruction?
- (9) How to arouse the interest of students and improve the quality and efficiency of teaching?
- (10) Do you think if it is necessary to introduce life education lessons? Why?

3.7.5 School with Life Education (Students).

- (1) What are the main contents of the life education lesson?

- (2) How much did you know about the knowledge before this lesson?
- (3) How much did you like about the life education lesson? Why?
- (4) Could you answer the questions which the teacher mentioned in the class?
- (5) Did you discuss some questions with the teacher and classmates?
- (6) Did you think the class time was too long, too short or suitable?
- (7) Will you teach your life education knowledge to parents and other friends?
- (8) Will you use life education knowledge in you daily life?

3.7.6 School without Life Education (Students)

- (1) How many hours do you spend on moral education every week?
- (2) How important do you think moral education is?
- (3) How many moral education activities have you attended?
- (4) Have you heard about the concept of life education?
- (5) If your school has life education lessons, how many hours do you want to spend on it every week?

3.8 Summary

The study began with a broad survey to generalize the results of life education of students in schools with or without life education. Using the case study method, four schools will be selected at Hong Kong and Jiangsu. Their life education levels and situations will be reviewed and compared. The second phase, focused on qualitative, open ended, semi-structured interviews and focus groups of teachers and students to collect detailed views from participants regarding the variations in life education of youths in schools (see Table

3.1). The principal or delegate of these schools was interviewed. Individual teacher or teacher groups were interviewed. The interview questions were designed to yield more detailed information from the teachers and students with regard to the research questions. This chapter reviewed the methods and procedures to be used in this research. The rationale for sample selection was discussed.

In my thesis, all data were collected and classified from April to September 2015 by two ways. The first way is to classify the teaching activities and contents based on the four relationships. The second way is to classify the implementation of life education in all four schools based on the four dimensions. All analysis and interpretation were concluded from these information and data.

For the actual data analysis, key words were first identified from the data, including school documents, curriculum material and interview transcripts. These key words served to locate relevant sections of the data. Then similar key words were grouped into themes.

Before I visited the schools, I had clear research targets and designed some specific questions for the principals, teachers, and students, respectively. Based on the four dimensions of life education, the implementation of life education was classified to four parts: Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional and Practical. The life education activities, contents of textbooks and teaching materials were classified based on the four relationships, i.e., Transcendent, Community, Nature and Self. The interview data, photos and other information were also analyzed according to these categories..

After all four schools were analyzed individually, comparisons among them were made based on the four relationships and four dimensions.

Table 3.1 Collecting research data in these four schools

	Interview principal	Interview teachers		Interview students		Collect textbooks	Collect lesson plan	Collect year plan	Class observation
	Individual (Code)	Focus group (Code)	Individual	Focus group	Grade (Code)				
School 1 (S1)	1 (S1P)	1 (S1T)	0	2	P3 & P4 (S1S)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
School 2 (S2)	1 (S2P)	0 (0)	2 (S2T)	1	P5 (S2S)	No	Yes	Yes	No
School 3 (S3)	1 (S3P)	1 (S3T)	0	3	P5 (S3S)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes (#)
School 4 (S4)	1 (S4P)	1 (S4T)	0	1	P4 & P5 (S4S)	Yes (*)	No	No	Yes (#)

Note: (*) means: This school has moral education textbooks, used as life education textbooks.

(#) means: They are Chinese subject lessons related to life education.



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Chapter 4

School 1-Hong Kong Primary School Implementing Life Education

4.1 General Situation of School 1

School 1 was founded in 1992 and is the first whole-day primary school of The Methodist Church, Hong Kong. The Methodist Church, Hong Kong is a local denomination committed to the integration of pastoral care, school education and social services. Throughout the years, the Methodist Church has been boldly shouldering the mission of the Faith and positively responding to the needs of the era. In the 1950s and 1960s of the last century, it established many kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Some of them were set up in resettlement areas to provide education to many children who would otherwise have no access to schools (http://home.methodist.org.hk/frame_history_e.html). At present, the Methodist Church has 13 kindergartens, 11 primary and 8 secondary schools in Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories. (<http://www.methodist.org.hk/locations/schools/>)

The Church formulated the policy for school education in 1991 – “to develop holistic education based on Christian spirit; and to nourish abundant life through evangelism”. Its Mission Statement stipulates that the aim of quality education is to enable students to know Christian Faith and to attain abundant life. This aim should be the target and goal of its schools; and the evangelistic model ushered by the integration of preaching, education and service should form the foundation for the work of the Church.

In order to achieve its education aims on holistic and quality education, the Church has done a lot of work. For example, it edited and published the first edition of a life education

textbook for two primary schools and a secondary school in June 2004. The target of life education is to mold the good character and kindness of students, to build their positive and meaningful attitude in life, to improve their resistance against adversity, and to develop their right values. The second edition textbooks, “Let life fly”, have been revised and published in 2015 (see Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1. Let life fly (Textbooks of life education in School 1).

In the textbooks, there are four teaching dimensions for life education:

- 1) List the life education as one of the major concerns in the annual plan;
- 2) Arrange one life education class every week;
- 3) Design some theme events for each grade, for example: life etiquette, gratitude and blessings, environmental learning, social services, self-strengthening in times of adversity, etc; and
- 4) Train the teacher with life education concepts.

Located in the New Territories, School 1 had 29 classes, about 700 students and 54 teachers. Based on Christian Spirit, it wanted to promote the development of whole-person education with evangelical fervor, and to cultivate the students to have a thriving vitality.

According to its education guidelines, it was trying to create a pleasant learning environment, and to provide students with an excellent all-round education such as morals, intelligence, physical fitness, work and aesthetics. The students were expected to be persons with high self-esteem, self-confidence and strong possessiveness; a good basis for future studies and serving the community.

According to the website of School 1, its education targets were:

- 1) Moral education: Students should be sincere, good-mannered, orderly and responsible persons. They need to learn to carry on responsibility of themselves, school, family and society.
- 2) Intellectual education: Students should learn some fundamental and necessary subject knowledge. In addition, they need to build the habit of active learning pursuing knowledge with a more thoughtful and scientific manner. They should have capacity to think and judge things independently.
- 3) Physical education: School should pay attention to healthy knowledge education, and guide students to cultivate good living habits. Students will grow up to become happy and healthy people.
- 4) Social education: Students must respect others; cherish families and school, care deeply about social and environmental issues. They should be active participators in social life and build good relationships with others.
- 5) Spiritual education: Students should know Christ, love God, love people, and live a life of abundance.
- 6) Aesthetic education: Students should know how to love, appreciate, respect and

pursue the good things in their lives.

As early as 2007, School 1 listed life education as one of its three concerns in a three-year plan from 2007/08 to 2010/11. The main objective was to develop the students' worship and love of gods, and to teach the students principles and lessons in the Bible. Meanwhile, students practiced knowledge in their real life with the basic content of "the unity of knowledge and action".

- 1) Know and love yourself, accept yourself with confidence;
- 2) Make determination and cultivate interests, confront your challenges, realize your potential;
- 3) Develop self-discipline, diligence, well-behaved;
- 4) To be an autonomous person with self-management;
- 5) Live harmoniously, love and help each other;
- 6) Pay attention to environment protection with a green life attitude and habit.

In its three-year plan from 2010/11 to 2012/13, School 1 continued developing life education, teaching students to be self-management. The key tasks in the first year were to understand the life, to treat people politely, to perform one's responsibility. In the second year, the students were expected to learn how to cherish their own lives, how to manage themselves, how to live a health life. In the third year, school 1 focused to nature life, to develop potential and to love and service. The objectives of life education were:

- 1) Guide students to know Gods, to listen the Bible, to do God's work;
- 2) Culture students with responsibility, self-management, and self-determination;
- 3) Guide students to positive value of life, healthy life and high resilience;

- 4) Teach students to treat people friendly, to care and service people;
- 5) Educate students to build a green life.

In order to reach the above objectives, School 1 developed various implementation strategies, an important indicator of success. For example, School 1 explored a planting plan and involved more than 70% of its students to directly feel green life. The success index of this plan was to build a botanical garden. The garden has so far been built with the great support and common efforts by all students and teachers.

From 2013/14 to 2015/16, the developing targets of life education are:

- 1) Implement the developing plan on high quality life education, guide students to love Gods, to love people, to listen Bible, and to enable whole-person development;
- 2) Culture students with good characters, such as responsibility, determination, discipline, respect, honesty, kindheartedness, and so on;
- 3) Guide students to love and care people, to protect environment, and to serve diligently.

In addition to the life education group, School 1 also introduced some other functional teams into life education, such as a religious team, library team, discipline team, guidance team, civil education team, activity team, uniform teams, green study team, general affaires section, planting team, etc. Specially, School 1 enforces planting activities with life education to the whole school. All students were required to take part in these activities. Students and teachers could enjoy two crops every year.

The former principal serviced School 1 for 22 years and retired at the end of 2013/14.

The new principal inherited teaching principles and continued to implement life education in this school. She set high quality life education as the first task for the future five years. She promoted students to have a positive and healthy attitude of life, to grow with their own spirituality, to take the initiative to learn, and to develop potential with noble sentiments.

4.2 The Life Education Curriculum Setting of School 1

4.2.1 Life Education Implementation. In this school, life education was listed as an independent subject. It set a life education class for 35 minutes every week. In addition, a school-wide class for life education was set in the afternoon of each Friday every week (see Figure 4.2). With different themes, it guided students to reflect on the essence of life, and to love life with a positive attitude.



Figure 4.2. School-wide class of life education is held every Friday afternoon.

Life education was being implemented at three levels:

- 1) the administration section;
- 2) life educational groups; and
- 3) home-school cooperation.

The three levels included the schoolmasters, teachers and parents who cooperated together to create a comprehensive teaching environment for life education. The administration of the school was responsible for the overall planning of life education and provided support to all kinds of teaching resources. The life educational groups were responsible for executing teaching programs and activities and provided feedback on teaching effects to the administration section for further improvement. What parents needed to do was to actively collaborate and maintain timely communication with the school and teachers.

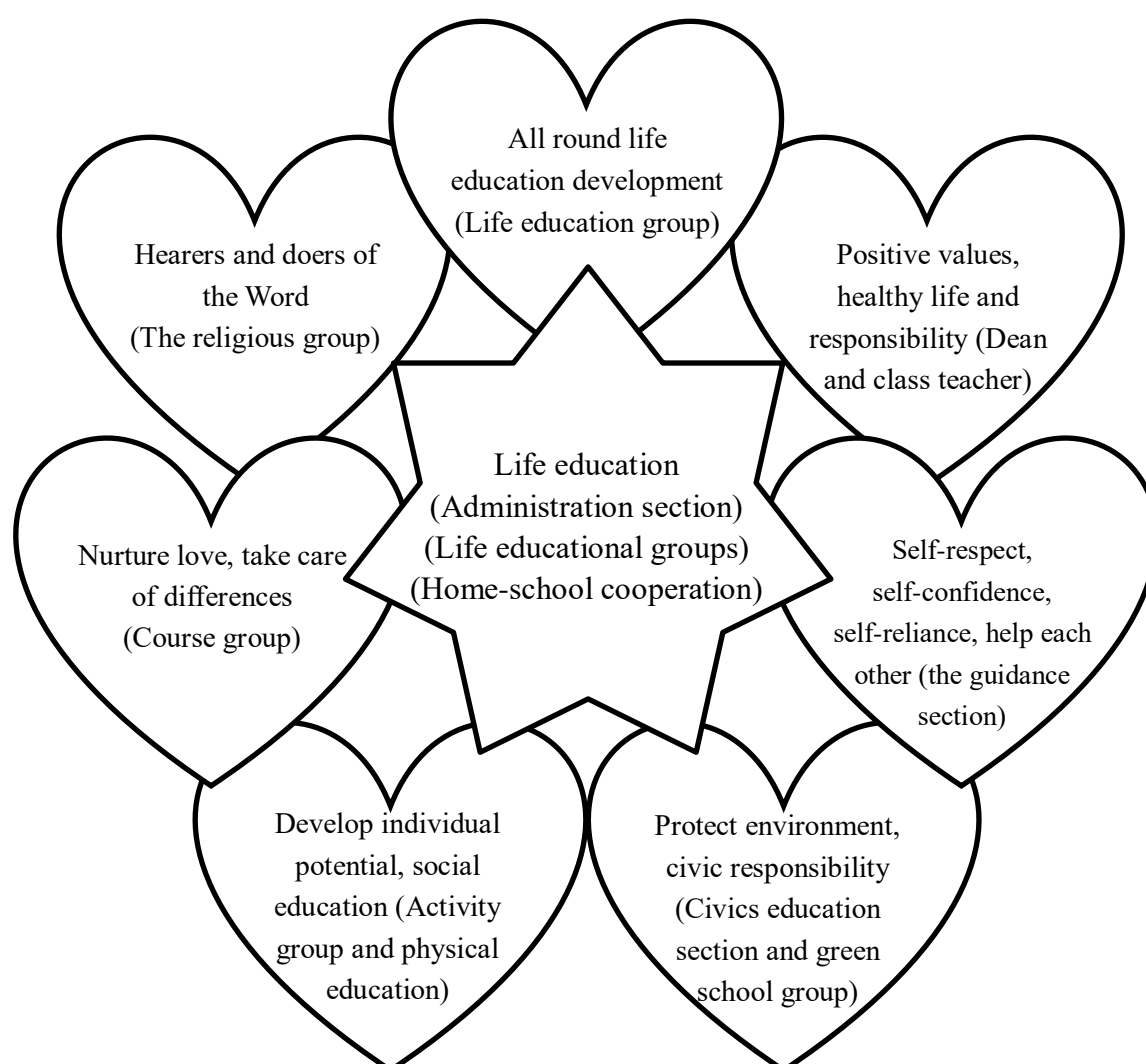


Figure 4.3. The development of life education and its cooperation with other education groups (based on the review of 2012/13 life education of School 1).

In addition to specified life education courses, life education had been infiltrated into other education groups, such as: the religious group, the course group, the dean group, the guidance section, etc (see Figure 4.3).

The scope of life education in each group and section is listed as follows:

1. All round life education development (life education group)
 - Formal life education course
 - Life education theme events (once a year)
 - Enlarged life education class (all students together)
 - Reading in the morning and picture-book education
 - Noon broadcast, reflection on life or social events
2. Positive values, healthy life and responsibility (dean and class teacher)
 - Morning meeting, week meeting
 - Classroom management, self-management, birthday party
 - Quality of leadership
 - Rewards program for excellent students
3. Self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance, help each other (the guidance section)
 - School-based guidance plan, self-discipline
 - Love ambassador
 - Guardian angel activity
 - Picture book guidance and backup
 - Home-school cooperation, parents classroom
4. Protect the environment, civic responsibility (civics education section and green

school group)

- Care for the environment activities or matches
- Energy and greenhouse reductions
- Promote organic farming
- Participate in social services
- Care about our country, visit in the Mainland China

5. Develop individual potential, social education (activity group and physical education)

- Develop multiple intelligences activity, have a special talent
- Community Youth Club, green ambassador
- Small stage at noon, talent show party
- The sports meeting, inner or outer school competitions
- Uniform teams: The Girls' Brigade, Scouts, Boy's Brigade (BB), etc.

6. Nurture love, take care of differences (course group)

- Emphasize care of environment, society, country
- Value rewards, raise confidence
- Project works: citizen of the world, the national identity
- Take care of differences
- Support some special students in need

7. Hearers and doers of the Word (the religious group)

- Morning meeting, worship, Christian fellowship meeting
- Feast worship and activities

- Gospel Camp
- Bible lesson
- Care actions and uniform groups

The scope included all sections of life education, such as: personal, nature, society, community, courses, activities, beyond, etc. It covered the entire spectrum of life education and provides the guidance of the overall development of life education in this school.

This school set some goals of life education:

- 1) To guide the students to explore the meaning of life and to cultivate good morals;
- 2) To help students to build a positive values and attitude toward life; and
- 3) To improve students' ability to face adverse circumstance time.

Based on the latest information of School 1's website, its implementation of life education included:

- 1) All school staff members take part in life education.
- 2) One life education class was taught every week. The textbooks were "Let life fly" published by The Methodist United Church.
- 3) There were four categories in the set of textbooks: people and self, people and others, people and beyond, people and environment. The experiences of life education were designed by "experience, share, introspection and practice".

Over the past few years, this school focused on developing four school-based life education resources: "theme events of each grade", "picture books", "school-based curriculum" and "organic farming and green life".

After years of effort of School 1, life education had been gradually applied into every

aspect of learning and teaching. The administration section worked so hard to design the curriculum setting and the scope of life education and to encourage teachers and students devoting to life education. When the present principal was interviewed, she said:

We always put life education on the important position. Meanwhile, it is necessary to set life education as a separated course. Only then can we effectively educate students with clear and complete concepts of life. Sure, life education in other subjects is also important. (SIP)

4.2.2 Continued Life Education. School 1 integrated religious education, moral education and citizenship education to develop life education, to guide students in realizing life, cherishing life, having healthy values, and to distinguish right from wrong. It also emphasized the unity of knowing and doing to promote students with whole-person development. There were various educational activities in this school to teach students positive values and attitudes toward life with good interpersonal relationships and responsibility.

School 1 set different themes for life education every year. For example, it was “Fostering life, developing potentialities, caring dedication” in 2012/2013; “Living life of love, worshipping gods and loving people, pursuing good characters and serving warmheartedly” in 2013/2014; “Loving and growing: love gods, love family, love school, love service” in 2014/2015.

In its latest three-year developing plan, School 1 proposed to develop life education, to culture life with love. Students should love God and people, have good morals and service diligently. At the same time, School 1 listed life education as the primary focus of 2015/16.

- 1) Implement the development plan of life education;
- 2) Guide students to love God and people, to listen Bible, to enable whole-person development;
- 3) Culture students with responsibility, determination, discipline, respect, honesty, kindheartedness; and
- 4) Teach students to love people, to protect environment, to service diligently.

Based on Wong's observation, the development of life education has been polarized in Hong Kong schools (Wong, 2013, p. 42). While most schools in Hong Kong are still at their early stages of life education, School 1 catered pretty well for the Intellectual, Emotional and Volitional dimensions of life education. With the joint efforts of both leadership and teachers, life educational achievement in School 1 has received approbation of experts and the public. The principal was invited to take part in the life education forum in Shunde (2015) and Hainan (2016). One teacher was selected as an "Excellent teacher 2016" (優秀教師 2016) by the Hong Kong Educator Association (香港教育工作者聯會). It has been an example of some other schools inside and outside of Hong Kong. One teacher told me:

Although we have gotten some good results of life education, it is still a challenge to further increase the teaching effectiveness. Especially, how to help students to apply life education knowledge in their daily life is an important issue waiting us to resolve. As for the teaching results, although we have had some teaching experience on life education, it is still a hard job to introduce and to discuss deeply with students in the limited time, thirty five minutes. Especially, it is very difficult for us to seize the "degree" of life topic to different students. (S1T1)

However, it mentioned less for the Practical dimension of life education which was the most important part. There are maybe two reasons. The first one is that time resources are quite limited for primary schools. Even almost every teacher and parent believes that life education is important to students; however, life education is the first one which is omitted during busy teaching. The second reason is test education which is actually the cause of the first one.

4.2.3 Scope of Life Education. Life education has been listed as a separate course in this school. The principal told me that:

It is necessary to set life education in my school because life education embodies the whole developmental education. Life education has been carried out in my school for about ten years. We have set up an overall curriculum setting and scope of life education, including textbooks, selected picture books, school-based teaching materials, activities, and so on. Meanwhile, we also introduce life education to almost all other subjects, such as Math, Chinese, Music, and so on. This school has a current enrollment of over seven hundred students, studying in five classes at each grade. There is one small life education class (35 minutes) for every class every week. Moreover, there is also an enlarged life education class (one hour) for the whole grade every week. (SIP)

“Let life fly” is the second edition of life education textbook. Its full content is listed in Appendix 1 which can be divided into four units:

- 1) People and self. Help students to recognize and accept themselves by vivid examples from life; to face and overcome difficulties, failures and even frustrations

in their daily life.

- 2) People and others. Recognize the relationship between people and people; respect other peoples and themselves; find a better way to get along with other peoples.
- 3) People and beyond. Explore the value and goal of life, the matters of life and death, and the meaning of life which is given to us by our belief.
- 4) People and environment. Enjoy and cherish the beauty of nature, take care of the world, implement national education, help students to think about their environment, community and even national problems.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the meaning and value of life lie in four basic dimensions: the Creator, Humanity, the Entire Creation, and the Individual Self. The units in “Let life fly” consistently match these four dimensions of life education.

Life education course features:

- 1) The spiral design of the life education lessons ensured students could recognize life from the shallower to the deeper.
- 2) Some cases in daily life, small stories, picture books and videos were introduced in the life education classes to help students to see and experience life.
- 3) The course focused on the cultivation of students’ value. To build students with good character and kindness, and a positive attitude on life.
- 4) For the national education, some recent historical events were introduced to guide students to know the world and to think from several different angles.
- 5) The missionary history was added in the life education to help students become familiarized with the missionaries who spread the words of the Gospel to China.

While the teachers were asked about textbooks and teaching materials of life education, one teacher mentioned that:

At present, we use “Let life fly” and some other picture books as our life education textbooks. These textbooks have rich content for students. Especially, there are some reference materials and information in a teacher's book which significantly reduces teachers' pressure to plan life education lessons. (SIT2)

As for the material preparation for life education, a young teacher added:

Even so, these textbooks are not enough to refresh our teaching contents. Therefore, we still have to prepare the lessons two times every week. Two hours for each time. If the teaching materials need some new information, we need to read some other references. For examples, we always read the newspapers and some other papers on life education. Once we find an educational story or event, we derive one or two life concepts from it and discuss with students. We also collect some videos and images and play them to students. (SIT3)

In School 1, the life education program was developed along six main themes based on a six-year cycle. They were “loving life”; “sharing life”; “appreciating life”; “developing life”; “holding on to life” and “reflecting on life” (see Figure 4.4).

School 1 made great efforts to promote a holistic life education so as to ensure students' overall development in moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic aspects. In this school, students are not only active in class, but also learning by themselves after class, discovering the mysteries of science and technology. It designed a curriculum while keeping in mind the four areas: the Transcendent, the Community, the Nature and the Self (see Table 4.1).

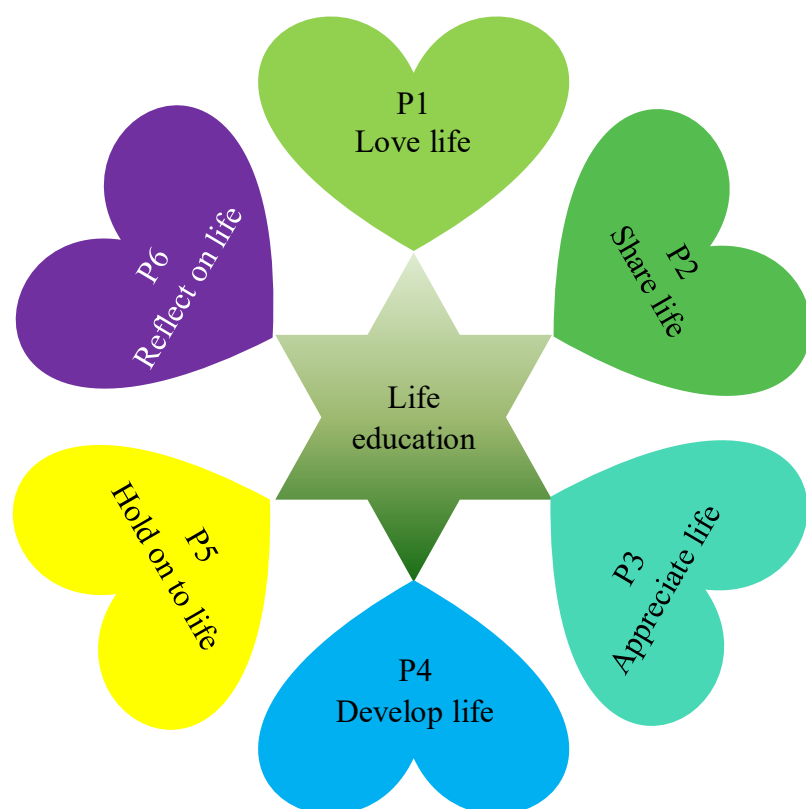


Figure 4.4. The six-years' cycle themes for life education.

Area 1: “the Transcendent”

Students studied topics that focused on the “meaning of life” and “value judgment” at Morning meeting, worship, and Christian fellowship meeting. Specifically, the topics covered faith and religion, spiritual nourishment, the meaning of life, and valuable judgment, and in activities (e.g., Feast worship and activities, Gospel Camp, Bible lesson, Care actions and uniform groups).

Area 2: “the Community”

Students gained an understanding of the group phenomenon and the interactive principles of human social behavior. The activities and courses showed a concern for fundamental concepts, such as civic literacy, social care, historical thinking, and multiculturalism with activities for positive values, healthy life and responsibility, such as:

Classroom management, self-management, birthday party, Quality of leadership, Rewards program for excellent students, Take care of differences, and Support some special students in need.

Table 4.1 *Life education areas, activities and courses in School 1*

Area	Let life fly	Activities and contents
Transcendent	People and beyond	Feast worship and activities, Gospel Camp, Bible lesson, Care actions and uniform groups
Community	People and others	Classroom management, self-management, birthday party, Quality of leadership, Rewards program for excellent students, Take care of differences, Support some special students in need.
Nature	People and environment	Emphasize care of environment, society, country, Care for the environment activities or matches, Energy and greenhouse reductions, Promote organic farming, Participate in social services, Care about our country, visit in the Mainland China
Self	People and yourself	Community Youth Club, green ambassador, Small stage at noon, talent show party, The sports meeting, inner or outer school competitions, Uniform teams: The Girls' Brigade, Scouts, BB

Area 3: “the Nature”

Classes focused on individual scientific capacity for critical thought and sustained care.

The classes emphasized the fundamental concepts of nature and science, and science and civilization, with activities and courses such as Emphasize Care of Environment, Society, Country, Care for the Environment Activities or Matches, Energy and Greenhouse Reductions, Promote Organic Farming, Participate in Social Services, Care about Our Country, and visit in Mainland China.

Area 4: “the Self”

In the category on the Individual Self, students’ individual subjective experience contributed to the development of the potential of an individual. This category included a variety of activities and courses, such as Community Youth Club, green ambassador, Small stage at noon, talent show party, The sports meeting, inner or outer school competitions, Uniform teams: The Girls’ Brigade, Scouts, BB, etc.

Life-and-death education is a sensitive issue in life education. Most primary schools do not mention this topic probably because teachers think it is difficult to discuss this issue with young primary students. In School 1, the life-and-death topic was mentioned in its textbook for Grade Five students. In this lesson, a letter from a dead father to his daughter expressed the great love. Meanwhile, it also taught that death is an inevitable step. Our parents raise and teach us. We love each other and should cherish the time spent together. Parents will leave some day. But we will meet somewhere in heaven. By these whole contents, the breadth and depth of life education in School 1 is much better than most primary schools in Hong Kong.

In addition to required courses, there are diverse activities and various academic seminars. Students are encouraged to take part in these seminars to learn a comprehensive learning environment and school life. According to its educational belief of life education,

this school profoundly believed that the life of each child is the gift of a creator who intended us to live in liberty and equality. It is developing life education based on Christian Spirit.

In recent years, the relationship between Hong Kong and Mainland China has become more and more close. It is necessary to fully understand the development recently on both the good and bad sides.

When several P5 students were interviewed, one student told me:

I have some concerns about the development of the Mainland. Recently there are some negative reports on China. But I do not know why some Hong Kong people do not like China. I asked my teacher about my question. She told me that China is developing rapidly. Chinese people are becoming richer. But something negative and even bad is happening at the same time, such as wealth gap, corruption, environment pollution.

(S1S1)

Another P5 student added:

The food even is not safe. And the quality of some Chinese people is not good enough. But on the whole, China is becoming better and better. They just need more time. (S1S2)

In order to examine what the students said, their textbook was reviewed. In the textbook of Let Life Fly (Grade 5), there were some topics about the negative aspects of China. In Hong Kong, not only the good side of Mainland China was shown to students, but some negative sides were also revealed. With the rapid development of China in the 21st century, the Chinese economy, politics, military affairs, science and technology have made fast development. However, behind the rapid economic development, China is facing many difficulties to be overcome, such as, the huge wealth gap in resident income distribution, the

ongoing corruption, the food safety, the environmental pollution, etc.

4.3 The Teaching of Life Education of School 1

4.3.1 Life Education Teaching. To help students learn life education effectively, the course used the group cooperation research strategy throughout the activity approach.

Moreover, some games, case study, group discussion and experience activities were introduced to help students to feel different life situations.

(1) Life Education Theme Events

Table 4.2 *The themes and targets of life education for each grade*

Grade	Themes	Targets
One	I want to grow. (Love life)	Face the new primary school life, experience growing happiness.
Two	Holding an egg (Share life)	Recognize the fragility of life and appreciate life.
Three	Life with accidents (Appreciate life)	Understand the hardship in life and face it positively.
Four	Union is strength (Develop life)	Learn to work with people and enjoy group life.
Five	Overcome adversity (Hold on to life)	Overcome adversity and live with positive attitude.
Six	Make the world more beautiful (Reflect on life)	Benefit the society with the direction of positive growth.

Students in different grades have different psychological development and growth needs. Therefore, the school designed the following theme events for different grades according to “experience, participation, self-examination and practice” (see Table 4.2). It guided students to face the difficulties and challenges in their life with good, positive and optimistic attitudes towards life.

For the Grade One students, the priest prayed for them on the first day when they entered the primary school to guide and encourage them to face the new school life (see Figure 4.5). For P2 students, a mission named “Holding an egg” was assigned to them to bring an egg from home to school and keep it safe. A single raw egg was seen as a fragile life. Students must cautiously protect the egg in campus activities (see Figure 4.6). This task-driven approach prompted the positivity and creativity of students.



Figure 4.5. The priest was praying for the P1 students.



Figure 4.6. P2 students were holding eggs.

For P4 students, they learnt how to work together (see Figure 4.7). These activities also provided skills in communication, dynamic thinking, teamwork, and organization. P5 students were communicating with a disabled athlete about her inspiring story (see Figure 4.8). The priest was praying on the rite of P6 student graduation to wish them having a better life in their secondary school and making them useful for society (see Figure 4.9).



Figure 4.7. P4 students taking part in a group activity.



Figure 4.8. P5 students were talking with an athlete in a wheelchair to learn how to overcome adversity and live with a positive attitude.



Figure 4.9. The priest was praying for P6 students.

4.3.2 Picture Books and Environmental Education. All children like stories. The school replaced the rigid and simplified teaching with picture books to improve the moral quality of students. Students could learn the good attitude to get along with other people through some interesting stories. Some life qualities, such as love, bravery, thankfulness, persistency, and being dutiful were taught to each student. The picture book instructions were

implemented during the picture-book classes and morning classes. Each class had a different theme (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 *Picture book instructions for each grade*

Grade	Theme	
One	Thomas Edison, American inventor	To know the growing-up experience of other people.
Two	The story of a little mouse – Nicolas	Establish an ideal and stick with an ideal
Three	Musician Beethoven	To understand his struggle with the fate of deafness.
Four	Dame Jane Goodall	To understand the importance of environmental protection.
Five	The poems of swallows	To know the love of the parents, to learn to be grateful in our life.
Six	King Yu tamed the flood	Failure is success if we learn from it.

For the picture-book classes on Fridays, the themes included “not afraid of any difficulties”, “how to establish the ideal”, “stories of pain and struggle”, “the love of the parents”, “life-and-death education” for different grades. For the morning classes on Thursdays, the students could read picture books on “overcoming difficulties”, “friendship and love”, “devotion and caring”, etc.

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parents”, “life-and-death education” for different grades. For the morning classes on Thursdays, the students could read picture books on “overcoming difficulties”, “friendship and love”, “devotion and caring”, etc.

Life education, not like other subjects, cannot reach good teaching effectiveness only by rote-learning. Especially for some junior primary students, it is difficult for them to focus in a spoon-feeding classroom. Therefore, the activity approach has enjoyed increasing popularity among teachers of life education. Students can feel various life situations by playing games, case study, group discussion, etc. Through these activities, the Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional and Practical dimensions can be imparted to students.

This school has also developed environmental education for many years. There were several special environment facilities, including a butterfly garden, an ecological farm, an organic garden, a small desert, and a small tropical rainforest. These environment facilities were used for a variety of subjects (see Table 4.4). Moreover, some school-based courses were compiled according to their characteristics. The Course topics included two main themes: “human and environment” and “people and me”. Its aim was to train students to be courageous, dare to fight, and defy difficulties. Furthermore, the students loved nature, treasured resources and actively protected the earth.

The principal mentioned:

In order to increase students’ understanding and experience on life education, an organic plant garden has been built as an internship base. Students can watch the growing process of various plants. At the same time, they even can grow plants with their own hands. By this method, it enriches the cultural life on campus and educates

students to understand life, to respect life. At present, the organic plant garden has become one of the special features of our school after years of unremitting effort. In particular, it was awarded “The environment-friendly small project”. Besides that, we set some different special events for every grade according to the mental and age traits of children. All students in this school are involved in at least one activity or event about life education. (SIP)

Table 4.4 *The environmental education for each grade*

Grade	Themes	Environment facilities and activities
One	Seeds are the vehicles of life (Love life)	Students sow in the ecological farm and visit various plants.
Two	How does a frog grow (Share life)	Students visit the growth of tadpoles.
Three	Every grain comes from hard working (Appreciate life)	Students plant and harvest crops in the ecological farm.
Four	Grass has strong vitality (Develop life)	Students observe wild grasses on the small hill in the ecological farm.
Five	Cactus in the desert (Hold on to life)	Students observe desert plants in the small desert.
Six	The miracle of nature (Reflect on life)	Students feel the nature in the small tropical rainforest and the butterfly garden.

4.3.3 Life Education Class Sample: Unexpected Life (P3). In order to study the teaching effect and students' response, several life education activities were observed, 10 minutes for each activity.

(1) Teaching Goals

- 1) Teach students understanding that there is prosperity or adversity in their future life through some experience activities.
- 2) Guide students facing the future in a positive way whether it is prosperity or adversity.
- 3) Introduce students to treat disabled with respect and consideration.
- 4) Some exemplars share with students to encourage them to face difficult challenges and to feel grateful.

(2) Important Messages

- 1) Life is full of prosperity and adversity. We must face our life with positive attitude no matter what situation we are in.
- 2) When we encounter difficulties or adversities, we must understand that they are the chance of growing.
- 3) We need to treat some disabled with respect and consideration.
- 4) We must be grateful when thankful when we are prosperity. We also are hopeful and thankful when we are in adversities.

(3) Teaching Learning Activities

- 1) Students take part in various experience activities in an enlarged life education class and learn how to face difficulties with a positive attitude.

- 2) Some exemplars will be invited to share their life stories with students to encourage them to face difficult challenges and to feel grateful.
- 3) Students discuss, share and rethink their ideas and experience, finish the life education work sheets.

(4) Preparing Schedule

Step 1: Finish the teaching plan

Step 2: Communicate with the class teacher about the activity. The class teacher marks the student handbook and asks students to take sports clothes and a face mask.

Step 3: Introduce the activity to some assistant teachers. Finish the worksheet and report.

Step 4: Arrangement of classroom and teaching materials.

(5) Activity Details

Activity 1: Write with the mouth (see Figure 4.10)

Each student holds a pen with his/her mouth and writes a word on a piece of paper. The most beautiful “handwriting” will be awarded a little prize.

Activity 2: Work as a group (see Figure 4.11)

Four students are asked to work as a team to transport a student to a target position ten meters away. Students must design their own strategy and every team member must take part in the activity.



Figure 4.10. Students were feeling an accident life: write with the mouth.



Figure 4.11. Work as a group: transport a classmate.

Activity 3: Using feet as hands (see Figure 4.12)

Students use their toes to control a spoon and to scoop some small balls from a bowl to another bowl.



Figure 4.12. Students were feeling an accident life: using feet as hands.

Through these activities, students will learn that:

1) It is not easy for disabled people to finish a simple task for non-disabled people.

They must put much effort to do a simple job.

2) Finally they can finish it if they work hard and do not give up.

3) They feel grateful for their complete physical.

Activity 4: Blind walking (see Figure 4.13)

The eyes of the students are covered by a face mask. They walk in the playground with some obstacles. Through this activity, students can understand how happy they have a healthy vision. They need to appreciate what they have. At the same time, they also learn that it is inconvenient for blind people. They are encouraged to help people in need.



Figure 4.13. Students were feeling an accident life: blind walking.

(6) Discussion, Rethinking and Share

The teacher invites several students to talk about their feelings and experiences based on the following questions:

- 1) Which activity was the most impressive one? Why?
- 2) What was your feeling when you were in the activity?
- 3) What was the most difficult thing for you during the activity?
- 4) How did you overcome the difficulty?
- 5) What were your feelings and experiences after these activities?
- 6) How will you face difficulty in your future life?
- 7) How will you treat disabled people in the future?

All students liked and were eager to participate in these activities. There were even several small arguments between the students for the role assignment. Finally, all the activities went on and finished smoothly. After these activities, several students were interviewed to examine the teaching effect. When a P3 student was asked what she had learnt

in the life education lesson, she said:

The lesson was very interesting. When my eyes were covered by a face mask, I could see nothing. Although I tried to remember the position of the tables before I become “blind”, I had no confidence to each small step. This impressed me very much. Now I understand the eyes are important to my life. I never have this feeling before. (S1S3)

Another P3 student added:

I should cherish my eyes well. And I should cherish every part of our body, my hands, my legs, my nose, my teeth, and so on. Although I can use my hand to write very easily, my mouth does not control the pen. And my mouth becomes very pain and soreness. And it is also difficult to pick up some small things by my feet. It will become very inconvenient if I have no hands. (S1S4)

The third student said:

I do not believe I can move a classmate before this activity. Working with other three classmates, we really move a classmate to 10 meters away. You know this student is the heaviest one in our class. By now I understand that the energy of one person is limited. But when we work together, we can do something very big. This activity impresses me very much. In the future, I will not be afraid of any difficulties because I can work with other people to solve them. (S1S5)

As mentioned in Chapter Two, these activities integrated different educational resources and combined teaching materials with the student’s daily and social life. Therefore, the enthusiasm of students can be greatly mobilized. For some task-driven activities, the

students were actively involved with these activities. They tried their best to work together for the task which fully developed their creativity and learning initiative. Finally, by these questions, students could think more about the deep meaning of these activities. These teaching methods can strengthen students' impetus and interests in life education and can improve its teaching result.

4.3.4 Teaching Professional Development

School 1 not only takes students' all-around development very seriously, but also focuses on nurturing teachers' right values and attitude. They believe that teachers must pursue continuous professional development to understand students' growth deeply which has the similar thought as New Education promoted by Yongxin Zhu (Zhu, 2015). In 2015/16, to match the development of School 1 and to improve teaching quality, teachers actively participated in many further education courses, such as life education, leadership and management. In addition, School 1 organized some teaching workshops and seminars during their teacher developing days. Some teachers enrolled in a special life education development activity which was held by The Methodist Church, Hong Kong to optimize life education classes.

When the principal was asked about the teaching resources and teacher training, she was proud of the teachers:

In order to ensure high teaching quality, a school must have excellent teachers with high consciousness. We attach great importance to the training and promotion of teachers. There are some opportunities and exchange programs for teachers to study and communicate with life education experts and other schools. Teachers in

this school have been organized regularly to interact with and learn from some primary schools in Taiwan. We also interconnected with a primary school in Shunde, Guangdong. Students and teachers of in these two schools often visit each other. Through life education exchange, we have learned a lot from other schools and education organizations. In addition to some professional life education teachers, each teacher has a certain level of life education in this school. (S1P)

In addition to some life education workshops in School 1, the principal allowed the life education teachers to visit Taiwan and Shunde, Guangdong Province. In 2015, life education teachers and colleagues from The Methodist Church attended the “Guangdong and Hong Kong life education teachers’ communication activity”. Teachers in School 1 shared their experiences on life education with all attendants. Moreover, life education teachers also shared and promoted their experiences to all educators at the award ceremony of “Love campus” and “Teacher development day in New Territories”.

Four teachers were interviewed in a focus group. All the teachers took life education very seriously. While they were asked about the importance of life education in their school, they expressed that it was necessary to introduce life education in this school. One teacher said:

All teachers have better understanding of life education by various activities and learning opportunities. We learn some advanced experience on life education from other schools by visiting and exchanging activities. It can improve our teaching quality. (S1T4)

At the start of the school year 2015/16, she inspired students:

The web of a spider was destroyed after heavy rains. It climbed up the wall with difficulty to its tattered web and wanted to rebuild it. Because the wall was very wet and slippery, it fallen down while it a certain height. It climbed up the wall again and again, but it fallen down every time. When you see this situation, what are your thoughts and feelings? Maybe you sign and tell yourself: “Does my life like this spider? Get nothing in the busyness of life.” So you are depressed slowly day by day. I guess that some of you give up on yourself without life goals and direction. Those who, like these people, do not have the power to hold their own lives, let alone loving other people. Maybe, you got moved by spider’s strong will and indomitable spirit and decide to learn its perseverance. Then you become stronger and stronger. You will never fear any difficulties in front of you. Your attitude determines your altitude and your aptitude. We should love and equip ourselves, overcome the difficulties, make progress, help others in the future. I hope you start from loving yourself and then lean how to love others. (SIP)

The administrator section played great attention on life education and adhered to the development of life education. After more than ten years of construction, School 1 had achieved enormous achievement on hardware and software of life education construction.

4.4 The Evaluation of Life Education of School 1

4.4.1 The Evaluation of Implantation of Life Education. For the development of life education in School 1, the principal said:

After years of effort, some good results have been obtained on life education in our

school. However, there are still some issues to be resolved. For example, some teachers said it is hard to control the “degree” of life topics when they discuss with students. It shows that they have no enough life experience for themselves. We will continue to train teachers and improve their quality. Moreover, there are still no professional life education teachers. We have to train life education teachers by ourselves. But this does not pay off in a short time.

We are using the life education textbooks which are edited by our church and some other school-based courses. And we set some requirements and standards for these classes. However, there is still no a rigorous set of criteria to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of life education. Furthermore, there are a variety of responses from students during the process of life education. We can only process these cases one by one. Even so, I believe, the level of life education in our school can be further improved with the joint efforts of both teachers and students. (SIP)

When the Church collected and edited the textbook of life education, it considered all our dimensions of life education: the Transcendent (People and beyond), the Community (People and others), the Nature (People and environment), and the Self (People and yourself). With these four dimensions, rich contents were provided to students in different grades. Meanwhile, School 1 also developed some different themes for each grade. All these themes were based on the four dimensions of life education. It is also worth mentioning that the topic about life-and-death was not omitted in the textbook and in this school. The concept of life education was instilled to the students from the shallower to the deeper.

In addition to the textbooks and normal life education classes, School 1 implemented

life education by some activities, group discussion, case study, etc. Students quite liked and enjoyed these activities. Afterwards, the thinking and share section was good for the students to understand and firm the knowledge they had learned during the course of thinking and working by themselves and, thus, achieve better results in teaching. The Intellectual, Emotional and Volitional dimensions of life education have achieved full development in this school. Although the school and teachers required the students to practice life education in their daily life, it was difficult to monitor their behavior outside of the school. Therefore, there was no evidence to show that the Practical dimension of life education was sufficient.

4.4.2 Students' Understanding of Life Education. Although it was difficult to assess the teaching effect, students' feedback expressed somehow their level of life education. I interviewed several students in P3, P4 and P5.

When a P4 student was asked how he used life knowledge in his daily life, he said:

I sometimes discuss life issues with some classmates and parents. From them I can learn more. For example, I know I must cherish my own body because it is very important to me. But my parents told me I should think more about disabled persons who lost their eyes, hands or legs. If we meet them in the daily life, we'd better offer them help as we can. (S1S5)

Another P4 student added:

At least, we cannot make trouble and inconvenience for them. (S1S6)

These students did learn some life knowledge. Moreover, they could think of some questions and tried to find the answers. The best thing was that they could use life education knowledge in their daily life. That is the final purpose of life education.

As for the teachers, they were in the frontier to contact and teach students. Therefore, their understanding of life education and their own life situation were key influence factors of the life education teaching result. In School 1, based on my observation and experience, the spiritual outlooks of all teachers were pretty good; that was a basic precondition to transfer positive life energy from teachers to students. By various teaching strategies, students can shower life education from every teachers and everywhere.

When I asked about the teaching effects, the teachers expressed their humility:

After more than ten years of effort, we have formed our own characteristics on life education. An overall scope of life education has been set up in our school. Under its guideline, life education is running smoothly. More important, there are some teachers with rich life education experience and we are still keeping touch with experts and other schools. (SIT1)

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, experienced teachers are the basic guarantee of the implementation of life education. School 1 created a school climate with positive and active life not only for students, but for teachers. Some teachers had worked in this school for more than 20 years. They hold profound feelings towards the school and students. After many years of practice, they had gathered rich teaching experience in life education.

Finally, they also talked about their experiences and options about the future development of life education:

At present, the contents of life education lessons cover almost every aspect of students' life. But in other ways, we do not have focuses. We hope we can set some focus topics for students based on their ages. (SIT2)

Especially, we need more classes outside of the classroom because we found that students have higher class participation in some life education activities than in classroom. They responded very actively to our teaching contents and questions. What impressed me most was that they could ask some questions. It showed that they were thinking about what I told them and what they watched. (S1T4)

Generally, the teaching period was limited for every school and student. Although it was necessary to include every aspect of life education in the textbook, it was impossible to teach students all knowledge about life education in a short class period. Even if the school did so, the teaching effectiveness would be reduced.

4.5 Summary

With the joint efforts of all administrators, teachers and students, School 1 had achieved certain achievements on life education. Students could understand the meaning of life through life education classes and some experience activities. They could help and love each other. It had also implemented a “Good character” activity to praise students with good responsibility, manners and behaviors. Most of students could follow the guideline of Bible to take care other people. We could see the results of life education.

School 1 organized some community activities to donate and help some vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly. Students were all willing to join the active part in these activities. This demonstrated that students could learn biblical guidance and good behaviors in their daily life to practice love, and to protect the environment. With the help of teachers and various life education activities, students generally had a positive and active life

attitude. They were confident and could help and care for each other with good relationship.

Most of students liked life education classes. Especially in some outdoor activities, they asked questions actively and felt the class time was too short. Some impressive classes and activities included the life and death education in “Dad in the heaven”, protecting eggs activity, face of adversity, etc. However, they also felt bored when the topic of life education did not spur their interest. Generally, students knew little on life education before classes. Some of them discussed the content of life education with classmates and teachers after class. They were more firm and persistent when they faced some adverse situations. Now, they had filial piety with parents in their own home and talk about some things they did not understand with them.

School 1 was using a textbook with full content of life education: the Transcendent, the Community, the Nature and the Self. By various themes and activities, the Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional and Practical dimensions were installed to students gradually. After years of practice and exploration, it had gained good teaching results in life education. Teachers had gained more experience in the teaching method, curriculum setting, and the scope and level of life education.

Unfortunately, the third level of life education scope, school-home cooperation, was not reviewed in my study due to time limitations. And the Practical dimensions could not be assessed during the short observations.

Chapter 5

School 2 - Hong Kong School without Life Education Subject

5.1 General Situation of School 2

School 2, as a government subsidized co-educational primary school, was founded and moved to its present location in the Sheung Wan district of Hong Kong in 2000.

The mission of the school was to achieve all-round development in their students by providing comprehensive services to them so that they may exert their full potentialities to serve the community whole-heartedly. Furthermore, the school strove to promote “a sense of integrity, positive values, social consciousness and commitment towards learning, life, family, community and country” so that they will lead a full and meaningful life. The “emphasis on pastoral care, and on a sense of partnership between school and home, is balanced with the school’s commitment to achieving excellence in academic, cultural and sporting pursuits” (website of School 2).

The motto of School 2 was “carefully thinking, efforts to practice”, with the aim of helping the students to think about things in depth and to distinguish between right and wrong. Following the truth was considered by the school as the right way for students to fulfill faithfully their obligations and to update them for a changing world. Meanwhile, this school provided a fine environment of studying for students based on the individual situation of every single student. Students were taught according to their own aptitude and no child was left behind. With a happy mood on studying, students had plenty of opportunities to discover and develop their latent talents. School 2 was trying to promote the moral, intellectual,

physical, social, aesthetic and spiritual development of students. The school encouraged students to be a positive person, to study hard, think independently, and achieve full development. In the future, they will become responsible citizens of our society.

School 2 hoped that its students possessed noble characteristics, enjoy learning new things, reach their full creative potential, and feign love of life. To achieve this, School 2 was continuing to create an all-round learning experience for all students. Students could achieve comprehensive development on their ability in five different dimensions. Their learning potential would be motivated to be lifelong learners who enjoy their learning and abundant life, and give back to the community and country.

The principal emphasized that:

The quality all-round education is important at this school. We have a strong emphasis on an all-round development of students, not only in the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic but also in the life domain. Meanwhile, I think that life education is important to culture students with correct attitude to life. Life situation is very important for students and the teachers. Although there is still no independent life education course, the concept and contents of life education is going to combining with other subjects and activities. We set themes for students, such as For a Healthy New Generation, Healthy Living for a Healthy Life, Our Love for China, Love in the School, and so on. Followed with these themes, students will learn the knowledge of life education gradually, such as love, respect, responsibility, gratitude, and so on. (S2P)

School 2 was a whole-day primary school with 18 classes in 2014-2015. Each grade

had three classes. According to the guideline of the Education Bureau of Hong Kong, School 2 set the following courses:

General subjects: Chinese (Putonghua for Grade 4 to Grade 6), English, Math, General Studies and Putonghua.

Art classes: Visual Art, Music, Physical Education.

Others: Computer, Books, Reading, Civics Education, and Topical Studies.

5.2 School-based Life Education Curriculum of School 2

5.2.1 All-round Education Curriculum. School 2 had no separated life education subject. It had developed a school based curriculum of all-round education. For all-round education, the curriculum content by grade level was listed on the following:

1. Learning outcomes for Grade 1:

Personal:

- Students understand their emotions and learn to protect themselves.

Social:

- Students are able to make friends using appropriate social skills. They are able to care for others and be considerate. They are willing to forgive others and to apologize.

Community:

- Students learn about the school, class rules and expectations on basic courtesy.
- They learn about their family and try to share the house work.
- They show respect for public properties and do not litter.

Life and beyond:

- Students are not afraid of difficulties and are willing to take up challenges.

2. Learning outcomes for Grade 2:

Personal:

- Students accept their own and others' physical appearance.
- When upset, they are able to talk to and seek help from adults at times of undesirable events.
- They know how to protect their body from violation by others.

Social:

- Students are able to make new friends, accept and include one another.
- Students acquire and implement basic communicative skills in daily life.
- Students are able to solve conflicts.

Community:

- Students develop listening skills and effective learning methods.
- Students understand their roles and responsibilities at home. They deepen their understanding of other family members.
- Students understand that nature and our daily lives are closely intertwined. They are encouraged to appreciate and protect Mother Nature.

Life and beyond:

- Students appreciate and cherish life.
- Students know their behavioral boundaries and are able to protect themselves and respect others.

- Students are confident, are not afraid of failure and are willing to take risks.

3. Learning outcomes for Grade 3:

Personal:

- Students understand basic emotions and are able to express themselves.
- Students can control themselves.
- Students understand the importance of punctuality.

Social:

- Students appreciate and accept individual differences.
- Students understand the importance of honesty and the consequences of lying.
- Students are able to show care to others and help those who are in need of help.

Community:

- Students are able to employ appropriate expressive skills to seek help.
- Students understand their role in school and develop a sense of belonging to the school.
- Students understand and are concerned with environmental pollution. They reflect on the relationship between their daily life and environmental protection.

Life and beyond:

- Students understand there are changes in different stages of growth.
- Students understand that they should be patient, flexible and adaptive when facing adversities.
- Students are able to take different perspectives and adopt a positive attitude.

4. Learning outcomes for Grade 4:

Personal:

- Students understand the source of emotions. They understand the reactions and consequences their emotions might bring.
- Students establish healthy life styles and habits.
- Students are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Social:

- Students understand different communication styles.
- Students know the steps to problem-solving.
- Students are able to refuse to let bullying happen.

Community:

- Students set their personal goals.
- Students are able to take actions to make our environment more sustainable.

Life and beyond:

- Students develop a positive thinking style.

5. Learning outcomes for Grade 5:

Personal:

- Students understand their emotions and are able to vent their emotions in appropriate methods.
- Students are prepared to cope with physical and psychological changes through the process of growth and development.

Social:

- Students can demonstrate the skills to live and work with others and to show

empathy.

- Students are able to choose appropriate methods to solve interpersonal conflicts.
- Students understand the power of a by-stander when it comes to bullying.

Community:

- Students are able to set and implement their goals.
- Students develop a stronger sense of civic responsibility.

Life and beyond:

- Students develop perseverance and do not give up easily.
- Students are able to face challenges in learning with a reflective and positive attitude.

6. Learning outcomes for Grade 6:

Personal:

- Students are able to understand the source of stress and use various ways to handle stress.
- Students are prepared to cope with physical and psychological changes through the process of growth and development.

Social:

- Students can demonstrate the skills to live and work with others and to show empathy.
- Students are able to handle peer pressure.
- Students can be the role model and help to stop bullying within the school community.

Community:

- Students are able to set goals for going to the secondary school and to prepare themselves for the transition.
- Students develop a stronger sense of serving others, the school and the communities.

Life and beyond:

- Students appreciate the potential and show gratitude in life.
- Students adopt an optimistic mindset and develop resilience in face of life challenges.

For each grade, the content of life education was divided into four sections: Personal, Social, Community, Life and Beyond. First of all, students needed to learn how to understand, accept, express, control themselves in the Personal section which was a precondition for the other three sections. For the Social section, students learnt how to contact and communicate with other individuals. Furthermore, they developed skills to integrate into the public and to respect nature. Life and Beyond taught students about mental health and to have a noble mind.

From the whole framework of all-round education in School 2, although its section names matched four aspects of holistic life education in Taiwan: the Transcendent, the Community, the Nature and the Self, its actual contents were somewhat different. As School 2 was not a religious school, it had no the concept of the Transcendent. Therefore, all spiritual education with a religious background were not suitable to this school. Its contents of Life and Beyond were the basic concept of a student's ideological and moral education. Without

the basis of religion, the depth and breadth of Life and Beyond was much less than Creator.

School 2 divided Humanity into two parts, Social and Community. Social is the relationship between people and other individuals. Community is the relationship between people and public.

Although School 2 also thought that the relationship between people and the nature is important, it classified it to Community as a very small part. Only Grades 2, 3 and 4 had some contents to appreciate and protect nature; to reduce environmental pollution; and to take actions to make our environment more sustainable. However, the deep-rooted relationship between people and the whole environment was not involved and discussed.

Finally, the content of Personal was similar to the Individual Self to teach students with humanism and spirit.

Moreover, the contents for different grades were designed to suit the Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional and Practical features of students at different ages. Gradually, the students could learn the related knowledge about life.

5.2.2 Interdisciplinary Curriculum (1st Semester). The principal explained the interdisciplinary curriculum of life education and other subjects and activities:

Our teaching strategy is to penetrate life education into textbooks and other subjects. It is not enough to teach overall life education to students by all-round education or even life education alone. We must penetrate the concept of life education to all subjects less or more. We need to try to explore and develop the meaning of life from a single paragraph or even from a mathematical problem. All

these have a subtle effect on students. I believe all students will achieve benefits if we persist. (S2P)

In the first semester of 2015/2016, life education elements were involved in some interdisciplinary courses. “Love, Respect and Responsibility” were the life education themes for Grades One, Two and Three, respectively.

In order to expand students’ scope and improve their own ability, School 2 had arranged a special activity for Grade 1 and 2 students to watch a play, concern for hearing handicap, which was sponsored by Audi charitable funds (see Figure 5.1). This play reminded students that they should care more about the hearing-impaired person. Moreover, it was important to reinforce the knowledge of hearing preservation.



Figure 5.1. Students were watching the play “concern for hearing handicap”.

Grade 2 students attended a seminar held by the Society for Abandoned Animals (SAA) to arouse their awareness on welfare of abandoned animals and the sanctity of life (see Figure 5.2). The motto of SAA is “Love Animal, Respect Life, No Killing or Abandoning”.

Grade 3 students visited the Central Police Station and knew about the jobs of police officers (see Figure 5.3). A student said:

We visited the Central Police Station. I almost saw policeman everyday on the street. They look very graceful. But I do not know what they really work. In the police station, the office told me their daily job. Now I know it is not an easy job to be a policeman. They have a heavy responsibility to keep all people safe. Sometimes they even are in danger of their life. Now I have much respect for them.

(S2S4)



Figure 5.2. Grade 2 students visited the Society for Abandoned Animals and learnt how to care about life.



Figure 5.3. Grade 3 students visited the Central Police Station and communicated with policeman.

For most students, responsibility was only an abstract notion. They did not understand its real meaning at all. By a vivid field teaching activity, students could learn the concrete meaning of responsibility. It was no longer an empty word. It was endowed with abundant connotations. Therefore, they understood the importance of responsibility. Meanwhile, they knew that they should respect persons who are responsible for your life.

All students participated enthusiastically in these activities and listened carefully. The students felt great harvest.

5.2.3 Interdisciplinary Curriculum (2nd Semester). For students of Grades 4, 5 and 6, there were also some life education activities related to “Love”, “Respect” and “Gratitude”. In order to expand their horizons and to enhance the learning effectiveness, Grade 4 students visited the Hong Kong Wetland Park to improve their care and protection of nature (see Figure 5.4).



Figure 5.4. Grade 4 students visited Hong Kong Wetland Park.

Students of Grades 5 and 6 watched an interactive play to teach them how to treat classmates with a proper attitude (see Figure 5.5). This play was held by the Hong Kong Equal Opportunities Commission which is the statutory body tasked to implement the

anti-discrimination ordinances in Hong Kong, namely the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance and the Race Discrimination Ordinance. Its vision is to create a pluralistic and inclusive society free of discrimination where there is no barrier to equal opportunities (www.eoc.org.hk). Grade 6 students visited the organic farm of Social Workers Across Borders (see Figure 5.6). They learnt that every single grain is the result of toil. They must treasure the food and feel thankful to agricultural workers.



Figure 5.5. Grades 5 and 6 students were watching a play held by the Hong Kong Equal Opportunities Commission.



Figure 5.6. Grade 6 students experienced the happiness and glory of labor in an organic farm of Social Workers Across Borders.

One student still remembered that:

Last year, I visited Hong Kong Wetland Park. I saw several kinds of frogs in the pool.

And there are more than ten kinds of birds. But I only saw six kinds of them. They are colorful and beautiful. There are also a lot of different flowers and plants. The Wetland park is a quiet place for all animals and birds. But the park is too small. I hope everywhere in Hong Kong is a park. At least, the Wetland Park cannot become smaller.

(S2S5)

After the students really touched nature, they can have a real feeling for the nature. This does not happen in the classroom only. Therefore, it is necessary for students to contact the nature, to feel the nature, to merge in the nature.

Table 5.1 *All-round education areas, activities and courses in School 2*

Area	All-round education	Activities and contents
Transcendent	Spiritual education	The meaning and value of life
Community	Social	Take care of the deformity; Equal opportunities play;
	Community	Seminars for the National Day; Visiting homes for the elderly; Visiting National education centre; Flag-raising ceremony
Nature	Community	Protect animal; Visiting Wetland Park; Working in the Green Garden
Self	Personal	Visiting Police Station; Anti-drug play; Day camp for
	Life and beyond	growing up; Swearing-in ceremony of discipline

School 2 is a non-religious school whose teaching contents do not include religion and

supernatural items. However, all-round education includes some contents of spiritual education which teaches students how to explore the meaning and value of life. But besides that, School 2 has various activities and contents for student to develop their ability of community, nature and self (see Table 5.1).

5.3 Life Education Related Teaching of School 2

Although life education was not listed as a separated course in this school, School 2 paid much attention on all-round education in recent years and is planning life education courses with the help of The Education University of Hong Kong. A teacher group of life education was founded in 2014-2015. Its aim is to help students to explore and recognize the meaning of life, and respect the value of life. In addition to the all-round education courses, the group organized some activities to guide students to love and to develop their unique way of life.

There are some intersections between all-round education and life education. Some topics, themes and activities of all-round education can be regarded as life education. Therefore, there is no clear dividing line between all-round education and life education. In other words, it was convenient for School 2 to join these two educations together. In addition to the all-round education courses, School 2 also designed some life education activities with special themes, such as “Respect”, “Survival in the sea”, “Teen bullying”, “Treasure the Food”, “Earth Hour”. “Eco-tour in Hong Kong Ocean Park”, etc.

When the principal talked about the teaching strategy, she said:

We digest and combine fully the teaching resources in real life and on the textbooks.

We design some teaching units which are interesting to most of the students. These units can arouse the interest of students and improve the quality and efficiency of teaching. Students are very willing to participate in class activities. Active participation is the premise and basis of creative study, which is an ability of independent study for the students. We also try to build a humane class environment. Students can feel the efforts and love from teachers. Teachers and students work together to build a happy classroom. (S2P)

1. Survival in the sea.

The objective of this activity was to make sure students understood the importance of listening to other people, mutual respect and cooperation. Students acted out some passengers on a boat which was wrecked. According to the different characters assigned to each student, they had to communicate with each other and work together to flip the boat (a piece of canvas) successfully (see Figure 5.7).



Figure 5.7. Grade 4 students experienced the importance of mutual respect and cooperation.

It is important to cultivate children's independent personality. However, if they are always self-centered, it is a barrier for them to work with other people. In a team or a group, each member must have a clear role. Someone plays the leader, while others are the actors. To achieve a set goal, all members must obey the same rules during the action. Otherwise, the task will be delayed or even fail.

For this activity, the first team immediately started the action without any plans. Every student put forward an idea for this task and tried to persuade other classmates to follow his/her suggestion. It took them a long time to reach an agreement. Finally, this team failed in this activity within the set time. The second team learnt from the first team. They appointed a leader and created an action plan. During this activity, all team members followed the orders of the leader. They completed the task smoothly and quickly.

After this activity, they shared their feelings after the activity. One P4 student in the first team said:

For this task, I have an action plan. And I think my plan is the best one. Other member should have the same idea as mine. Or they must listen to me. Because they did not listen to me, our task failed. (S2S1)

The leader of the second team said:

We saw the problem of the first team. We have some time to make a plan because we are the second team. Maybe the plan is not the best one. But it works. I am the leader. Every member follows my order. Each member plays his role and does his job. So we perform much better than the first team. (S2S2)

For the first student, he thought that he was always right. And the other person must

listen to him. He blamed their failure on others. Unfortunately, other members in the same team had the same thought. Everybody believed he was right and did not want to accept other's suggestions. For the solo task, there was no problem. But for a multiplayer mission, every person must obey the same rules to work with others. Otherwise, they would always lose. The second student was good at observing, and learning from the mistakes of others. Maybe this was the main reason why he was the leader of the second team. The other important thing was that all members obeyed the commands. However, this did not mean they did not have their own personality. Rather, they knew how to retain and put overall interest first, and to balance the relationship between people and social (Humanity).

The first student added:

The second team did very well. They worked together. Now I know our problems. If we have a second chance, I believe we can do better than the second team. (S2S1)

It was good for the first student to learn something from their failure and other fine examples. This was also the goal of education. We do not expect every student to perform perfectly but we do expect they can learn something. They can try and fail again and again within the classroom to avoid failure in the future.

2. Teen bullying

A disturbing new twist on bullying is the advent of internet bullying (cyberbullying). The objective of this activity was to tell students how to identify and prevent cyberbullying. Some stickers were pasted on each student. They needed to paste a sticker on other students and protect their own stickers at the same time (see Figure 5.8).

Online virtual society's influence on real society is becoming bigger and bigger. It has

easy appeal for the bully because it does not involve face-to-face contact and it can be done at any time. It can occur on social networking sites and in email and text messages. For example, some teens who are overweight get teased, and bullying can be a real problem. In 2010, 147 children in Japan killed themselves. School bullying is believed to be the main cause. Cyber-bullying is often committed by a student's friends and the student is also sometimes the bully, so that has fundamentally altered how we perceive the risks.



Figure 5.8. Grade 5 students joined the activity on the importance of respect and peace.

Actually, it is difficult to distinguish bullying from normal playing because there is no clear separation between them. However, if playing is not guided correctly, it will be deteriorated into bullying. It is the parents' and teachers' responsibility to find what is happening because many students are reluctant to report being bullied. More than half of the teens have experienced abuse through social and digital media (Modecki, 2014).

The goal of this activity was to teach the students that they should know how to protect their own information. More important, they should learn to respect the privacy of others.

One P5 student said:

I write my name, address, email, mobile number and other information on several

stickers and paste on my back. According to the rules of the game, I need to paste some bad stickers on others, and protect my own stickers. However, I found it is impossible. When I try to paste sticker on other people, I leave a big chance to others to paste bad stickers on me. The best way to protect myself is keeping peace with others. I do not want attack you. And you do not attack me. (S2S2)

Although the game rule required the student to paste more bad stickers on others, the student understood that it was not a good way to keep peace with others. The best way to protect oneself was to respect others. Otherwise, he would be attacked at the same time. Contrary thinking is a good method to improve the effect of classroom teaching.

In addition, there were also several other activities. In order to learn how precious food is and to reduce leftovers, students of every grade were asked to take part in some activities on “Treasure the food”. School 2 pasted the post of “Treasure the food” in every classroom. Teachers shared some messages with students on the morning meeting and taught students some good methods to treasure the food. Students made their promises to treasure the food. In order to address concerns about climate change, all lights in School 2 classrooms were turned off for an hour during the noon break in response to Earth Hour. School 2 inspired and mobilized students to use their power to change climate change and to build a sustainable life. One P5 student said:

I learnt some knowledge about environmental preservation. I took part in Earth Hour last year, and know we need to save electricity to reduce the carbon dioxide emission. We turned off all lights in the classroom at noon. Furthermore, I turned off all lights in my home at that night for another hour. In my daily life, I try to use

few plastic bags when I buy things in the market. At one hand, I can save 0.5 HKD for each plastic bag. At the other hand, I can really feel involved in eco-friendly efforts as well. I shorten my shower time to less than five minutes to save water.

(S2S3)

For life education, the final dimension should lie in its Practical dimension. Students need to practice what they learn in their daily life. This student extended the idea of Earth Hour to other aspects of life.

One student expressed his thought about “Anti-drug”:

I have no idea about drug abuse of teenagers before life education related course. In a course, the teacher read news about “Taking drug” issues among Hong Kong students. And she showed us some pictures and videos. I am shocked by the hazards of drug abuse. There are also some noncommercial ads on TV telling us to say “NO” to drugs. Now I know how to refuse drugs. (S2S3)

Using multi-media to show some pictures and videos to students, the visual impact would have been massive. The students were really impressed by these materials. Meanwhile, the social resources were also connected to the course content. Students obtained twice the result with half the effort.

5.4 The Evaluation of Life Education of School 2

5.4.1 The Evaluation of Implementation of Life Education. When the principal was asked about the importance of life education, she stated that:

In 2014, I set up a life education group and appointed several teachers to work on life education with civil education teachers. We emphasize the experience teaching of life education. We encouraged students to take part in various activities related to life education. Meanwhile, life education was also immersed into other subjects, such as Chinese, Mathematics, Physical Education, Civil Education, Holistic Education, and so on. (S2P)

Although life education was still not set an independent course, the all-round education in School 2 played the same role. The four main areas in the textbook of all-round education matched the four relationships of life education.

When we talked about teaching difficulties on life education, she mentioned that:

Because we do not have suitable textbooks for life education, the teachers have to design the courses and working sheets. They need to collect teaching information and materials. Especially, when we need different courses to meet the students' needs, the teachers must prepare lots of teaching materials to encourage the students to study. It is a heavy burden to all teachers. Meanwhile, it is also difficult to evaluate the teaching result of life education. There is no a quantitative way to show what they learn. Now, we use 50% class performance and 50% working sheet to grade students. (S2P)

I am very appreciated that all teachers in this school are working hard on life education related coursed and activities. They designed a lot of units, activities and working sheets for different grades students. They spend innumerable hours planning lessons, grading papers, and encouraging students. (S2P)

We took part in the life education project hold by The Hong Kong Institute of Education. At the same time, we also participated life education workshop “We Care” hold by Hong Kong Education Bureau. With their help, our level of life education teaching is increasing. (S2P)

Under the leadership of the principal, School 2 was working hard on life education. Although there was no independent life education course, it had some life education related units and activities. The principal and teachers spent much time to improve the life education level in this school.

The school also plans to improve the life situation of teachers by participating life education workshops for the teachers with the help of The Education University of Hong Kong and Education Bureau. Thus, it can be seen that School 2 put an emphasis on life education of the students as well as the teachers. A group of teachers who joined the life education enrichment plan were required to attend the life education workshop each semester.

I interviewed two teachers individually. A teacher who joined the life education group emphasized that:

I think it is necessary to introduce life education courses because the basic function of a school is teaching and educating. Nowadays, family education is too weak. Some of the families failed to provide adequate support for students and that some students from single-parent families tend to have potential discipline problems. Students get little life education from their parents. Therefore, schools play more important roles on life education. (S2T1)

When we talked about the advantages and disadvantages of moral education, a teacher thought:

Moral education is carried out pretty good in this school. Most of students do well. However, moral education is a too wide concept for us. It is impossible to teach all aspects of life to students by moral education alone. It is less likely to replace life education by moral education. Therefore, I suggest that life education should be set as an independent course in the future. (S2T2)

The first teacher said:

Life education should be included in the school curriculum, as it is essential and very important to the teachers and students. Although the quality holistic education lessons covered the four domains of life education, life education should be included as a core subject in the curriculum. The school used to have quality holistic education lessons in all grades. Since the academic year 2014, the teaching of life education lessons have been added the teaching of quality holistic education lesson in Grade five and six. (S2T1)

But I am not happy about the way that life education is being taught to the Grade five and six students. We should learn the teaching experience from some other schools with life education. It may avoid detours and shorten the time of trial and error. The school, family, society and government should be responsible for life health and that is also the reason why the school should add life education lessons to the curriculum. (S2T1)

The second teacher said that:

Most of students are active participators in the life education courses and activities.

I am pleased to say that students learn how to respect other people, to be filial piety, and to care about others. However, some students may not want us to use teaching time to tell them stimulating and life changing stories, as they expect teachers to go on with the academic lesson. Thus students are more concerned about their academic results but do not realize the importance of understanding the meaning of life, how to relate with others and other important issues that will improve their life situation. (S2T2)

When they were asked how to improve or enhance life education in their school, the second teacher said that:

Because we have no textbooks for life education, we have to prepare teaching materials and worksheet by ourselves. We need to collect and choose lots of information. We bought several kinds of life education textbooks which were published by different publishing houses for reference. Generally, it takes several hours for one course. You have to know that I also have to teach other subjects and I am quite busy every day. Our principal supports life education. And I suggest that she needs to employ some professional life education teachers. (S2T2)

Although we try our best to make life education classes lively and interesting, I have to say that it is difficult to design a course to interest all students. Moreover, it is hard to evaluate the teaching effect. What we can do it try to design more interesting life education activities to attract students. (S2T1)

Although moral education and other subjects involved the concept of life education in these lessons, the principal and teachers thought it was not enough to fully implement life education. In these courses, only the Intellectual dimension was mentioned among these course content, and did not mention the Emotional, Volitional and Practical dimensions. The teaching effectiveness for life education was limited. Therefore, it was necessary to set life education as an independent course. But because they had not much experience about life education teaching, life education teachers training and course construction were two key issues in this school. Fortunately, this school is moving forward.

5.4.2 Students' Understanding of Life Education. I interviewed six P5 students in a focus group. When they were asked about their all-round education, a student expressed that:

We have two all-round education lessons every week. Our school has various activities and responsibilities for us to learn about communal, transcendental, environmental and personal domains of life education. Various activities include Survival in the sea, Teen bullying, camp, club activities, and so on. (S2S2)

Another student added:

And we also have a life education related lesson every week. I feel these lessons are very interesting. Most of my classmates like life education related units and activities. I feel the class time going very quickly, not like other subjects. Especially, when there are some activities in the classroom, every student wants to take part in them. For example, "Survival in the sea" needed nine students. But more than 18 classmates want to take part in this activity. We had to do it twice. In this activity, I

learnt that we must work together in some special situations. If we only think about ourselves, everyone will suffer. (S2S6)

All students had knowledge and experiences of life education. They took part in several different activities and learnt something. Some of these activities impressed them. More importantly, some students could related what they had learnt to their daily life.

5.5 Summary

School 2 hoped that its students possess noble characteristics, enjoy learning new things, reach their full creative potential, and feign love of life. To achieve this, School 2 continued to create an all-round learning experience for all students. Students can achieve comprehensive development on their ability on five different dimensions: moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic. It is hoped that they will be motivated to be lifelong learners who enjoy their learning and abundant life, and give back to the community and country.

School 2 had no separated life education subject. It developed a school based curriculum of all-round education. For all-round education, the curriculum content by grade level included four sections: Personal, Social, Community, and Life and Beyond. As School 2 was not a religious school, it had no concept of the Transcendent. Therefore, all spiritual education with a religious background was not suitable to this school. Its contents of Life and Beyond were the basic concept of a student's ideological and moral education. Without the basis of religion, the depth and breadth of Life and Beyond was much less than the Creator. However, all-round education included some content of spiritual education which taught students how

to explore the meaning and value of life. In addition, School 2 had various activities and contents for students to develop their ability of the community, nature and self.

Although there was no life education as an independent course in this school, it set up a group to carry out life education. Students in School 2 had knowledge and experiences of life education. They took part in several different activities and learnt something. Some of these activities impressed them. More importantly, some students could relate what they learnt in their daily life.

With the strong support of the principal, some teachers took part in the life education project and workshops to increase their level of life education. The teachers spent enormous amounts of energy in preparing life education teaching materials. Most of the students liked life education and enjoyed the life education activities. Students learnt the knowledge of life education gradually, such as love, respect, responsibility, gratitude, etc.

Chapter 6

School 3-Jiangsu Primary School Implementing Life Education

6.1 General Situation of School 3

School 3 had listed the first batch of Experimental Primary Schools which had changed its teaching ideas; made teaching reforms and innovations; built a kind of political teaching emphasizing ability and fulfilling quality education. It was located in Xuanwu district, Nanjing City in Jiangsu Province. Its beautiful campus covered ten thousand square meters with a long history. Equipped with advanced teaching and recreational facilities, this school was named as one of the “National Modern Education Technology Experimental School”, “National Technology Educational Base”, “Provincial-level Model School” and “Civilized unit” of Jiangsu. It was famous for its unique curriculum settlement, farsighted reforms, courage to innovate, solid teaching methods, good school spirit, and high-quality teaching ability.

It had 36 classes and 1,790 students. For the total 96 teaching staff in this school, two of them were “the super teacher”; six teachers were senior teachers of Nanjing City; and seven teachers were academic leaders. Twelve teachers had the title of Outstanding Young Teachers. Fifty-seven and 25 teachers were senior teachers and first-level teachers of primary school, respectively. More than 95% teachers had a college degree or above. Sixty-seven teachers were under 35 years old equating to about 72% of all teachers.

There were four main teaching buildings in School 3 which were linked by some corridors. Besides 36 normal classrooms, there were also music classrooms, art classrooms,

reading rooms, lecture theatre, library, labs, etc. The Children Academy of Sciences and Children Reading Rooms were two characteristic teaching activities in this school and famous around China.

According to its school performance and educational quality, School 3 had received lots of honorary titles, such as: National Red Flag Brigade, Advanced Hygienic Unit, The Provincial Model School, The Excellent Parents' School, etc. In 2002, Zhili Chen, the former Minister of Education, visited this school and said it was one of the best primary schools in China. In 2004, Changchun Li, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, visited and evaluated this school as the model of a successful quality education.

Motto: To pursue the truth

Ethos: Innovation, Honesty, Vitality, Happiness

Teaching style: Unity, devotion, practical, creativity

Study style: study hard, forethought, lively, healthy

Educational goals: Guided by science, to found a best experimental primary school.

Teaching goals: to implement the direction of quality education and to cultivate talents for the future.

School spirit: rising

Slogan of Communist Party Member: Look at me and follow me. My position is the model.

Teachers spirits: love and dedication, unity and cooperation, Nonstop advance and innovation, looking for the truth and be practical.

The principal of School 3, Mr. Shuangjin Sun, had the original understanding and the founder of “Emotion and Intelligence Education (EIE)” (情智教育) of primary students. He built his own style and system throughout the whole school. All the columns on the website of this school were related to EIE, such as the Center of EIE, Theory of EIE, Management of EIE, Classroom of EIE, Activity of EIE, EIE online, etc. Actually, School 3 did not list life education as an independent subject although the principal was the chief editor of “Life education before twelve years old”. (Figure 6.1) The content of life education was attached on other subjects of EIE.

When Sun was asked the role of life education in this school, he thought life education was important to students. He organized a writing team of life education textbooks a few years ago. Meanwhile, some life education experts at Nanjing Normal University were invited as instructors to this school to support the writing of the life education textbooks. Now, “Life education before twelve years old” was published in 2014. The teachers in this school learnt a lot of theories and knowledge on life education while writing the textbooks. Now they are life education experts too.

Even then, life education cannot be set as a separated course according to the direction of the nation’s educational departments. Now, there are two lectures of moral education every week. The textbook of moral education is “Pinde Yu Shenghuo” (Moral and life) for Grade 1 and 2, “Pinde Yu Shehui” (Moral and society) for Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6, respectively. Teachers were able to choose some life education contents during moral education class. There was also a form-master period every week. The form teacher could use “Life education before twelve years old” as a reference book.

Although “Life education before twelve years old” could not be used as textbooks for students, the principal and teachers in School 3 had rich knowledge of life education. Hence, School 3 could represent the high level of life education in Jiangsu. Prof. Jianjun Feng, Nanjing Normal University, recommended this school and Mr. Shuangjin Sun to me. So School 3 was chosen as one subject in the southern regions of Jiangsu.



Figure 6.1. Life education before twelve years old. It was edited by Shuangjin Sun and published by Nanjing Normal University Press in 2014.

6.2 Life Education Curriculum of School 3

There were several sections of life education curriculum in School 3, including moral education, form-master periods, and other life education activities.

6.2.1 Moral Education. According to the present educational policy in China, School 3 had no permission and authorization to set a separated life education subject. However, it had realized the importance of life education and spent considerable human, material and

financial resources to edit and publish life education textbooks. Like other primary schools in Jiangsu, it had two moral classes every week, 40 minutes for each class. In these classes, “Pinde Yu Shenghuo” (Moral and life) and “Pinde Yu Shehui” (Moral and society) were being used as the textbooks. Unlike other primary schools, the moral teachers in School 3 could use “Life education before twelve years old” as supporting materials. Moreover, the class teachers could choose part of the contents of life education at the class meeting.

There were twelve textbooks for moral education. Their overall framework is reviewed in the next chapter because School 4 also used these textbooks for moral education. In this chapter, the content of “Pinde Yu Shehui” for the first semester of Grade 5 is analyzed.

There are four units in this book:

- 1) Who am I?
- 2) Learning to get on well with others;
- 3) Ownership of my class;
- 4) Chinese descendant.

In the first unit, students learn to like themselves. People who learn to value themselves are more likely to have self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth. Students need to list their own advantages by themselves. And then they can ask their teacher, parents, grandparents, classmates, and neighbors about their merits. Every student should be proud of himself, because everyone has advantages. However, no one can be perfect. Not surprisingly, everyone has shortcomings of one kind or another. It is valuable to know oneself. Students can list their own shortcomings or something not good enough. Meanwhile, they should differentiate which one is changeable and which one is unchangeable. For example, myopia

and being short are unchangeable characteristics. For some other changeable disadvantages, they can face up to the defects in their own character and try to modify them diligently.

While they know their strengths and weakness, students can believe that they will be better and better in the future. Meanwhile, they can learn advantages from other classmates. They can encourage each other and achieve common progress.

For Grade 5 students, they needed to learn how to think independently. They should dare to assert themselves and not follow others blindly. Most of the students had discipline troubles at this age, such as eating snacks in class, assignment procrastination, internet addiction, TV addictive, sleeping in, etc. In order to improve their emotions and actions, students must do some training:

- 1) Set some better performance goals and development objectives;
- 2) Command yourself to complete these objectives;
- 3) Ask parents, teachers and classmates to be your supervisors;
- 4) Record your behavior every day;
- 5) Inspect your performance periodically;
- 6) Reward yourself when you make progress.

Sometimes, students have to make their own decisions in their daily life. At the same time, parents need to let their children go. Students need their own space and privacy and they have to be able to develop their own talents, skills and abilities. Student can plan a small activity, such as an outing at the weekend. Students must prepare every detail including the date and time, food, route, transportation, etc. Maybe there are some oversights and even the activity fails, but children can learn from this kind of training.

In the second unit, students learnt to give a compliment and to get along with other people. Everybody likes a compliment. When a person hears a compliment, he feels energized and happy. While we receive compliments, we had better find traits, skills or actions to complement our classmates, parents, teachers, and other people. Advantages from classmates, praising him/her with genuine compliment include:

- 1) “Your learning methods of math are very good. They are eye-opening to me”.
- 2) “How beautiful you sing today! I want to listen again”.
- 3) “You play football very well”.

If you give a good compliment, the recipient will think you are smarter and an easy-going person. All people are willing to make friends with you.

In a large class, there are inevitably some classmates who cannot get on well with others. The exact reason why a person does not like this classmate could be considered and whether or not the reason is tenable. Trying to consider advantages of the other person and maybe a friendship will develop.

Peer relationships are the interactions between the people whose age or mental age is almost the same, which play a more important role in adolescents’ social development than adult play. Mutual understanding and respect are the foundation of long lasting friendships. A friend is a person with whom another person may be sincere. True feelings may only if a true heart has been given.

At Grade Five, the differences between boys and girls becomes more apparent, such as voice, energy, etc. Therefore, boys and girls have their own strengths and weaknesses. In addition to biological differences, their interests or hobbies, personality traits, ways of

thinking, and modes of behavior are also different. These differences cannot simply be judged as good or bad. Actually, every boy and girl are all good. Boys and girls should appreciate and learn from each other and achieve common development.

There are various rules in the social world. Although we encourage students to develop themselves freely, they also need to realize the importance of rule abiding. There are a lot of accidents and samples which are caused by rule violations. Therefore, students should consciously follow and act by the rules.

Every class is a small society. Students should feel happy to be a member of it. Meanwhile, they also need to contribute their own part for the growth of class-collection. They can also learn how to care about others, and how to cooperate with others for a collective life. Moreover, everyone has his own right in the class, such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to elect class leaders, etc. However, students also need to know to undertake the rights correctly. They cannot invade the rights of others.

In the fourth unit, it is a matter of national pride. Great China has a long history with a splendid culture. Chinese people have made outstanding contributions to the progress of mankind civilization. Wisdom of the ancients always served civilization well. In terms of material civilization, papermaking, gunpowder, printing and the compass, the four great inventions were accomplished by Chinese people, are believed to have changed the course of world history. Chinese culture was created by Han and other minority nationalities. It has a long history of five thousand years. China is a country with a history of more than 2,000 years old civilization, has also been a lot of traditional culture, such as: elegant folk craft, ancient ethnic arts, unique customs, etc. China also has many well-known places of interest,

famous mountains and great rivers, etc. As a Chinese person, students should be very proud of these.

Table 6.1 *Moral education areas, activities and courses in School 3*

Area	Moral education	Activities and contents
Transcendent	The meaning of life; The value of life	Hero stories; Samples; Idealism
Community	Learning to get on well with others; Ownership of my class; Chinese descendant.	Admire and respect other people; Boys and girl are different and are all good; follow rules; play a right part in a class; Great ancient China; places of great interest in China.
Nature	Chinese descendant	Protect the mother river, environmental knowledge
Self	Who am I?	Appreciate oneself; believe oneself; face weakness; learn from others; think independently; self-management.

In this textbook, some hero stories tell students what is the meaning and value of life. It should be part of the Transcendent. The content of the first unit is about the Self. Students should appreciate themselves and take a proper attitude to their advantages and disadvantages. The content of the second unit is about the Community which teaches students how to get along with other individuals. The third unit is also about the Community which tells students how to play a right part in class. Although a small part of the fourth unit is about protecting

the mother river, most of the content is about National Education which should be the Community (see Table 6.1).

6.2.2 Framework of Life Education before Twelve Years Old. In addition to moral education, School 3 also had a whole set of life education textbooks. The framework of life education in School 3 included:

Grade One: Recognize life; Safety; Explore life; Good manners.

Grade Two: Recognize life; Safety; Explore life; Good manners.

Grade Three: Recognize life; Safety; Explore life; Social communication.

Grade Four: Recognize life; Safety; Explore life; Social communication.

Grade Five: Recognize life; Safety; Explore life; Pursue life.

Grade Six: Recognize life; Safety; Explore life; Pursue life.

The framework included two key factors of life education, recognizing life and exploring life, throughout all grades. Step-by-step, students learnt how to recognize life, take preventive measures, find myself, pursue future life, good manners and social communications.

Its table of content is attached in Appendix 2.

6.2.3 Contents of Life Education before Twelve Years Old in This Book Series.

Shuangjin Sun, the principal of School 3, edited “Life education before twelve years old” which was published by Nanjing Normal University Publishing House. It includes six books for each grade from Grade one to Grade six with different sections:

1. Recognize Life

This section is divided into three parts for each grade: plants, animals and human body.

For Grade One students, this session teaches them basic life phenomenon. The children are told that plants and fruits all have their life. Therefore, they should take care of the plants, cherish every tree and every blade of grass. No climbing trees, snapping branches, plucking flowers, gathering fruits, digging roots, and treading on the grass.

Some little insects also have their own world and life. Children are guided to watch the actions of ants, to feel their life, to learn their good attributes, such as being orderly and responsible. The kids have fun learning about different insects such as bees, beetles, horseflies, ants, butterflies, ladybugs and spiders.

For Grade Two, some vegetables on the family's dinner table are introduced to the students. They should identify various fruits and vegetables and learn their nutritional value. Cultivate them with good habits about choice of food and not to be too selective.

A famous and beloved story for Chinese people is called “The Little Tadpoles In Search of Their Mother” and is told to children with some pictures of a tadpole and frog. In this story, a school of tadpoles are born with a different looks from their mother. After these tadpoles failed several times, they eventually find their real mother: frog. Students learn to be self-motivated, self respecting, confident people who are not afraid of failure. It is also a great story to teach about life cycles.

For Grade Three, students are asked to walk around the campus and to find and record all kinds of plants. They need to know the name and characters of trees and flowers. In the small garden, the soil is turned over in the planting area with a garden shovel. A living underground world is shown before the students. Using the earthworm as a sample, the students need to know there are some useful animals underground. On the ground, the

earthworm is food for other animals. Under the ground, it makes rich soil for fields and gardens. Without earthworms, the farmland would not be as productive, even using the most powerful fertilizers.

From these activities, students can realize that there are lots of living things around us. We are not alone on the earth and we cannot survive without other animals and plants.

For Grade Four, they are asked to plant some simple plants in their own home. Before students perform the actual operation, they need to learn some basic knowledge of planting, such as water, sunlight and air. Then, some plant seeds are delivered to each student with a record book. A 7-day planting plan is listed on the record book, and students are required to treat the seeds and plants by following the instructions. Meanwhile, they also need to record the growing phenomenon every day. After a week, all students need to bring their plant to the school no matter what the situation of their plants. Generally, there are only about half of the students can plant very well. And about a quarter of the plants are dead. In particular, no students are criticized by the situation of their plants. The purpose of this activity is to let students experience life and even death. They should know it is a responsibility for them to take care of a little life. And it is not an easy task.

Students are also told how to treat animals correctly, especially some small animals. Animals are friends of human beings and we need to protect them. We cannot abuse animals. When we love and protect animals, our compassion will develop naturally.

For Grade Five, students are told some life stories in harsh conditions. The surroundings a child grows up in may have an effect on his development. They should know that a tree planted in bad conditions will not flourish, just as a child brought up in a bad

environment will not flourish. Students also learn the variety of different species.

For Grade Six students, they have some ability to discriminate what is right or what is wrong along with their growing age. Some controversial topics are discussed with them, such as genetically modified foods and alien life.

To recognize their own body step-by-step from Grades One to Six, six topics are talked with students gradually.

- 1) Where did I come from?
- 2) The functions of eyes, nose, mouth, and ears;
- 3) The organs inside their body;
- 4) The relationship with other people;
- 5) How to use the brain in a healthy way;
- 6) The change of the body.

In this section, about two-thirds of the content are the basic knowledge of plants, animals. The relationship between human beings and nature are slightly discussed which belongs to the scope of the Nature. A third of the content involves the basic knowledge of the human body which should be the scope of the Self. However, this part is only some simple knowledge about the functions of the human body.

2. Safety and Security Issues

This section is also divided into three parts: in home, in campus and out of home. Students learn some basic knowledge of safety and security.

For Grade One students, they need to know that the kitchen is not a place for playing. There is content related to fire, town gas, electricity, sharp and hot. They are dangerous for

children at their age.

On their way to school, adult supervision is necessary to make sure of the students' safety and security. At the same time, students are asked to cooperate with their companions. Once they get lost from their family, they need to know how and who they should ask for help.

There are several incidents that could happen to children who stay at home alone. For Grade Two, they need to learn how to face similar situations. They cannot, for example, open doors when strangers knock.

Most accidental injuries of students happen during recess. So students must improve their safety consciousness in school. They must remember to keep right and not push when students go upstairs and downstairs; and not to chase or fight during the break. And safety education should be carried out according to the sex and age characteristics of students, so as to improve their cognition.

Every year, up to 3 million children survive a drowning incident. Drowning is the second most common cause of death from injuries among kids under the age of 14. Children who live near open water sources, such as ditches, ponds, irrigation channels or pools are especially at risk. A lapse in adult supervision, even for a very short period of time, is a major contributing factor to children drowning. Although parents' lack of drowning prevention, knowledge and insufficient care to their children are the major reason, children are also warned not to access water without adult supervision.

For Grade Three, it is time to teach students safety of electricity. Electricity in modern society has played a significant role, and has become an essential part of life. With the

increasing number of households, the threats of electric shock and electric fire accidents have become more and more serious.

In schools, physical security issues have become the focus of social attention, and it directly affects the quality of physical education. The existence of physical education class security management promotes teachers, researchers and stakeholders to pay more attention and research security management of physical education classes in time. In fact, it really is not enough to promote students' psychological healthiness only through two physical education lessons each week, whether from time or pertinency. It is a pretty hard issue for all schools in China to balance the safety and physical situation of students.

At present, world technology is unable to completely eliminate elevator faults. When a lift breaks down and students are trapped inside, they need to know the procedure to deal with this situation: calm down, stay away from someone who fell down, avoid falls and stay against a wall.

The dog is the best friend of humans. More and more dogs are raised as pets. Although they are good-natured, high-spirited, and intelligent most of their time, some dogs bite occasionally. For Grade Three students, they are asked not to tease dogs - even friendly ones. They will avoid being bitten by keeping their fingers and face away from their mouths. Once a person is bitten by an animal suspected to have rabies, vaccines must be administered for prevention.

Some students like playing tricks on their classmates in school which causes difficulty for them. They are encouraged to say “no” to any mischief, especially some with bad will.

In recent years, with the development of the network, that is why it is important to be

aware of the possible pitfalls that come with networking online. Once we fall into the 'traps' of the net games, we will hardly pick ourselves up. Meanwhile, in China, “Internet Addiction Disorder” has already become a comparatively serious problem of the mental health affecting college students because of incorrect internet use. Schools should pay attention to its influence on students, provide a positive guide and help students to use internet in a proper way.

Because of the social reality, the safety of students is paid much attention by families, schools and the whole society. Therefore, safety and security issues are upgraded to a high level. Basically, these issues are the relationships between people and the social (Community). However, students can only learn some methods to protect themselves. But they do not fully understand the reason which leads to this situation.

3. Explore Life

From Grade One to Six, the first part of this section is to help kids develop self-confidence.

- Grade One: Do your best
- Grade Two: Make progress everyday
- Grade Three: Believe yourself
- Grade Four: I am brave
- Grade Five: My different aspects
- Grade Six: I can do it.

The second part focuses on mood management.

- Grade One: Control your emotions

- Grade Two: Identify faces with different feeling
- Grade Three: Failure isn't fearful
- Grade Four: I became clever
- Grade Five: Look at failure from another angle
- Grade Six: Adapt to the environment.

The third parts help students to develop their intelligence.

- Grade One: Develop your imagination
- Grade Two: Learn exercises which are benefit for their intelligence
- Grade Three: Pay attention to what you are doing
- Grade Four: Tend to have a creative streak
- Grade Five: Everyone is the best designer
- Grade Six: Relax when you feel nervous.

This section belongs to the Self.

4. Social Communication

This section has three stages. The first stage is “Everyday Manners” for Grades One and Two students. The second stage is some norms for human behavior for Grades Three and Four. The third stage is to pursue the meaning of life for Grades Five and Six.

“Everyday Manners” teaches students that they have to be polite. When they talk to their teachers and elders, they should use polite and formal languages. They should conduct themselves properly and have good manners. They can treat people and handle things in a correct way. Being polite also means smiling to strangers you meet in the elevator, on the street, in the supermarket or mall.

During the second stage, some moral limits should be built into their mind no matter how complex the society is. They must be an honest person even they cannot tell the truth at some time. We hope every child has a happy life. Although they will have a different life, we need to teach them the key to find their own happiness. They should have a positive attitude to face any difficulties and even anything unfair.

For the third stage, some topics about the meaning of life are discussed with students. Students are asked to collect information and give their own opinion on these topics.

- 1) How about the future?
- 2) What is the happiness?
- 3) Is money the most important?
- 4) What is beauty and ugliness?
- 5) Is freedom useful or not?
- 6) What is the result without death?

In this section, the first and second parts are about personal cultivation and good behavior. Because they are related to the relationship between students and other people, these parts belong to Community. For the third part, the meaning of life is discussed which is the scope of the Self. However, these topics also involve human being emotions and spirit. So it can also be classified as the Transcendent.

It is generally known that religious content is not included in the primary schools in Mainland China. Therefore, the concept of the Transcendent in religion and other supernatural ideas and things cannot be mentioned to primary students (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 *Life education areas, activities and courses in School 3*

Area	Life education before twelve years old	Activities and contents
Transcendent	Pursue life	No religious activities in School 3. Topics on Freedom, Death, Future, Happiness, Beauty and ugliness
Community	Social Communication	Everyday Manners; Norms for human behavior;
	Safety and Security	Writing safety topics; Visiting a fire station;
	Pursue life	Visiting the city traffic control center; Knowledge of safe-defense; Obey traffic regulations and lights; Gratitude education
Nature	Recognize Life	Basic knowledge of plants, animals
Self	Social Communication	Pursue the meaning of life; Basic knowledge of
	Explore Life	human body
	Good manners	
	Pursue life	

Although there were no religious topics in School 3, there were a few topics about future, freedom, happiness, beauty and ugliness for Grades 5 and 6 students. These topics were related to the spiritual aspect of students. Even, the death topic was also mentioned a little bit for Grade 6 students. Therefore, the “Pursue life” is classified to “Transcendent”. However, without religious background, the thinking of pursuing life is limited.

6.3 Life Education Teaching of School 3

6.3.1 Life Education Penetration Teaching. School 3 had two Moral education (Pinde Yu Shenghuo and Pinde Yu Shehui) lessons each week. It was the most suitable subject to connect to life education.

One teacher said:

Because of the assignment of Education Department, we must use moral education and cannot list life education into our schedule. Moreover, students have to take part in the written examination of moral education which is organized by educational department. There also are examinations on moral education in school at the end of every semester. “Life education before twelve years old” can only be used as supplementary teaching and learning materials to moral education. (S3T2)

In the moral education lesson, the students were asked to play some roles for better understanding. For example, students played their own parents to take care of each other when they were in “Parents’ love”. They had to meet every requirement which maybe was unreasonable. And they could not say “No” and must be patient. After the play, they felt that it was not easy to be parents. Some students thought they needed to change their attitude to their parents at home. They should show filial affection towards their parents.

In the “Busy people” lesson, students were guided to complete relative moral education homework, such as serving tea to their parents, cleaning up the home, and visiting lonely elderly people in nursing homes. These activities enabled students to acquire life experience in practice.

In the “Glory your hometown” lesson, the students were asked to investigate bad habits

in their own community. After they collected the information, they wrote an investigation report. In addition, the students were planting trees and flowers, raising animals; they knew that contentment is a treasure, to cherish their hard-earned efforts and treasure all their lives as being valuable. The children were brought to the real life, to observe, to feel, to experience, analyze, and reflect on life, so that their moral sense can be improved in practice.

Some teachers in School 2 had rich knowledge and experience of life education. They penetrated the concept of life education into their own subjects.

For example, in “Good health habits” Chinese lesson, by comparing two children with good and bad health habits, students understood what are good health habits, such as frequent hand washing, covering their mouth when coughing and sneezing and minimizing contact with pets while they are ill. Students learnt the relationship between health and life. Good health habits can protect our health. Some similar lessons included “Traffic security education”, “Elimination hidden dangers”, “Resistance infection”, etc.

With the great improvement of the technological facilities and teaching environment, some classrooms in School 3 had multimedia teaching methods.

For example, in the “Talk about you” lesson, students watched a video on how children were taken good care of by parents. They knew how harder it is for parents who bring up their children. After the students saw some baby-related goods such as toys, buggies, car seats and cots, they were asked to write what they wanted to say to their parents on a card. In the case of this scenario, it was not only an experience of moral life, but also the education and development of personality and affection. In other lessons, such as “How many rubbish do we produce every day?”, “When an epidemic contingency is coming”, “Preventing food

poisoning”, and so on, some videos were played to show visually the precious and frailty of life. Then students could establish the conception to treasure life, treasure themselves, and have a wonderful life.

6.3.2 Life Education Social Activities. Xingzhi Tao said:

It is an incapable education if it does not use the social strength; it is a blind education if it does not understand the society; it is an incomplete education if it leaves the society and family. How to teach children to learn, to survive and to get along with people is the eternal theme for educators. Education cannot be carried out by rigid and simplified teaching. For the best educational effects, students need to contact and enter the society. (Zhang, 1992)

School 3 focused on practical education, especially safety education of students. In the winter and summer holidays, School 3 carried out a series of activities on safety and self-defense.

(1) Group 1 wrote the teaching materials by themselves, and students explained some safety topics in turn. By this way, it could deepen students’ understanding and memory.

One student said:

I have to collect a lot of materials and information. The hardest thing is to select the suitable materials for the teaching. Firstly I need to understand these materials fully. At least I know teaching is not an easy job. Moreover, I have to prepare some questions and answers in case someone will ask me questions. It took too much time. And I also got help from my parents. Now I learn a lot of knowledge about safety, especially about how to use gas and electricity at home. I also know how to

deal with some small accidents. Even my father does not know all of them. I taught him. In my home, there were no fire extinguishers. And most of houses have no smoke alarms. Under my advice, my parents bought extinguishers and smoke alarms. Moreover, I suggested some of my neighbors to buy fire extinguishers and to set smoke alarms. All of them thought it is important to prevent fire disaster. But only a few of them want to buy fire extinguishers and alarms. (S3S1)

When the students sat in the classroom, they listened to what the teachers taught. They maybe could not remember some knowledge but would forget it in a short time. When they were required to prepare a lecture, they had to collect materials and information by themselves. In order to write good lecture notes and to choose suitable teaching materials, they needed to read and understand a lot of information. With a special aim, they had a deep impression on what they had read, listened and watched. Moreover, they could connect what they had learnt in their daily life. This was the final purpose. They may meet with some problems and difficulties when they practice their ideas. The parents and teachers need to give them some guidelines and help to keep their initiative.

(2) Group 2 went to a fire station to learn about fire prevention. In front of a fire engine, the firefighters introduced the functions of the water hoses, fire extinguishers, cutting tools, fire-free uniform and helmet. Students remembered the fire emergency number 119. They also knew that “When there is a fire, DON’T use the lift”.

One student expressed his impression:

The fire truck is awesome. It has a lot of functions. It is maybe more than 100 kinds of tools. I thought a fire truck is only for fire extinguishing before today. Now I

know it also can do various rescue operations. Now I know I can call 119 not only when there is a fire but when we need almost any help. And the uniform is also very cool. It is very dangerous when there is a fire. The special uniform can protect the firefighter. But it is too heavy for me now. And the firefighters are very quick. They use only one or two minutes to get ready when the alarm is on. They said “Time is life”. So when we meet fire trucks on the road, we must make way to them. The best way is we must take precautions against fire in our school, at home, at every place.

(S3S2)

After students touched the fire truck, they tried various rescue tools, and had a real feeling about fire and accident rescue. For them, 119 is not only three digits. This number means some firefighters had a fire truck and various tools to save lives. Time is life. This sentence also had a solid meaning. They knew the fire truck has the right-of-way on the road.

(3) Group 3 joined an activity named as “Traffic in children’s eyes” in the Nanjing traffic administration bureau. Firstly, students visited the city traffic control center that is the signaling system of the urban transport system. The traffic situation of each trunk road of the whole city was monitored and displayed on more than one hundred LED screens. Students read carefully the traffic education materials and listened to a lively traffic lesson by traffic police. After this visit, students learnt that it is very important to pay attention to the traffic safety.

One student was shocked:

There are so many traffic control points in the whole city. It is a very complicated system. It is very important to control the on and off the traffic lights. If only one car or

person does not obey the traffic signal, the traffic in this area will be slow down. Even, it will affect the whole city in rush hour. I saw a small traffic accident on the screen.

There is a long car queues on the road quickly. Fortunately, a policeman arrived at the accident site under the order. He disposed the accident and dispersed the congestion.

Therefore, we must care about the traffic security. Every person and car must obey the traffic signals. Stop running red lights. (S3S3)

Traffic safety is an important topic for students, especially in some big cities. Some children have been hurt on the road. So it is necessary to teach students to know and to obey the traffic regulations. However, teaching effectiveness was not satisfactory. Students were unable to realize the importance of traffic safety. Traffic accidents happen again and again. Most of these accidents are attributed to students. After they visited the traffic control center, they learnt how complicated the traffic system is. A small traffic accident can influence not only yourself, but also many other people. So students knew the importance of traffic safety, not for themselves, but for everyone.

(4) In recent years, School 3 also paid much attention on gratitude education. Some gratitude education is the basic means and requirement of training intact personalities. The education of feeling grateful is one component part of education in ethics for students and it is rather important to construct the current socialist harmonious society. It has important impacts on moral education and the social construction of spiritual civilization. Thanksgiving education through speech contests, blackboard paper, billboards, and to write to students' parents are often held.

One student expressed his change after gratitude education:

I am the only child in my family. I have four grandparents. They doted on me. They bought everything I wanted. They can almost meet all my requirements. Therefore, I took all these things for granted. I never did any household affairs at home. Sometimes I yelled to my parents if they can't meet my requirement. After the gratitude education, I think I am wrong. I feel quite ashamed. Now I try to do help my parents do some housework as possible as I can. I never yell to my parents again. (S3S4)

Thanksgiving education to contemporary students is an indispensable and important subject for the construction of spiritual civilization. Thanksgiving awareness among contemporary students, occurred from time-to-time. In order to change this situation, there is a need to strengthen the education of students in Thanksgiving. Gratitude education is the basic means and requirement of training intact personalities. It has important impacts on moral education and the social construction of spiritual civilization.

School 3 taught its students the knowledge of life education by various ways, such as: textbooks, classroom teaching, sample stories, picture books, video stories, etc. All those activities gave students chances to practice what they had learnt in the classroom. In addition, School 3 also required students to do some housework as much as possible which is a part of Gratitude education.

The flag-raising ceremony is a solemn and sacred moment every Monday morning. It is an advantageous opportunity for patriotic education, ownership and strong sense of responsibility. Blackboard newspapers and writing competitions were also open spaces for students to use their imagination and creation. Furthermore, there were some forms for

students to discuss and share their different ideas and opinions of life education.

6.4 The Evaluation of Life Education of School 3

6.4.1 The Evaluation of Implementation of Life Education. When the principal was asked how to evaluate life education in School 3, he said:

I think my school has been at the forefront of life education in China. A few years ago, I organized some life education experts to edit life education textbooks with the support of Jiangsu education bureau and Nanjing Normal University. Meanwhile, I also required some teachers in this school to involve in the editorial. They helped to collect and arrange information, papers, books, stories, and other materials. They learnt a lot of knowledge about life education in this process and became the main force of the developing life education. Moreover, they have incorporated life education in every subject teaching as a natural part. Although life education is not listed as an independent subject due to some limitations, they do not limit the implementation of life education in this school because life education has deeply rooted in the teaching thought of every teacher. (S3P)

Life education before twelve years old was edited and published by School 3. Its content includes: Recognize life; Safety; Explore life; Good manners; Social communication and Pursue life. All these sections somehow matched the four relationships of life education. However, its content is impossible to fully cover all the four basic relationships because of the educational policy in China. It has only some general knowledge in the scope of human bodies, plants and life. No topic was mentioned to reach the level of one's higher self or soul.

However, the editing and publishing of textbooks is a great advance for life education. Meanwhile, some teachers were trained with the idea of life education. It was convenient for them to combine life education with other subjects.

The principal assigned four teachers who were responsible for life education and other subject teachers. As with their focus on life education goals of their schools, all teachers paid much attention on the life qualities of students. When they were asked the importance of life education, one teacher agreed that:

Life education is important to students. A few years ago, I took part in the writing team of life education textbooks. Moreover, I also invited some students' parents to give lecturers. With varied and lively contents, these lecturers are welcomed to students. (S3T1)

Although life education textbooks cannot be used directly in the classrooms, teachers in School 3 had a huge amount of life education knowledge. They explored and penetrated the concept of life education in some other subjects and activities. By multimedia teaching and natural teaching strategies, teachers were trying to vividly instill in students the minds of life education.

In School 3, most of the efforts from the principal and teachers lay on the imparting life education to the students. The most content of life education was about safety. It was a kind of life skill rather than life education, not to mention the meaning of life. But even so, the teaching level of safety education was still in the Intelligent dimension. Students could learn some safety knowledge in the classroom. Although students could take part in some activities to practice some safety issues, the Emotional and Volitional were hardly involved.

6.4.2 Students' Understanding of Life Education. Students in School 3 knew the word of life education because this school delivered “Life education before twelve years old” to them. When the students were asked to talk about some points of life education, they mentioned that they were taught how to take an elevator. In the focus group, one Grade Five student expressed that:

The form teachers of senior grades could not spend as much time with us compared with the teachers in the junior grades. Our teachers provided us with knowledge and information but in contrast with the Grade one situation, teachers do not help us with the personal and communal domains of life education. We think that teachers need to give more real life stories that can inspire us more about relating with ourselves and others. If we join in more extra-curricular activities, we can get more help in personal and communal domains, but we do not have time to go to extra-curricular activities since we are now in senior grades and need to prepare for our examinations. (S3S1)

For the higher primary grade students, they had to face more and more pressure for their studying. The school and parents did not wish them to fail in the examinations. So they had to spend most of their time for academic subjects. Therefore, the time for life education and even other extra-curricular activities was certainly reduced and cancelled.

When we talked about the activities which they took part in, one student remembered that:

In the “For more children” lesson, the teachers allow us to play blind child, with a handkerchief on my eyes, then to ask me to pick up a book, to write, to pack bags

and other activities. I never have this feeling before. I can see nothing. Certainly, I can do nothing. I feel helpless at that moment. I was in the dark for only a few minutes. How about people who lost their eyesight, or with other disabilities? Although the hard life of persons with disabilities, but they are still strong enough to overcome the difficulties. Their life will have new meaning, peace, health, serenity and happiness. This arouses my awareness of concerning disadvantaged groups. (S2S2)

Like the students in Schools 1 and 2, the students in School 3 had a deep impression on some task-driven activities. Only as they have had such personal experience, could they have a solid understanding of what they had learnt.

Most of students in Schools were familiar with safety knowledge. Ensuring students' safety was one of the most significant responsibilities of schools besides transferring knowledge to them.

6.5 Summary

The development of life education in this school was in the forefront in China. With the support of some life education experts in Nanjing Normal University, the principal edited and published a series of life education textbooks, Life education before twelve years old. These textbooks include two key factors of life education, recognizing life and exploring life, throughout all grades. Step-by-step, students learn how to recognize life, take preventive measures, find myself, pursue future life, and learn good manners and social communications.

Students in School 3 knew the word of life education because this school had delivered “Life education before twelve years old” to them. Although some students read these books, the learning effectiveness was not so good. They could only remember some small stories but could not learn emotional and volitional meaning of life education without the teacher’s guidance.

Meanwhile, these textbooks could only be referred to as ancillary teaching materials. And life education was not listed as an independent subject because of the limitation of government-directed teaching policy. But the principal and teachers in School 3 had learnt a lot of theories and knowledge of life education in the editing process because some teachers were involved in the collecting and editing process of these textbooks. These life education experiences were the valuable wealth of School 3. With these theories and knowledge, teachers have combined life education with other subjects in this school.

Because of the assignment of the Jiangsu Education Department, School 3 must use moral education and cannot list life education into its curriculum. School 3 had two Moral education (Pinde Yu Shenghuo and Pinde Yu Shehui) lessons each week. It was the most suitable subject to connect to life education.

Although some life education activities were organized by this school every year, most of these activities were focused on safety education, self-defense, and some other simple and shallow directions. It is still far from comprehensive life education.

Chapter 7

School 4-Jiangsu Primary School without Life Education Subject

7.1 General Situation of School 4

School 4 was an Experimental Elementary School built in 1960 in Jinhu County, Jiangsu Province. For more than 50 years, all teachers and students in School 4 have worked hard to pursue knowledge, truth and reliability. With the supports and concerns of the leading cadres at all levels, School 4 has grown to be a provincial level experiment school. It had 72 classes and 3,602 students in 2015. Because of its outstanding achievement, it has been given more than 40 titles or fames such as The National Education Characteristics School, The National Red Flag Team, Civilized Unit in Jiangsu, The Provincial Model School, The Excellent Parents' School, etc. It wins more and more attention and reputation from students and parents.

School 4 upholds the principles of self-reliance and hard work to prompt education modernization. There were 4 teaching buildings; the teaching areas were 14,500 square meters. A new integrated teaching building was built two years ago with more than 2,000 square meters. Meanwhile, this school also had some special classrooms such as computer rooms, laboratories, dancing rooms, studio, etc. Its library and teaching equipment had passed the necessary checks presided by the Jiangsu Science & Technology Committee. School was trying its best to build up the ranks of teachers, with the emphasis on improving the quality of teachers. It encouraged teachers to attend certain training courses and to achieve higher diplomas. By various training programs, School 4 was working hard to create a group of

teachers with high moral level, educational level, educational art, and theoretical quality.

There were a total of 150 teachers in this school. Seventy of them were members of the Communist Party. Seventy teachers had been honored for their teaching work. Forty-eight teachers were named as subject leaders. One hundred and nineteen teachers were named senior teachers. One hundred and eleven teachers had bachelor degrees.

The mission of the school was to achieve an all-round development in their students by providing comprehensive services to them so that they may exert their full potentialities to serve the community whole-heartedly. Furthermore, the school aimed to promote “a sense of integrity, positive values, social consciousness and commitment towards learning, life, family, community and country” so that they will lead a full and meaningful life. The emphasis on pastoral care, and on a sense of partnership between school and home, is balanced with the school’s commitment to achieving excellence in academic, cultural and sporting pursuits.

In order to enhance moral education in School 4; to enrich the Young Pioneers activities; to improve the ability of daily life; and to promote the students' healthy development, School 4 made some working objects:

1. Adhere to people-centered education, moral education first principle, take high moral values establishment, culture students with the core values of socialism.
2. Guide students to set goals, to learn to be a man in the activities of the Young Pioneers.
3. Educate students with civilized manners, with self-management and self-development.
4. Train students to do housework with good practical living ability.

5. Improve teachers with good capacity for work and for class management.
6. Enhance home-school connection and cooperation. Practice moral education in school, home and society.

School 4 also arranged some themes for every month. For example, students needed to learn and obey the “Regulations for Primary School Pupils” in February. March 5th is the memorial day of learning from Lei Feng. In March, students should follow in the footsteps of Lei Feng and give their love to anyone who is in need. School 4 organized activities like going hiking, sweeping tombs and planting trees in April. In May, some working activities were organized. Students went to the park near the school where they took part in volunteer labor. Before the summer holiday, students deployed and designed safety education and activity plans and social-practice activities.

To reform and to innovate moral education comprehensively, School 4 developed a school-based curriculum which was based on teaching and research activities. It actively promoted the basic education reform and implemented the new curriculum standards in recent years. It has been committed to culture students with first-class quality, good habits and first rate of intelligence.

Students acquired a balanced development in the areas of knowledge, emotional growth, perseverance and skills in the moral education curriculum. They have learnt to make appropriate personal and social judgment, manage their emotions, and live with others. They have also learnt to maintain a harmonious relationship with their environment and the world. Through exploring the values and meaning of life, students have developed a world view and character.

When the principal of School 4 was asked about the importance of life education, he thought that life education is a very important part of the curriculum and that this school includes life education in moral education and health education. The final goal of life education is to teach students to love life. In everyday life, the students also need to take action to protect life. They cannot pick the flowers, cannot walk on the grass, cannot rob a bird's nest, and cannot bully small animals. They should learn how to love and treasure life. Although there were no special teachers and groups for life education, he encouraged all teachers to read some textbooks and papers on life education. Life education has been developed in some lessons and extra-curricular activities and it has also been promoted as a hidden curriculum. However, life education should be a supplementary part of Moral Education. They have paid much attention on the life safety of students.

I completed my primary education in this school. I am very familiar, therefore, with its basic situation and know some teachers. It was natural for me to choose this school as my subject.

7.2 Life Education with Moral Education Curriculum of School 4

7.2.1 Moral Education Framework. There was no life education subject in School 4. Like School 3, School 4 was using “Pinde Yu Shenghuo” for Grades 1 and 2, and “Pinde Yu Shehui” for Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6, as textbooks of moral education. There were two moral lessons on the curriculum for each week; 40 minutes for each lesson. In addition, there were still some activities or themes for students to develop their virtue, intelligence, physical conditions, mind status and community service.

At the lower primary levels, the curriculum emphasized students' awareness of safe, respectfulness and responsible behavior. Together, with the moral education themes of the year, the curriculum was integrated into various subjects to strengthen students' moral development.

For Grade One students, this was the first time for them to enter the primary school. From nursery into primary school, children in the face of sudden change in education and living conditions, are bound to various aspects that are incompatible. To enable the healthy growth of children, the school also pledged to help children gradually adapt to primary school life. They need to meet new friends and become familiar with the school environment. Meanwhile, they need to understand the concept of family and their place in the home. At this age, some changes happen in students' body. They should maintain good health and a healthy lifestyle to protect their eyes, teeth, ears, etc.

For Grade Two students, they are growing up and want to try something new. Therefore, they need guidance and practice to know what is right and what is wrong. They need to learn how to treat others. From Grade One to Grade Two, students are guided to witness the changing of the seasons. They should have ideas about how to treat small animals and the environment.

Generally, students in Grade One and Two are taught some basic living knowledge in the school. They just need to remember what the teachers tell them and do the right things. They cannot think too much because of their young age.

At the upper primary levels, the curriculum emphasized students' emotional management, problem-solving skills and interpersonal communication skills. It instilled a

positive attitude in students so to raise their overall resilience in face of challenging life events. Together, with the moral education themes of the year, the curriculum was integrated into various subjects to strengthen students' moral development. Through grade level/upper primary assemblies and external speaker's visits, specific themes and current affairs were introduced, discussed and explored.

From Grade Three to Grade Six, some stories were introduced in the textbooks to tell some lessons of life. The amount of information in the textbooks increased. When students read these stories or watched a social phenomenon, they needed to think about the meaning. Students were encouraged to take part in some activities to practice what they had learnt.

For Grade Three students, they needed to learn how to deal with their relationships with classmates and neighbors. They could learn from others and control themselves, find their own shortcomings and correct them. Certainly, safety issues needed to be emphasized again and again. Students had to keep safe from any potential safety risks. They should know some emergency call,s such as 110, 119, 120, etc. Moreover, they should understand that their development cannot progress without their family, school, and many other people. Everyone should hold a heart of gratitude to his family members, friends and others who are concerned about him/her.

For Grade Four students, they had more and more contacts with society. They would experience more social problems, see lots of right and wrong with the world. They would need to learn some necessary knowledge to judge and deal with these social phenomena. Certainly, they should know the moral bottom line, to be an honest, kind, law-abiding, honest, and serious person.

For Grade Five students, they should have further understanding of themselves, learn how to get along with other classmates, especially with the opposite sex. The class is a small society for students' growing-up, a family for living and learning and a harbor for placing students' soul. Every student will find his own position in the class collective, and properly handle the relationship between rights and obligations. As a Chinese person, students should be proud of the long history of Chinese civilization, historical cultural resources, famous mountains and great rivers, etc.

For Grade Six students, they will have more chances to contact some good and bad things with age. They should have the ability to identify and say no to some bad behaviors, such as drinking, smoking, evil religions, drugs, etc. Environmental and world issues are mentioned to students, such as pollution, war, and so on. This area is much later than in Hong Kong schools which have already mentioned these issues to junior students.

Quality education ensures students' overall development in moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic aspects, which should be part of the Transcendent. The overall contents of moral education were classified to the Community, the Nature and the Self (see Table 7.1). Just like the name of this set textbooks, most of the contents are related to life and society.

In addition, a whole-school initiative entitled "No Bully" was implemented with the aim of creating a sustained bully-free environment for all students. It enhanced students' social and emotional learning through promoting empathy, respect and inclusion. The program of "No Bully" included professional development for faculty and staff, parent forums and a series of "No Bully" prevention and intervention programs for students.

Table 7.1 *Moral education contents in School 4*

Area	Moral education
Transcendent	Quality-oriented education
	Make friends; Love family; Action of love; Have a happy life; Care for the elders; Get along with classmates and neighbors; Safety issues; Growth
Community	with family, teachers, school, and other people; Cooperation with others; Social phenomena; Boys and girls; Class collection; Chinese history; National pride; Family responsibility; Rights and obligations; Identify bad social problems; World and environment issues.
Nature	Four seasons; Environment protection;
Self	Know yourself; Good living habits; Behave civilly and friendly; Happy birthday; Be a smart customer; Further understanding oneself.

At the same time, art education was another characteristic of this school. Every student was encouraged to learn a musical instrument and a kind of painting technique. One hundred percent of students participated in various artistic creations. The “Jinhu Children Art Group” became famous for its good performance and won several provincial and national awards. It was invited to perform at the Spring Festival Celebration on China Central Television (CCTV). The remarkable achievements of art education spread its fame all over the country. All these efforts promoted its rapid development. Its teaching achievement was highly acclaimed by some leaders and education experts.

According to the faith of innovating and making progress constantly, the operation policy of steady and practical, School 4 seized the opportunity to deepen reform and

accelerate development. It has intensified the educational reform and promotes the quality-oriented education in an all-round way.

Although life education was not listed as an individual subject, there were two moral courses every week using “Pinde Yu Shenghuo” (Moral and life) for Grades One and Two and “Pinde Yu Shehui” (Moral and society) for Grades Three, Four, Five and Six (Figure 7.1) which were published by the Jiangsu Educational Publishing House (Appendix 3).



Figure 7.1. Moral and life; Moral and society.

7.2.2 Life Education Exploration. In addition to moral education, several subjects, especially Chinese, in School 4 have endowed a mission to promote life education.

As the most important culture carries, Chinese has a prominent position in life education. Literature has carried aspects of human cultures to us, so we can educate students to cherish life, to find the significance and quality of life. Language subject's humanistic

character determines its life education on young people's special status. For Chinese teachers, they should teach students to appreciate life, to form a healthy emotion, to have their own ideas, to search for the life value, to live significantly and brilliantly. During Chinese teaching, penetrating life education is a sacred duty born in Chinese education, and is an important act to build open in vigorous Chinese lessons. There are lots of life education resources in the Chinese course. The rich materials of life education included stimulate a better understanding of life and provide a healthy outlet to embosom them emotionally. So in Chinese teaching, teachers should give full play to the Chinese advantages in life education, and cultivate the potential life function in Chinese textbooks. As Chinese teachers, when they are teaching the knowledge of Chinese, they should look at the penetration of life education and make the students to establish the correct value of life, to cultivate life awareness in Chinese study, and to live an active life. All in all, it is worth future research in this multipolar world on rethinking Chinese education on the basis of terminal care to life itself.

The life value in Chinese teaching is of great importance. Caring for life and paying attention to life should be the eternal direction followed by Chinese teaching. In order to implement life education, teachers must dig into Chinese textbooks, guide students to warm life with life, to inspire life, and to lighten life. Students need to develop the ability to make themselves, to depend on their own potential, and to take responsibility for the results achieved in their life. In order to bring it back to its normal course, they need, at first, to reform Chinese classroom teaching methods and to adopt the life Chinese classroom teaching model.

7.2.3 Life Education Supporting Materials. China is an exam-taking country that pays

a lot of attention to exam skills, but ignores the cultivation of students' qualifications including creation spirit, independence and gratitude attitude. Most school students nowadays are the only child in the family. They enjoy lots of love from elders and do not worry about anything. How happy they are! However, while they become used to such love, they tend to take it for granted. They may not be aware that they also need to give love to those who love them. Gradually, they have lost their heart to feel life and love. At present, some students have a weak sense of thanksgiving; thanksgiving actions are missing, and the reason is mainly due to some faults of family education and school education. In other words, students lack of thanksgiving consciousness results from both social background and education. The education of feeling grateful is one component part of education in ethics for students and is rather important to construct current socialist harmonious society. Gratitude education is the basic means and requirement of training intact personalities. It has important impacts on moral education and the social construction of spiritual civilization. Gratitude has a long historical tradition. Gratitude education is one of the key targets of virtue education for primary education. Gratitude is the moral character that students should have, however, with the development of social diversity, graceful education has become a soft spot of the moral education in China.

The lack of responsibility education in family and schools has resulted in the loss of students' thanks-giving thoughts and the occurrence of phenomena contradictory to thanks-giving attitudes. Thanksgiving awareness among contemporary students, has occurred from time to time. In order to change this situation, it needs to strengthen thanksgiving education. Therefore, gratitude education is of great need for students to inherit traditional

Chinese virtues and to improve the overall quality of students, so as to promote social harmony. Grateful education is the important foundation stone of students' moral education.

When we talked about the gratitude education in School 4, the principal said:

Gratitude education is a kind of love education, which is of great significance to create harmonious interpersonal relationships and pursue a happy life for us. We should make great efforts to build up accurate indebted consciousness among students, activate their sensibility and develop practice on indebted action. In order to explore the practical basis of gratitude education, thanksgiving education through the speech contest, blackboard newspaper, billboards, writing to students' parents are often held in the school. Almost all students attended at least one of these activities. The activities are excellent opportunities to socialize, make friends, have fun with others and be grateful for the people in their life. As a result, the overall level of gratitude education of students has been improved markedly. A tiny gratefulness can give us a lasting positive mood, which requires our consciousness and gratefulness. Then with a heart of gratefulness, everything turns out to be gorgeous. An attitude of gratitude not only lets us appreciate our lives more, but it also puts us in the right frame of mind for doing even better. (S4P)

Just like School 3, School 4 has no religious content and supernatural things. Moral education also teaches students to train their healthy psychological quality, to form good character, to enhance their overall quality, and to establish a correct outlook on life, values and world view. These contents should be a part of the Transcendent. In addition, School 4 organized some speeches on gratitude and responsibility education. Some life education

concepts were penetrated into other subjects, such as Chinese, English and Mathematics.

Moral education also plays the role of life education to teach students the knowledge of the human body, nature, safety, etc (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.2 *Life-related education areas, activities and courses in School 4*

Area	Life-related education	Activities and contents
Transcendent	Quality education	Correct viewpoint on the world, life and values
Community	Gratitude education	Ancient Poetry; A Mother's Bill; Applause;
	Responsibility education	Festival Topic
Nature	Caring for life;	Chinese teaching: Life, Life; Seedling with
	Paying attention to life	tenacious vitality; Touch the Spring
Self	Good manners;	Moral education
	Know and protect your	Listen to your own heartbeats;
	body	

7.3 Life Education and Moral Education Teaching of School 4

7.3.1 Teaching Strategy. There were two moral education lessons on the curriculum every week. I inquired into the observing of moral education before I visited this school, but my inquiry was denied. Some teachers in School 4 told me privately that some of these lessons were occupied by other subjects, such as Chinese, English or Mathematics. Or students did their homework during moral education class time. Even some moral education lessons were regularly conducted. The teacher just read the textbook to the students. No more fresh teaching materials and lesson plans were prepared.

Probably because of this, I could not observe the teaching of moral education lessons. But I was allowed to observe several Chinese and English lessons.

As intermediary, the literary selections of Chinese teaching materials reflect life theories, show life consciousness and promote life development. Nowadays, the character of cultural activities in human society returns to Chinese education. Many excellent novel works have been edited in textbooks. There are many factors of life education in literature works in Chinese teaching materials which are the base of life education.

After defining “life” and analysing the character of life, we think that the life connotation in Chinese teaching includes two aspects: respect life relation and promote life values. Chinese life experience is a process that connects with life development and with the characteristics of experience, concealment, individuation, and innovation. The implementation of Chinese Teaching from the view of life includes course and strategy.

Chinese teachers should shoulder their responsibilities for life education to help their students cherish their lives. This process of language learning is not only a knowledge of the process of capacity growth, but also the process of enjoying life.

Life is hope, so we should cherish life. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to teach young people how to cherish life, understand the value of life, and overcome the setbacks of life and create a meaningful life. In fact, life does not tell us all the time, as long as we are smiling and content, we will know how to cherish life and live life.

7.3.2 Teaching Models of Life Education. In School 4, I observed three Chinese classes which were about life and nature, including: Life, life; Touch the spring; and Ancient poetry. Before the class, the teacher did a lot of work to prepare the information about the text

and the author. The teaching plan had rich content to enhance the flexibility and elasticity of materials. The idea of life education was integrated with Chinese text and poems.

1. Life, life

While teaching the lesson “Life, life”, the students were guided to feel the lust to live of a moth, seed tenacious vitality and to feel the beating of our hearts. Through three cases, the author presents his feeling and observation of life. The text explores the essential nature of life existence and the fundamental condition of life. Only when we witness death, will we recognize how precious life is. Beyond fostering intellectual and personal development, Chinese education also enables students to develop meaning and commitments in their lives.

(1) The teaching plan was:

1) Emotional and value attitude:

To feel the author’s thoughts and insights on life. To cherish life, to respect life, to treasure life. To reflect an infinite value during a limited life

2) Teaching important points and difficulties

To guide the students comprehending the life meaning of these three cases is the teaching important points and difficulties.

3) Teaching processes

Talk over their life with students to inspire their emotions.

Talking guideline: In Chinese culture mottos, many are warning people to love lives.

Before this lesson, the students collected some mottos, can we communicate about them?

The teacher spoke first: “A trivial seed often contains a brilliant season; an ugly

caterpillar may change to a five-color multicolored butterfly. Because life itself is a miracle.”

4) Coursework presentation

Although the author has a disability, her indomitable spirit with a shock to the hearts of every able-bodied person. She did not live in vain. Instead, she became more appreciative of the meaning of life and its permanent spiritual values. Today, let us really probe into her inner world, to feel her feeling and thinking of life.

(2) Before students read the text, the following requirements were listed:

- 1) Please read the text by yourselves. Then I'll ask some students to read for us.
- 2) Although you can read this text correctly and fluently, do you really understand the meaning of these words?
- 3) Please read the text again. While you read the text, please think which cases this lesson contains. Use the subheads to summarize them.
- 4) Do you have similar experiences in your life?
- 5) It seems that some students had similar experiences. The three cases in the text are too common to be noticed. However, why was the author shocked strongly by these normal cases? Can you understand the significant meanings storing in the text?
- 6) How can we understand this text?

(3) Reading the text to feel the language

- 1) The first case: Moth-the lust to live

Read this part repeatedly; highlight the sentences which you think they are exciting statements to express the author's feeling. Talk about your understanding.

The teacher read the important sentence: “I could control and even kill it with my

fingers easily. However, it kept struggling, encouraged strongly its wings and tried to escape.

I felt a force of life and movement in my hands”. The struggling of moth is its fight against life-threatening. It does not easily give up life no matter how dangerous it is, no matter whether or not it can escape. It is only a moth. The struggling moth shows me that every creature has a strong desire to live and an indomitable fighting spirit to survive. With suffering from serious diseases, how does Xing Lin Zi think?

2) Seedling with tenacious vitality

We just learn the meaning of the first case. Can we use the same method to understand the contents of the second case?

The teacher read the important sentence: How strong a vitality life in such a tiny seed! Without sunlight and dirt, it even broke through the hard shell to thrive. Although it just lived only a few days, it actually impressed me.

Guide students to the question: Is the description inconsistent? The first half describes that the seedling thrives, but the latter part says that the seedling lives only for a few days.

Students' answers:

Student A:

The text is inconsistent. The author should describe that the seedling should grow into a giant tree. It is better suited to show the strength of life. (S4S1)

Student B:

I think the text is consistent. Although there is no sunlight and dirt between the bricks, the seed still germinates in the spring. Under such a poor external environment, the seedling lives for several days. It does fully demonstrate the value

of its life, though not for long. (S4S2)

To guide the students to feel that it is a seedling.

How does the author think while she is fight against the illness?

Student C:

Just like the seedling, the living environments of the author are also hard. But the author does not give up. That indicated her stubborn brand life. The Indomitable seed is worthy of our learning. We must love life, but also cherish their precious lives. So, if someone wants a simple life, wants their lives to glow, perhaps they should learn from the plants, finding ways to co-exist with the nature harmoniously. (S4S3)

Student D:

The author thinks her own life maybe not as long as a normal people. However, she wants to work hard to bloom the most brilliant fireworks. Extremely adverse growing environment makes tenacious vitality with the plant. (S4S4)

(4) Listen to your own heartbeats

Do you listen to your own heartbeats in a silent moment? What are you feeling? Why was the author shocked by her heartbeats?

Student E:

Although my heart beats day and night, I never pay attention to it. (S4S5)

Student F:

I know that the heartbeats mean the life of a person. But I do not listen to it seriously. (S4S6)

Student G:

We each have heartbeats. I do not understand why the author was shocked by such a normal thing. (S4S7)

The teacher reading: “I can use it in the right or wrong way which is decided by me.”

This sentence reflects the author’s life consciousness after she had heard her own heartbeat. A human’s life only belongs to himself. We have to learn to become responsible for ourselves, to use our life correctly. William James said, “The best use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.” The truth is, only the kingdom of God is going to last. So we have to take responsibility and be independent on our own.

(5) Summarize the whole text, improve the affection

The first part of this text asks a question. Then, the three cases are listed to reveal the meaning of life. This article is short and pithy. The depiction is plain, succinct and meticulous, which shows the author’s sedulous character and optimistic attitude towards life.

Whatever a life is humble or honor, it has the same meaning. We must cherish life, respect life, and treasure life. We can use our limited life to create unlimited value. We must establish a positive and aggressive life attitude. An individual life is so insignificant for the nature, so we must be up against it strongly.

After reading this text, we are impressed by “Struggling against fate”. Moreover, it also implies to challenge oneself. In the Chinese teaching, the teacher builds bridges among life and Chinese class. While the teacher designs the coursework, he/she should connect the real life with the class life to perceive the author’s inner world, to feel the value of life, and to dig the human factor. We should strive to treasure life, enhance the living confidence and living

quality for the rest of their lives. Moreover, the students can learn how to accumulate and to use the language materials.

The teaching focus of this text is to guide to better comprehend the life meaning. However, we cannot figured it out. It has to be expressed by means of words and life. For the three cases in the text, the students should feel different feelings. In the case “Moth-the lust to live”, the students were asked to imagine that they were the moth which was caught. The teacher asked the students: “Moth, you are so small with plain sight. Now you are caught by fingers. Why do you still struggle?” The students must give their own explanations. Moreover, they also needed to connect their own life experience to state their understanding of life. When learning “Seedling-tenacious vitality”, the teacher asked the students to connect what they have seen in real life. Because the seedling is not uncommon in daily life, some students even planted seedlings by themselves. So the students discussed this issue heatedly. By this teaching method, the students could understand profoundly the meaning of life. In the case “Listen to your heartbeats”, the teacher borrowed a stethoscope from a hospital. Using the stethoscope, the students could hear the heartbeats of their own and other classmates. For some students, this was the first time that they had heard their heartbeats clearly. Then, the students discussed their inspirations. From their loving eyes, I could feel that the students were all moved by the text and the author.

2. Touch the Spring

In another text “Touch the spring”, a little girl is walking through the flowers at such beautiful spring season. She stops in front of a Chinese Rose Flower. Slowly, she stretches forth her hands and holds a butterfly on the flower. The butterfly flutters among the girl’s

fingers. The face of the little girl is full of surprise. She opens her fingers after a long time. Then the butterfly flies away. The little girl looks up to the butterfly. The special girl is An Jing, the heroine of this text. Although she is blind, she can feel the spring sense, touch the spring pulse and catch the spring traces by her special ways. In the fragrant spring, the author touches a kind of life force and feels the essence of life. Everyone has his right to embrace spring. When he feels the goodness of life, he can create his own spring. Although this text is short, it contains a profound truth.

When the teacher is teaching this text, the students need to be guided to embody the passion and love for life. Meanwhile, the students must understand that life is beautiful. They should love life and find much fun in life. Then, the students can learn a positive life attitude and establish a correct outlook on life and values.

Spring is a season full of life, full of vigor, full of hope. Everything comes back to life when spring returns. Spring is a perfect topic to deliver life information to students. Students not only read and understand the word literally, they also need to spread their imagined wings to touch the spring, and to feel the life. It will be much better to arrange an outdoor activity to allow students to touch some real flowers in a garden.

3. Ancient Poetry

In language teaching, ancient poetry is in its innate sense, humanism and life consciousness of ancient poetry has provided us with an important resource for life education.

A Song in Slow Time is a folk poem which is an excerpt from Song of Han Dynasty. In this poem, the normal phenomena of nature were described: the morning dew is easily dried by sunlight; the plants and flowers sicken in the autumn; the water flows from west to east.

Life is already so brief, and the happy days become much shorter. We must cherish life, cherish the time and treasure friendship, cherish the opportunity to study and development.

The teaching focus of old poems is to taste the emotions which were contained under various images and scenes. The teaching difficulties are to reproduce the original situation to resonate the students and the author. According to the content of the poem, some pictures were shown to the students when they were reading the words. The students could imagine the crystal clear dewdrop, the lush spring and the bleak autumn. Then, these images were connected to the verses. They helped the students gain the insight of the image in the poem and to feel the perishable time. Finally, the students talked about the bad performances and their serious consequences arising therefrom. Therefore, the life of smart was highlighted.

In School 4, there were no specialized courses, textbooks and activities for life education. But some teachers penetrated segmental knowledge about life education into their subjects and some sample stories. However, students could only scratch the surface of life education. They had no chance to understand the profound meaning of life. Although there were also some similar activities as School 3, such as visiting activities, flag-raising ceremony, blackboard newspapers, writing competitions, there was no overall plan and a focus. It sometimes felt as if students were being asked to take part in these activities for the sake of just that. Without specific destinations, students had less inspiration and motivation to participate. As can be imagined, the teaching and learning effectiveness of life education was heavily discounted.

7.4 The Evaluation of Life Education of School 4

7.4.1 The Evaluation of Implementation of Life Education. Frankly, the principal of School 4 had a very narrow concept about life education. He did not have a whole understanding of it. What he thought about life education were only about the good manners of students and safety education. For the leadership of School 4, while his level of knowing of life education was at a low state, it could not be expected that this school would have good life education teaching to the students.

In School 4, although moral education was listed as a formal subject in the curriculum, some of the teaching time was occupied by other major courses, especially for the higher primary grade students. They needed more time to study their Chinese, English and Math homework. Although I cannot say that the principal encouraged teachers and students, to do this, at least, he knew this situation and gave tacit approval for it. In other words, moral education was somewhat neglected in this school. When I was a student in this school, I had a similar experience. What surprised me was that this situation has never changed. And I believe that most of the primary schools are like this.

Because the role of moral education is not as important in School 4, it has gained little attention from teachers and students. Moral education teachers did not pay much time and energy to prepare the lessons. The content of the textbook was simply to read it to the students. Even the contents of several lessons were taught in one lesson to catch up on occupied time by other subject. There was no discussion among students, no profound thinking, not to mention activities. As can be imagined, the teaching effectiveness of moral education was not satisfactory. However, everyone thought this was normal and no one complained about it.

Similarly to School 3, School 4 also paid much attention on gratitude education and safety education, such as traffic safety, fire safety, home security, etc. Students can learn some knowledge about how to avoid dangers and to save their own life. When we talked about the safety education, the principal had a lot to say:

At present, every school pays much attention on safety education, such as traffic safety, fire safety, and so on. For example, it is really an unpleasant thing to have a fire happen in the school, which greatly threatens the safety of the students' lives. There are many reasons to cause fire at school. For example, smoking in the dorm, incorrect way of electricity using, and the dry weather of winter... It goes without saying that publicizing the knowledge of fire prevention is the best way to prohibit it happening again. Fire safety awareness education should be conducted in the education stage and emphasizes the important role of fire safety awareness for fireproofing of buildings. After the fire education lesson, students shocked by how young a life we lost and how vulnerable students can be. The most important content is to teach the students how to rescue themselves when accidents happen.

(S4P)

We cannot say that safety education is not important. Safety education is a necessary education in every school. But it cannot be used as life education or to replace it. One key reason is that it is easy to handle the teaching materials for safety education. There are some solid teaching materials for it. When students learn safety education, the teaching effectiveness can be observed and evaluated by schools and parents.

Gratitude education has been a hot topic during the past few years. Some education

experts or speakers were invited to make a passionate speech. All audiences, students and parents, were wholly moved. They even cried. They were moved because they did not do well at thanksgiving. Most of them felt guilty for the children or parents. All in all, a speech cannot change the current situation too much.

The principal of School 4 assigned three teachers who were responsible for moral education for the focus group, one of whom was a discipline mistress, one was a guidance master and the other was in charge of extracurricular activities. They recognized that life education relates to their overall safety health. All three teachers expressed that life education was very important to the curriculum. Although there was no life education in this school, they tried to find some life elements in other subjects, such as Chinese, English, Math, etc. However, all teachers had to care about their own assessment and evaluation which were based on the measure of student achievement. Therefore, some class time for moral education was occupied by other subjects. One teacher said:

We developed a little bit of life education to students through our own curriculum, programs and extra-curricular activities. However, there is a lack of systemic lessons for life education and no special activities related to life education. But we have two courses of moral education, “Moral and life” for Grade one to two, “Moral and society” for Grade three to six. Some contents in these lessons are similar to the concept of life education. In addition, some subjects also pass the idea of life education to students by various ways. For example, Chinese always is an important lesson for all primary students in China. By explaining texts and poems, we can analyze and dig the meaning of life between the lines. (S4T1)

In School 4, teachers, even the moral education teachers, had little concept and experience about life education. There was also no relevant training for them. Therefore, the low level and shortage of life education teachers were two issues that limited the implementation and development of life education. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to change in the near future.

As for the gratitude education, a teacher said:

Generally, parents knew student's birthday and celebrated their birthday every year. Certainly, all students are very happy and proud. However, there were only a few students who knew their parents' birthday. And no one said "Happy birthday" to their parents. It was that contrast which makes all students felling silent in the class. It was a great chance for me to guide the students to be a loving and caring human being. Use practical actions to redound on parents, repay teacher's kindness and reciprocate the society. One day, when they grow up, they should repay their parents for their unselfish love. The greatest thing the students will ever learn is to love and to be love in return. (S4T2)

Ironically, the reason that the school paid much attention on gratitude education was that the whole society and family do not value gratitude education. Filial piety has long been a tenet of traditional Chinese culture and is a core concept of Confucianism. In a traditional Chinese family, filial piety is rigidly observed. However, economic and social pressures are loosening the filial obligations that have long bound Chinese society. Therefore, it is a favorite activity to enhance gratitude education to students. But there is little optimism about the effectiveness if there are only a few meetings or seminars.

Strictly speaking, gratitude education is only a small part of Community in life education. Just because of the lack of life education, filial piety is often missing. Without life education, gratitude education may be short-lived. So, there is no benefit to solve all of the whole educational problems by taking stop-gap measures in the long-term.

When we talked about the life education teaching strategy, one teacher thought task-driven approach was a good way to activate students' learning enthusiasm:

To satisfy the citizen's need of recreation, the facilities, places, and space of recreation has mushroomed around various sizes of communities. In the "Public facilities are crying" lesson, the students generally know the benefit of the public facilities. And the comfort of public facilities is presented to students using the modern means of teaching. Then a mission was assigned to students: how about is it if all the public facilities were destroyed. This mission instantly captured the students' attention. The students are coming to realize the serious consequences when the public facilities were destroyed. (S4T1)

Although teachers in School 4 had less professional theory and training about life education, they actually did a lot of work on life education. They explored the concept of life from differing subjects and teaching materials. Safety education and gratitude education were two main contents of moral education or life education.

7.4.2 Students' Understanding of Life Education. I interviewed 20 students in School 4; 10 of Grade 4; and 10 of Grade 5, respectively. Unlike the other three schools, these students were not good at expressing their own options and feeling. When they were asked to give some fine samples about life education, one student mentioned:

I know the stories of Ms Zhang Haidi. She worked very hard and faced frustrations of her life, though she was disabled. To her, the fate is too cruel to give her only a sound brain and fortunately she has her own free thoughts and optimistic attitude to life. The long sufferings have only made her a nation of fortitude and perseverance. She said that it is not rare to meet some difficulties in your lifetime. If you can overcome them, you are a hero, a strong man. When I meet difficulties in the future, I will face it bravely. (S4S1)

Example education is always the glorious tradition and effective method of Chinese ideological and political education. The exertion of example educational roles involves both the change of modern people's morality and ideology, and the establishment of correct philosophy and axiology. As these kind of practical activities accompany human society, the status and function of example education is indispensable in the development of human civilization. At present, example education in schools still plays an important educational function, but there are no practical results and investment, and its effectiveness are out of proportion.

When they were asked about the life education in their daily life, one student said:

I like Coco Cola very much. But my parents do not allow me to drink it. When I asked them about the reason, they just told me that all soft drinks are not good. They are not persuasive. So I drink a lot of Cola every day. After I know the ingredients of carbonated beverages and the chemical reactions when they enter human body, I decided to reject the soft drinks. (S4S2)

Students should know what kinds of foods are beneficial to the human body. They are

“The Food Pyramid”. Nutritionists emphasize eating correctly by referring to the food pyramid. However, some students are more likely to fracture a bone. Bone density in students is lower than those with no bone fracture. Low bone density is attributed to carbonated beverages. Some students drink too many carbonated beverages every day. All carbonated beverages can be a problem, therefore, students should avoid all soft drinks. Tea, coffee and carbonated drinks, or even fruit juices, are no substitutes for water. Even sugar-free soda can destroy the bones because of the high acid content of most carbonated beverages.

Most teenagers love food with a lot of fat, oil, salt, and sugar. People often call this kind of food “junk food”. Junk foods are high in salt and sugar and may taste appealing, but they will play havoc with children’s health and moods. It is perhaps unsurprising then that today’s children have been labeled the “junk food generation”, with a third of youngsters aged 5 to 13 already considered obese. They are messing up their health with a diet of junk food. However, creating healthy eating habits in children can be a daunting task in this age of heavy marketing to children and teens, and the convenience of fast food in the busy lives of many families. Therefore, we should help to develop healthy lifestyles of juveniles which needs the cooperation of our families, schools and the whole society.

When they were asked about the safety education, one student admitted:

Before the teacher taught the traffic rules, I did not follow the traffic rules. I thought it was OK to cross the roads when there was no policeman. Sometimes I run red lights when I found there was no car on the cross, especially at night. The teacher played a video on a road accident. The jaywalker was run down by a truck. Some driver ran the red stoplight and some people crossed the street as they hadn’t

seen the red light. In fact, most traffic accidents can be avoided. If everyone learns and complies with traffic regulations, I believe one day traffic accidents can be avoided. (S4S3)

It is the content of quality education and the duty of schools to strengthen the safety education for students and to develop their emergency response capabilities. Schools are responsible for educating qualified citizens, holding the post of student's information safety education. The students shall accept the education and administration of safety conducted by schools, abide by the disciplines and various regulations and rules.

Although students in School 4 had no formal life education lessons, they knew some stories about life education. They could learn the concept of life from their daily life and apply it accordingly. Safety education was also an important content for moral education or life education.

7.5 Summary

The mission of School 4 was to achieve all-round development in their students by providing comprehensive services to them so that they may exert their full potentialities to serve the community whole-heartedly. Led by the Jiangsu Education Bureau, School 4 was using the same moral education textbooks and curriculum as School 3.

Just like School 3, School 4 had no religious content and supernatural things. Moral education also taught students to train their psychological quality healthily; to form a good character; to enhance their overall quality; to establish a correct outlook on life, values and world view. Moral education also played the role of life education in order to teach students

the knowledge of human body, nature, safety, etc.

In addition to moral education, several subjects, especially Chinese, in School 4 had been endowed a mission in order to promote the life education. The rich materials of life education included in the Chinese course stimulated a better understanding of life and provided a healthy outlet to embosom students emotionally. Caring for life and paying attention to life should be an eternal direction followed by Chinese teaching.

Students in School 4 learnt and mastered some concrete knowledge about daily life, especially safety. However, they lacked more profound reflections on life. Their emotional and volitional levels of life were quite low. In turn, their intellectual and practical life was also affected.

To be very frank, the principal had limited knowledge of life education. It was the main reason that there were less themes and activities related to life education in this school.

Although the teachers in School 4 were trying to extract life education from Chinese, English and other subjects, their teaching level of life education was still on its rudiment. Without systemic training, teachers had insufficient skills and knowledge base on life education teaching. The consciousness of life education needed to be reinforced for both teachers and students. A harmonious atmosphere and surroundings of life education should be offered for the all-round development of students. This school has a long way to travel in order to reach the essence and rules of life education.

Chapter 8

Life Education in Hong Kong and Jiangsu Primary Schools

Based on the findings in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, the situation of life education in Hong Kong and Jiangsu primary schools are compared in this chapter. The differences and similarities of life education at four schools are analyzed. Their curricula, teaching methods and materials of life education are examined. Finally, the gaps between life education theories and practices are discussed.

8.1 Life Education Differences and Similarities at Four Schools

8.1.1 Life Education Consideration in Different Schools. The principal of School 1 maintained:

Our life education program is carried out throughout all aspects of students, including textbooks, picture books, activities, theme events, and so on. Students can get life education at any time, any places in school. Other schools usually focus only one or few parts of life education. We do not relax in our effort for high grade students.

School 1 differed from other schools in that it developed its own life education characteristics to help students in developing their healthy life so that they have positive life goals for themselves and for the society. Moreover, it spared no effort to develop life education. All teachers and students were covered by life education plans. Growth and developmental changes take place rapidly during adolescence and studies have shown that

help is needed to cater for the healthy life of adolescents as they progress from junior to senior grade (Francis & Robbins, 2005). School 1 designed and adjusted the contents of life education lessons to fill students' requirements according to their age. For students who had benefited from the life education program during their six years at this school, they would truly understand the value and purpose of life to not only be about excelling in studies but also in treasuring life, living a purposeful life with meaningful contributions to society. And through their six years of school education, students should learn how to respect life; possess noble values; express affection to people around; and develop passion as well as aspiration for life.

During the interviews with the vice principal and the panel head responsible for life education, they expressed that:

Although there are rich contents in our life education textbook, we have to collect and provide supplemental information every year. Sometimes these teaching materials were gotten just before lessons. We must extract educational meaning from them quickly and involve them into the life education class. Life education should keep pace with the world.

School 2 designed a six-year all-round education plan for each student when they entered the school on the first day. Its aim was to build a green, harmonious, respectful campus atmosphere, in order to stimulate the development of students. Moreover, it encouraged students to develop their own interest and hobbies. Some activity teams were also found to organize students visiting, speech, workshop, tours, etc. Through these activities, students could improve their abilities and widen their view. In addition, School 2 offered

some theme events to enhance the teaching effect of all-round education, such as: enjoy young, take responsibilities, etc. But, for the moment, all these plans and activities were designed for all-round education. Although most of them could be regarded as life education, School 2 needed to set more resources to support life education.

The principal and some teachers in School 3 had rich knowledge on life education because they edited and published a set of life education textbooks “Life education before twelve years old”. Although life education cannot be set an independent subject, the content of life education could be quoted and penetrated by other subjects. Students could borrow life education textbooks when they needed to.

School 4 had little support for life education. They had no independent subject for life education and there was no teaching requirement of life education for teachers. The level and degree of life education was dependent on the understanding and personal will of teachers.

8.1.2 Life Education Curricula. Almost all departments in School 1 incorporated the main theme of life education into their school curriculum. This helped life education to be run successfully in the school. The school based life education curriculum developed initiatives to cater for the life situation of their students.

Students in School 1 were asked during the focus group about which curricula and activities helped them the most. Three students mentioned that the reading response helped them with the personal domain. During the focus group, Grade 4 students expressed their view that the school organized various activities, such as planting, reading, and caring for eggs. They liked these curricula and activities very much. Meanwhile, they thought that these curricula and activities helped them in the Transcendental, the Community, the Nature and

the Self domains of life education.

Because all of these curricula and activities needed to be designed and adjusted according to student age characteristics, teachers in School 1 usually spent a lot of time working on the teaching materials. Certainly, students could feel love and were also moved by the teachers' excellent job. One Grade 5 student expressed:

I can feel that my school and teachers really love and care for me, and every student. They consider various every single detail of programs and activities. Therefore I can enjoy them. I do appreciate the contribution all teachers made to ensure the smooth running of these programs and activities.

Another Grade 4 student said:

I like volleyball very much and play it quite well. So I joined the volleyball team. When I am on the field, I have confidence. Nevertheless, I discovered my weaknesses and shortcomings too. For example, sometimes I don't pay attention in class. My teacher told me a story about "Dog, cock and fox". The cock was cheated and eaten by the fox because it did not pay attention to the dog's suggestion. From this small story, I know that attention is very important. Now I correct my shortcoming diligently.

Although School 2 does not list life education as an independent subject, it had a six - year plan from 2010 to 2015 to implement quality all-round education. All-round education promotes life education and nurtures the healthy life of students. This school emphasized the importance of life education and there were plans to develop life education in the future. In 2014/2015, a life education teaching group was founded with the help of The Hong Kong

Institute of Education. It helped students to understand and explore the meaning of life. This group always organized some activities to guide students to love and develop their own life, such as: visiting the police station, taking part in manual labor in a farm, performing dramas, Earth Hour, etc.

One Grade 4 student said:

I like policeman from childhood because they have motorcycles. They look like so grand and powerful. I was very excited about visiting the police station last year. I asked a lot of questions to the officer. Now I know police is a kind of special profession and policeman shoulder great responsibility and bound duty. Meanwhile, to be a policeman is also a dangerous job. However, I'm going to be a policeman when I grow up, because I like to help others.

One Grade 5 student stated:

I joined the activity of Earth Hour for two consecutive years. I turned off all lights in my home for one hour.

The principal of School 3 was the founder of “Emotion and Intelligence Education (EIE)” and he implanted it throughout the whole school. All the columns on the website of this school were related to EIE, such as the Center of EIE, Theory of EIE, Management of EIE, Classroom of EIE, Activity of EIE, EIE online, etc. Actually, School 3 did not list life education as an independent subject, although the principal was the chief editor of “Life education before twelve years old”. The content of life education was attached on other subjects of EIE. But some life education activities were organized every year. Meanwhile, if students had an interest in life education, they could obtain instruction from teachers.

School 4 developed a little bit of life education to their students through their own curriculum, programs and extra-curricular activities. However, there was a lack of systemic lessons for life education and no special activities related to it. But the school did have two courses of moral education, “Moral and life” for Grades One to Two, and “Moral and society” for Grades Three to Six. Some contents in these lessons were similar to the concept of life education. In addition, some subjects also passed the idea of life education to students in various ways. For example, Chinese always is an important lesson for all primary students in China. By explaining texts and poems, the teachers could analyze and dig the meaning of life between the lines.

One of the Grade 5 students said:

Our teachers sometimes teach and guide us the idea of life education in class. For example, we were required to write a letter to a firefighter who lost his eyes during a fire-fighting action. In the letters, some students expressed a sense of awe to the hero. Some students want to be a doctor to cure the firefighter's eyes. Some students give a lot of suggestions for his daily life. In short, we have a deeper understanding of life through this writing event.

School 1 included all the four dimensions of life education. Its Transcendental education was quite comprehensive because it was supported by a religious group. Without a religious background, Schools 2, 3 and 4 had no religious-related lessons and activities. The all-round education in School 2 included some spiritual education which should be part of the Transcendental. School 3 and School 4 practiced quality education which taught students to build a correct outlook on life, values and world view. Moreover, there was little safety

education in the two Hong Kong schools. Conversely, the Jiangsu schools paid much attention to safety education. For the two Jiangsu schools and moral education, they taught students' knowledge of living and society. For the Nature and the Self, all four schools covered these contents. However, the Hong Kong schools mentioned environmental issues at an earlier age than in Jiangsu schools. This demonstrates that Hong Kong schools pay more attention to environmental education than Jiangsu schools (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 *Life education curriculum in four schools*

		School	School	School	School
Life education contents		1	2	3	4
Transcendental	Religious education	✓			
	Spiritual education		✓		
	Quality-oriented education			✓	✓
Community	Social education	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Safety education			✓	✓
	Moral education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nature	Environmental education	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Sustainable development	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self	Self-esteem	✓	✓	✓	✓
	self-discipline	✓	✓	✓	✓
	self-confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Living education	✓	✓	✓	✓

8.2 Teaching Activities and Strategy

8.2.1 Life Education Activities. School activities are always implemented in unique educational contexts which are the functions of the individual school's capacity and conditions. The activities should be “diverse” in nature and meet students' ability, interest and needs. This is the guiding principle of the framework of life education, which covers objectives development, strategies formulation, content design, and expected outcomes forecast and evaluation. All four schools had their special teaching strategies and activities. These are listed in Table 8.2.

In some Hong Kong schools, life education is not limited to a single activity. Life education has been set an independent subject because schools get quite a degree of flexibility in the curriculum. Moreover, some have even written their own textbook of life education. In School 1, life education was taught once per week for 35 minutes. In addition, all students had a large life education lesson with a specific theme in a big lecture hall every Friday afternoon. The content of life education was also discussed in an early morning meeting. School 2 only had Civil Education. Although there was no independent subject for life education, it founded a special teaching group for life education to promote life education in the whole school. Under the lead of several assigned teachers, life education was being implemented from the senior junior students.

In Jiangsu, the education departments have the right to assign the curriculum for all schools. Schools have to follow the assignment and cannot make any changes. In the running status of the curriculum, it is impossible to list life education as an independent subject. Therefore, life education can only be carried out as an activity, an additional part of moral education, or even

Table 8.2 *Teaching activities and strategy of life education in four schools*

	Teaching activities/strategy	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Intellectual	Textbooks	✓		✓	
	Classroom teaching	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Religious stories	✓			
	Sample stories	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Picture book; Video stories	✓	✓	✓	
	Religious ritual	✓			
	Comedy; stage plays		✓		
Emotional and	Outdoor activities	✓	✓		
	Classroom activities	✓	✓		
Volitional	Visiting activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Flag - raising ceremony			✓	✓
	Blackboard newspaper			✓	✓
	Writing competition			✓	✓
	Student discussion and share	✓	✓	✓	✓
Practical	After-school activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Social activities			✓	✓
	Do housework			✓	✓
	Voluntary labor			✓	✓
	Gratitude education	✓	✓	✓	✓

an idea attached to other subjects. School 3 was leading in life education compared to other schools in Jiangsu. Even so, it still had no life education as an independent subject. It had two lessons of moral education every week. Although “Life education before twelve years old” was edited by School 3, it could only be used as supplementary teaching and learning materials to moral education. Or the teachers shared it with students on class meetings. School 4 also set two moral education lessons every week. The teachers knew a little about life education which was mainly related to safety education. Some of the content about life education was delivered through other subjects. For instance, there were themes of thankfulness and friendship in Chinese class and English class, respectively. That is, the allocation for life education was very limited in School 4.

Instead of force-feeding knowledge and information to students, the principals and teachers in Schools 1 and 2 motivated students to learn for themselves, and the curriculum emphasized student-centered learning. Meanwhile, student-based internal management system and curriculum system had also been set up. In the classroom teaching, students were made to practice independently, truly showing that they were the masters of the classroom and of learning activities. The most important thing was that students not only learnt some knowledge of life (Intellectual), but also thought about life (Emotional and Volitional).

Primary students in Hong Kong do not need to take the standardized testing to get into middle schools. All examinations in primary schools are organized and held by schools with their own examination papers. According to the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System, students get their allocation bands according to their scaled internal assessment (IA) results. In addition to Students’ standardized IA results of Primary 5 and P6, secondary

schools also assess the non-academic performance of the applicants based on the admission criteria and weightings set by the schools. Some students need to meet with teachers to show their aptitude, interest and potential for the future study and life.

Therefore, students' overall performance in schools is an important criterion to enter a secondary school, especially a better school. So all teaching goals are focused on the all-round improvement of students. While the students are learning knowledge, their inner mind and character should be improved at the same time. Especially, there is no written examination for life education, and its assessment is based on the ordinary performance of the continuous assessment system. Above all, the ultimate goal of the education is to train independent learners.

In China, schools and teachers teach knowledge of life and safety. Students can learn and master the related knowledge. We should admit that teaching and learning are two things that Chinese schools and students are good at, respectively. However, regardless of their academic performance, most of these students lack independence as they have become so reliant on their families for support. Most of them make little or no independent reflections on problems. This is caused by Chinese cultural traditions and educational policy which emphasizes memorization over independent thinking and creativity. Unfortunately, it cannot be changed within current China's political climate for a really long time.

I knew from the teachers in Schools 3 and 4 that students had to take part in the written examination of moral education organized by the educational department. There also were examinations on moral education in school at the end of every semester. Teachers were not impervious to face pressure from this kind of teaching and learning evaluation. They

unknowingly tended to care for students' academic performance, rather than their mind and character. So, schools in Jiangsu attached more importance to "instruction" than to "cultivation" in life education.

8.2.2 Students Understanding of Life Education (Intellectual). Students in School 1 fully understood the meaning of life education because it was set as an independent subject in and they had two lessons every week. When they were asked about life education, they were reminded what they learnt in the life education lessons. They all liked life education because its contents were related to their real life. From life education, they could understand where they came from, how to live a meaningful life, how to face death and loss, etc. They had deep memories about the course materials and stories. Some senior students still remembered the content of life education when they were in Grades One or Two.

Although life education was not listed as a separate course in School 2, students in this school knew some concepts of life education. School 2 was planning life education course with the help of The Education University of Hong Kong. A teacher group of life education was founded in 2014-2015. Its aim was to help students to explore and recognize the meaning of life, and to respect the value of life. The group organized some activities to guide students to love and develop their unique way of life.

One student spoke about how she learnt how to identify and prevent internet bullying through 'Teen bullying' activity. Students also expressed:

I always hear some cyberbullying in primary schools from news. Whether it is through emails, instant messaging, cellphones, texting or web sites, cyberbullying is a growing problem. From this activity, I learn how to protect myself. More

important, we cannot bully or attack others.

Students in School 3 knew the words of life education because this school delivered “Life education before twelve years old” to them. When the students were asked to talk about some points of life education. They mentioned that they were taught how to keep themselves safe at school, at home, and on the street. At the focus group, Grade 5 students expressed that:

Many students got injured by various accidents every year, especially traffic accidents. Our school is located in the city center. The traffic is very heavy around our school, especially during pre-school and after school. Students share the same road with a lot of cars, buses and other kind vehicles. There is a high chance to have an accident. In order to decline or even avoid accidents, our school cannot put too much emphasis on the importance of traffic safety. We also visited the traffic control center of Nanjing. Moreover, we designed and printed some leaflets to distribute to passengers.

Most of students in School 4 knew some knowledge of traffic safety, fire safety, self-defense, and some other safety knowledge. Thus, it could be seen that safety education had been deeply rooted in the students.

Students in School 4 had little idea on life education. However, inspired by my examples, they could relate some activities to life education, such as the graves of the martyrs. At the focus group, a Grade 5 student stated that:

We visited the martyr memorial park during Qingming every year. All of us wear artificial poppies on the day and some teachers and classmates made speeches in remembrance of the nation's fallen heroes who gave their lives that the nation

might live. In our real life, we can see many revolutionary martyrs died young for the people.

8.2.3 Emotional and Volitional Attitude on Life Education. As a religious school, School 1 had some religious ritual, prayers and ceremonies for students to gain a sense of belonging and cognition. While the students accepted the religious ethos, life education in School 1 received tremendous support from the students in that it was being strengthened and consolidated by the student body through their feedback and co-operation. Students kept on asking the school to organize more life education activities and to give more lessons every week. At the same time, more and more parents were willing to discuss life education topics with students at home.

A Grade 5 student in School 1 said:

When I first talked about the word of “life education”, my parents had less idea about it. Later, my dad and mum read some books about life education. Now, they help me to understand the meaning and aim of life. We have a family meeting every weekend to share some life education stories. By this method, I learn more knowledge on how to be a responsible person with politeness, tolerance and modesty.

Students were encouraged to read some life education related books and stories and to write their reading response. Then, all students shared their responses with each other every month. They could learn how to evaluate their responsibilities, goals and perseverance by discussing different opinions of other classmates. This program prompted students to improve their own thoughts and actions. They were active in learning and in discussing some topics of

life education.

School 2 organized some life education experience activities for students to learn about communal, environmental and personal domains. Various activities included survival in the sea, teen bullying, club activities, etc. Through these activities, students tended to build a healthy school through establishing a green, harmonious, mutually respecting and caring, safe and healthy school.

One student in Grade 5 expressed:

I took part in “Survival in the sea” activity. I cooperated with other six group members to move one “injured” classmate from the sea to shore. By this activity, I understand the importance of listening to other people, mutual respect and cooperation.

Another Grade 4 student attended a seminar held by the Society for Abandoned Animals (SAA) to arouse their awareness on the welfare of abandoned animals and the sanctity of life. She said:

I occasionally see some abandoned cats and dogs on the street. Some of them are ill or badly injured. I felt sad and try my best to care them. I feed them some water and food. Last month, I found a dog at a street corner, about to die. I asked my mother to call Society for Abandoned Animals. Finally, the dog got treatment in time.

School 2 also encouraged students to develop their own interest and hobbies. One male student from Grade 4 felt very happy:

I love piano very much. I spend about 8 hours to practice piano every week. Now I

can play several tunes. Last year, I was appointed as an accompaniment to the grade concert. I did a good job and got praise from teachers and classmates. I am so proud of my performance.

Both School 3 and School 4 had organized some activities about safety education, such as visiting a fire station, traffic control center, police station, etc. Students could have an intuitive sense of some knowledge of the books. Every Monday morning, there must be a Flag - raising ceremony on the school playground. All students without exception had to attend the ceremony. It was an important moment for patriotism education. In addition, students were required to write a blackboard newspaper and composition at some important festivals, such as Teachers Day, National Day, Dragon Boat Festival, etc.

8.2.4 Practical Life Education. Hong Kong schools effectively implement life education in their curricula, activities, lessons, daily life, etc. They aim at developing well-rounded students with good virtue, intelligence, physical conditions, mind status and community service. However, Jiangsu schools had insufficient motivation to promote life education because of the limitation and guidance of the present education policy. Most of life education in these two schools was merely expressing words and papers.

After more than ten years of effort, School 1 had formed its own characteristics on life education. An overall scope of life education was established in this school. Under its guidelines, life education was running smoothly. More importantly, there were some teachers with rich life education experience and they were still keeping in touch with experts and other schools. The experienced teachers were the basic guarantee of the implementation of life education. School 1 had created a school climate with positive and active life not only for

students, but for teachers. Some teachers had worked in this school for more than 20 years. They held profound feelings towards the school and students. After many years of practice, they had gathered rich teaching experience in life education. The spiritual outlooks of teachers in School 1 were pretty good and a basic precondition to transfer positive life energy from teachers to students. By various teaching strategies, students could shower life education from every teacher and everywhere.

Students in School 1 did learn some life knowledge. Moreover, they could think of some questions and tried to find the answers. The better thing was that they could use life education knowledge in their daily life. That is the final purpose of life education.

School 2 had set up a life education group and appointed several teachers to work on life education with civil education teachers in 2014. It emphasized the experience teaching of life education. It encouraged students to take part in various activities related to life education. Meanwhile, life education was also immersed into other subjects, such as Chinese, Mathematics, Physical Education, Civil Education, Holistic Education, etc. Although life education was still not set an independent course, the all-round education in School 2 played the same role. The four main areas in the textbook of all-round education matched the four relationships of life education.

School 2 also planned to improve the life situation of teachers by participating in life education workshops for the teachers with the help of The Education University of Hong Kong and the Education Bureau. Thus, it could be seen that School 2 put an emphasis on life education of the students as well as the teachers. A group of teachers who joined the life education enrichment plan were required to attend the life education workshop each semester.

Students of School 2 had knowledge and experiences of life education. They took part in several different activities and learnt much. Some of these activities impressed them. More importantly, some students could relate what they had learnt to their daily life.

A few years ago, School 3 organized some life education experts to edit life education textbooks with the support of the Jiangsu education bureau and Nanjing Normal University. Meanwhile, some teachers in this school were also required to be involved in the editorial process. They helped to collect and arrange information, papers, books, stories, and other materials. They learnt a lot of knowledge about life education in this process and became the main force of developing life education. Moreover, they had incorporated life education in every subject teaching as a natural part. Although life education was not listed as an independent subject due to some limitations, they did not limit the implementation of life education in this school because life education was deeply rooted in the teaching thought of every teacher.

Students in School 3 knew the word of life education because this school delivered “Life education before twelve years old” to them. When the students were asked to talk about some points of life education, they were familiar with some safety knowledge. Ensuring students’ safety was one of the most significant responsibilities of schools besides transferring knowledge to them.

Teachers in School 4 had less professional theory and training about life education. They only penetrated some partial ideas or concepts of life education into some other subjects and teaching materials. Safety education and gratitude education are two main contents of moral education or life education. Students in School 4 had no formal life education lessons, but

they knew some stories about life education. They could learn the concept of life from daily life and apply it in their daily life. Safety education is also an important content for moral education or life education.

8.3 Teachers Development

8.3.1 Teacher Understanding of Life Education. The principal of School 1 assigned a five-teacher team from 2002 to be responsible for the life education project. These five teachers were not only the pioneer workers of life education in this school but they also owned this school-based curriculum development initiative. The panel head of life education of School 1 described:

Life situation relates to life education which is an important component of the school curriculum, integrated into specific areas, such as religious education and health lessons. We designed the curriculum of life education according to its four domains.

Even so, teachers in School 1 are staying motivated to improve their life education theory.

Some teachers of School 2 took part in life education projects and workshops held by The Hong Kong Institute of Education (now The Education University of Hong Kong) and the Hong Kong Education Bureau, respectively. The teacher of School 2 emphasized that:

Life education is very important to the teachers and students. I learn a lot from these projects and workshops. More teachers in our school should be involved into these projects and workshops. They do help out life and teaching. Only a few

teachers knowing life education is not enough. Meanwhile, I think that life education should be included as a core subject in the curriculum although the school was not doing that.

The principal of School 3 assigned five teachers who were responsible for life education and other subject teachers. As with their focus on life education goals of their schools, all teachers focused on the life qualities of students. All teachers agreed that life education was important to students and took part in the writing team of life education textbooks. Moreover, they also invited some students' parents to give lectures. With varied and lively contents, these lectures were welcomed to students. However, because of the assignment of the Education Department, they must use moral education and cannot list life education into their schedule. They could use life education at the class meeting.

The principal of School 4 assigned three teachers who were responsible for moral education for the focus group, one of whom was a discipline mistress, one was a guidance master and the other was in charge of extracurricular activities. They recognized that life education relates to their overall safety health. All three teachers expressed that life education was very important to the curriculum. Although there was no life education in this school, they tried to find some life elements in other subjects, such as Chinese, English, Math, etc. However, all teachers had to care about their own assessment and evaluation which were based on the measure of student achievement. Therefore, some class time for moral education was occupied by other subjects.

Although teachers of all schools were responsible for life education stated that life education was very important for students, their levels of life education were uneven.

Teachers in School 1 had years of experience in life education teaching which was a basic guarantee to realize the goal of life education. Some teachers of School 2 had learnt some knowledge from through some life education projects and workshops. But these short-term courses were not enough to train a qualified life education teacher. Some teachers in School 3 edited the life education textbook. They had accumulated rich knowledge about life education. However, the framework of these textbooks is limited to somehow narrow areas because of the overall Chinese educational policy. Therefore, the understanding of life education in School 3 was not deep and not complete. Teachers in School 4 had only a little concept of life education. It was not enough to support a whole life education teaching duty.

8.3.2 Teachers Development in Life Education. School 1 recognized the importance of the life situation of teachers and set aside a special time for the life development of teachers at staff meetings. There were also some opportunities for teachers to exchange and learn from other schools in Taiwan and Shunde. One teacher introduced:

As early as 2010, the education and training demonstration base of life education for Chinese young people was founded in Shunde. At the same time, several primary schools have gradually carried out life education, including Daliang Xishan Primary School, Benyuan Primary School, Fengsha Primary School, and so on. Last year (2015), the “Life education Exhibition” was officially opened in Fengsha Primary School on 31 March. In the exhibition, several sections, such as Human and society, Life education movies, have been set to expound the course and meaning of life to students. There is also a big mailbox to collect students’ letters for themselves, twenty years from now. I learnt a lot by visiting the

exhibition.

Another teacher added:

In addition to the exhibition, Shunde also developed a variety of activities and forms to promote life education. For example, they bring life education into the teaching material and classroom. In Chinese classroom, the students learn how to protect environment when they are reading “Only one earth”. While students are learning calculation in math classroom, the teacher tells them the meaning of courtesy and care. Moreover, they also invited some professionals to teach students how to prevent them from drowning, abduction and cheated. In Shunde, I got some ideas on life education teaching from them. Meanwhile, I think it is really a good way for a comprehensive display of life education. We maybe build our own life education exhibition in the near future.

A teacher who visited Taiwan said:

Overall, the implementation of life education in Taiwan schools is a little better than in Hong Kong. After many years of accumulation and innovation, they have a relatively mature theory and method system for life education. However, the overall social and educational environment in Hong Kong is different from Taiwan, we cannot copy their theory and practices blindly or mechanically. We should make some adjustments of it according to our domestic situation on the basis of absorbing the advanced Taiwan experiences.

School 2 took part in the “Improve the life education in primary schools plan” which was organized by The Hong Kong Institution of Education. Three teachers, including the

principal, received special training on life education. Although there was no a long-term training plan for teachers on life education, some teachers studied life education by themselves. One teacher stated:

I took part in the training plan by The Hong Kong Institution of Education. The training was a good fit for my desires and needs on life education. Before the training, I only know some relatively superficial knowledge on life education through self-study and actual practice. The lack of professional knowledge limited the development of life education to a higher level. Now I learnt some theoretical knowledge of life education. I combine the theory with my practical work experiences. I am feeling confident of better teaching results of life education.

School 3 invited some experts of life education from Nanjing Normal University to support the writing of the life education textbooks. The teachers in this school learnt a lot of theories and knowledge on life education while writing the textbooks. Now, they are life education experts too. One moral education teacher said:

I knew little about life education before I joined the editorial group of “Life education before twelve years old” several years ago. Under the leadership and guideline of our principal and some experts from Nanjing Normal University, we read and collected an enormous amount of material and information on life education. Although I spent a great deal of time and energy, I think it is significant when the textbooks were finally published. Meanwhile I learnt a lot about life education. Now, in my class, I naturally combine the concept of life education with my teaching contents.

However, there were no more life education training courses for teachers after the textbooks were published.

For the teachers in School 4, they had some superficial ideas on life education, but they lacked life education training systemically. And there was no special plan made to cater for the life education of teachers, whereas, the principal spoke about improving the life situation of teachers through staff development, giving them less pressure from work and involving them with the Healthy School program. One teacher said:

I know life education is important to students. Some parents also asked us to teach students some knowledge about safety. I know safety education is only a small part of life education. However, I don't know how to promote life education to a higher level because of lack of professional study and training. Now all I can do is to extract some basic ideas of life education from other textbooks. I hope our school can provide us with the opportunity to learn life education outside. Or we can invite some life education professionals to hold a life education seminar or workshop in our school.

8.4 Life Education Differences and Gaps in Two Places and Four Schools

8.4.1 School Attentions on Life Education. School 1 was owned by The Methodist Church which had 13 kindergartens, 11 primary schools and eight secondary schools in Hong Kong. As early as 2004, The Methodist Church began the implementation of life education in several schools, and then in all its schools. Over the last ten years, the former president of School 1 had always insisted the importance of life education. The current president

introduced that:

With the strong leadership of last president, a teaching group of life education was founded five years ago which led and motivated a group of teachers in the development of life education through the school curriculum, programs and other extra-curricular activities with the support of the whole school. With the efforts of all teachers and students, life education has been developed to be a separate course in this school. As an important component of the school curriculum, life education is also integrated into specific areas, such as religious education and health lessons.

School 2 was aiming for all-round development in their students by providing comprehensive services to them so that they may exert their full potentialities to serve the community whole-heartedly. It encouraged students to be a positive person, to study hard, think independently, and achieve full development. In the future, they will become responsible citizens of our society. To achieve this aim, School 2 was continuing to create an all-round learning experience for all students. The principal of School 2 emphasized that:

The quality all-round education is very important which improves life education. Life education is also very important for students and the teachers, and the school has a strong emphasis on an all-round development of students, not only in the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic but also in the life domain.

The principal of School 3 was a well-known education expert in China. He had original understanding of “Emotion and Intelligence Education” of primary students, and was building his own style and system. Certainly, he thought:

Life education is important to students. I organized a writing team of life education textbooks a few years ago. Meanwhile, some life education experts at Nanjing Normal University were invited as instructors to this school. Now, “Life education before twelve years old” was published in 2014.

School 4 provided comprehensive services to students so that they may exert their full potentialities to serve the community whole-heartedly. In addition to moral education, School 4 had developed school-based curriculum for students which was based on teaching and research activities. The principal of School 4 stated that:

Life education is a very important part of the curriculum and my school includes life education in moral education and health education. Although there are no special teachers and groups for life education, I do encourage all teachers to read some textbooks and papers on life education. Life education is developed in some lessons and extra-curricular activities and it is also promoted as hidden curriculum. However, life education should be a supplementary part of Moral Education. We must pay much attention on the life safety of students.

All four school principals stated that life education was very important for their students and all their schools had tried to cater for the life situation of their students through their curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

School 1 paid full attention to life education. School 2 was going to show concern about life education while its focus was all-round education. The principal of School 3 pushed his “Emotion and Intelligence Education” theory in this school. Life education was only a subsidiary part although it had edited and published life education textbooks. For School 4, it

did not pay any attention to moral education. For them, life education was only a concept scattered among different subjects.

8.4.2 Different Teaching Styles. Principals and vice-principals of all schools in Hong Kong and Jiangsu accepted the ideas of life education and emphasized its importance to students. Although they had somehow different understandings on the meaning of life education, they agreed that was necessary to implement life education in schools. They also developed life education based on their actual situation.

For the four schools in Hong Kong and Jiangsu, they had different teaching styles and characters, so did life education. School 1 set life education as an independent subject which was consistent in its educational mission and religious background. It unified morning meetings, student management and the overall performance of students. Although School 2 did not have an independent life education, it delivered life education to students through civil education and other activities. School 3 had added life education, especially safety education, to moral education. School 4 penetrated life education ideas into some other subjects, such as Chinese and English. In short, all schools wished their students could have a better life and were working towards this goal.

Some Hong Kong primary schools, such as School 1, set Life education as a separate subject. It can give the students a clear concept of life education. Students can learn life education systematically and step by step. With textbooks and syllabus, the school and teachers can plan and prepare teaching materials precisely. Generally, the teachers of life education are trained with professional background. Therefore, the teaching results of life education in these schools are good.

However, more teaching resources are needed to set a separate life education subject, such as time, classroom, textbooks, teaching materials, and so on. Moreover, it is difficult to examine the learning results for every single student.

When life education is permeated into other subjects, it can happen in any subject at any time. Generally, life education is related to various interesting stories. So students can have deep memories. The teaching results may be more longlasting by story-telling.

However, there are no specific textbooks and standard teaching guidelines. All teaching points are scattered. Generally, teachers of other subjects have no training of life education. They have to talk about life education based on their own understanding. Sometimes, there are some misunderstandings between different teachers in schools.

In 2015, there were 572 primary schools in Hong Kong. Among them, 106 mentioned life education. Even so, not all 106 have separated life education. Among 106 schools with life education, 84 schools were run by religious groups. There was still no government primary school that mentioned life education. Apparently, religious groups are the main force to promote life education in Hong Kong.

In Mainland China, few of primary schools had separate life education. Even there was life education concept in schools, it should be permeated to other subjects or an additional course. The fundamental cause was that life education was still not be considered seriously by the government, the society, the parents, the teachers, the schools and even the students.

8.4.3 Life Education Theory and Practice Gap in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the development of life education is mainly practiced by schools and some private groups from the 1990s; especially some religious groups (Wong, 2013b). Rather, the government of Hong

Kong does not play a leading role in life education. Moreover, there is a gap between life education theory and practice, i.e. the study and theory of life education is behind the practice. Only four treaties on life education were published during the last ten years or so. However, 80 primary schools took part in the life educational program which was held by the Religious and Spiritual Education Center at The Education University of Hong Kong. This illustrates that schools in Hong Kong prefer to implement life education rather than to study it. Besides, it is a bottom-up approach to advance life education in Hong Kong.

With the theory support and guidance from some life education researchers and experts in professional organizations, the practice of life education were impressive in both School 1 and School 2. In School 1, “Let life fly” was used as the specific textbooks for life education which were edited and published by The Methodist Church, Hong Kong. To help students learn life education effectively, an active experience teaching and learning model has been recommended. Some games, case study, group discussion and experience activities were introduced to help students feeling and understanding different life situations. In fact, School 1 even developed its own teaching characteristics, school culture and image. In turn, School 1 has become a research object for life education study. Its experience and effects will be upgraded from practice to theory and generalized to other schools, and so on in a virtuous circle. Teachers in School 2 were all beneficiaries of this circle. They learnt quite a lot from life education training courses and workshops. They combined life education with other subjects according to their teaching experiences and the actual situation of their school.

In view of the good momentum of life education development in these schools, the Hong Kong government involves life education in its teaching outline. However, life

education is only placed at a less important position. In order to use the power of the government to promote life education in all schools in Hong Kong, we need to keep working on this.

8.4.4 Life Education Theory and Practice Gap in Jiangsu. It was mentioned in a report that about 30 papers on life education were published recently in Jiangsu alone (Yuan, 2015). There are also lots of papers and books written or edited by some experts of life education, such as: Yongxin Zhu, Yibao Zhang, Zhen Li, Jubo Qian, etc. However, very few schools are fully observed to be implementing life education. It is hard to find a school who truly commits to practicing life education. The principals admitted what they did was not enough to reach the level of life education. There is still a large gap between theory and practice of life education. The educational department and some researchers have studied life education to a certain degree and established the new curriculum requirements. But the practice of life education in schools is very backward. So, it is a top-down approach to push the development of life education in Jiangsu.

In Jiangsu, it is not difficult for researchers to apply some projects on life education. It means that the government did play attention to life education. With financial and personnel support from the government, some project teams were set up to study life education, to edit life education textbooks, to reform current education system, etc. These projects have received lots of achievements with the collective effort from researchers and schools. Some scientific papers have been published, including the innovation of theories and practices. For example, a series of textbooks, Life education before twelve years old, have been edited and published in School 3. However, these great achievements in life education have hardly been

converted to practical teaching. This is a spectacular waste of intellectual and educational resources. Obviously, research theories, papers and textbooks cannot be transferred to students without practical teaching.

Life education, compared with other science subjects, has its unique and profound effect in human's spirit world (Palmer, 1999). Moreover, ideological and political education is an important spiritual mental tool by which the ruling classes maintain their rule (Wang, 2008). Specifically, in some developing countries such as China, their rulers may worry that education will loosen their grip on the population. Furthermore, Robert J. Barro found that higher levels of primary education predict higher freedoms after he analyzed more than a hundred countries (Barro, 1999). Therefore, the government views the education system as a means to control information and to indoctrinate students. Under the leadership of this kind of government, it is not expected to carry out deep and full life education in schools. Only some superficial knowledge of life education can be presented in papers and textbooks. Most of them are safety education. For example, "Life education before twelve years old" seems like a handbook of safety education. All contents related to freedom and spirit are omitted in these textbooks. This situation cannot be changed by individuals in current circumstances.

After more than 30 years of development, Taiwan government, the education sector, educational researchers, and the whole society have reached a consensus that life education is important for students. Under this condition, the implementation of life education moves smoothly from the government to the schools.

In Jiangsu, the situation of life education is different from Taiwan. Although all people verbally admit that life education is important for students, there are millions of problem in

carrying out life education. In reality, the government and the education sector do not pay much attention to life education. There are no many educational resources and supports for life education. Moreover, the shortage of qualified life education teachers can't be solved in a short time. Frankly, most of schools do not feel any urgent need for life education. The root cause is that life education has no direct contribution to various examinations.

In Hong Kong, both in School 1 and 2, people emphasized achieving individual value by personal choice and personal effort. Personal success is the goal of most Hong Kong people. There are also several popular examples of personal success recognized by many Hong Kong people, such as Li Ka-shing.

But in the mainland, the socialist education puts the community on top of the individual. It is an honor to serve the community. Committing yourself to the society is a great way to give meaning to your life. One who devotes himself to society and people will have a lot of enjoyment from the process of dedication.

The traditional moral education in China emphasizes that individuals belong to the community, to the society, to the country. It weakens the focus on the person in the education. The potential intention of moral education in China is to suppress the subjectivity of individuals. All people should be subordinated to social or political demands.

Life education pays more attention to the development of human individuality. With the expanding scope of freedom in China, more and more people are concerned about their own personality development. The traditional approach to moral education can't keep pace with the times. Life education is needed in China to supplement moral education to meet the urgent needs of the new generation.

In Hong Kong, both life education and moral education have paid much attention to personal development. Individual success has been widely promoted as only life goal for many Hong Kong people. So in a way, the interest of the community is overlooked. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance community education in Hong Kong.

All four schools in Hong Kong and China think that life education is important. Life education can help students to understand the meaning of life, to keep a balanced living, to build a bright future. Some schools in Hong Kong are teaching life education which helps students to better prepare for their future life and career. However, life education is a time consuming project. Moreover, there may be no immediate effects and results. Even so, some religious schools in Hong Kong still do it because they are concerned about the whole life of their students. But for some schools in mainland China, many teachers in these schools do not want to devote themselves to life education because they think it is wasting time. They only take care of students for the six years of their study there, not for students' whole life.



Chapter 9

Life Education Challenges and Suggestions

Compared with life education in Hong Kong, the development of life education in Jiangsu is lagging far behind. Although some primary schools in Jiangsu (School 3) set life education as part of moral education, it is still at a secondary position. Not as with life education in Hong Kong, life education in Mainland China is divided from moral education which is highly government-directed. Therefore, it is hard to claim that life education has no politics. It is still risky for schools to perform life education without any political considerations under the current situation in Mainland China. Although almost all principals and teachers stated verbally that life education was very important to students, there was no impetus for them to take the initiative to push the development of life education. After all, life education, unlike other subjects, is a thankless and time consuming task.

An old Chinese saying goes, “It takes ten years to grow trees but a hundred years to rear people” (十年樹木，百年樹人). It may take a fairly long time for the family, schools and society in Mainland China to accept and develop a good atmosphere for life education. I believe that life education will get better and better with the joint efforts of educators in Hong Kong, Mainland, Taiwan and anyone concerned about life education in China.

9.1 Life Education Challenges in Hong Kong

According to my interview and observation in School 1 and School 2, both of them had formed a characteristic life education teaching model with their own teaching practice. All

schools, including principals, teachers and students, were working feverishly hard to carry out life education. Meanwhile, some life education researchers and experts have played a role in helping them to upgrade teachers' quality and to improve teaching level. With the joint efforts of both researchers and educators, life education has achieved good progress. However, there are also some issues which hinder its further development, such as: family factors, student academic pressure, unstable teacher team in schools, negative social phenomenon, etc.

Some Hong Kong families have been fractured by various society issues, such as inflation, economic inequality, increasing property prices, etc. A survey found that the resilience of Hong Kong families has decreased compared with ten years ago. Housing, marriage crisis and debt are three problems in front of Hong Kong families. Inevitably, family problems will influence children more or less.

Generally, in order to maintain their decent livelihood, both the father and mother have to perform full-time work. Accordingly, they have no sufficient time to stay at home to look after their children. So, the work of taking care of children falls on household workers (Filipinos). Although Filipinos can look after the child's daily lives very well, they have no responsibility to replace their parents. As a result, children have not much time to communicate with their parents. This situation becomes worse when parents have to work overtime from time-to-time. Therefore, Hong Kong parents have less opportunities to teach life education to their children.

A survey showed that 75% primary students felt some degree of stress in Hong Kong, as reported by Wen Wei Po on August 12 2013. Study and parental expectations are two main

pressure resources. For the 513 primary students in the survey, over one in five thought they were under severe stress. Some students worried about their undesirable study results (21%). Or they did not achieve the required degree of their parents (15%). Other students felt pressure when they were left alone, they did not want to meet teachers in schools, and they were bullied by other students. For an average middle-class family, it has enough economic power to provide its children with various extra-curricular activities. However, sometimes these overwhelming activities are the pressure source of students because their parents disregarded the wishes and abilities of their children. For some students, their only activity after school is doing homework or taking various extracurricular classes. They have little time to relax. Even their dinner time and bath time were also stripped. Under such a situation, students are more prone to worry and have negative emotions, and expressed their dissatisfaction by some inappropriate actions. For example, a primary student did not finish his homework as required by his parents. He lashed out under pressure and punched his father and mother. Another student afraid to face his studies, locked himself in a room to evade school.

It is generally known that it is a very stressful job to be a teacher in a Hong Kong primary school. As employees of the school's principal, teachers must first complete teaching tasks and some administrative work which was assigned by the principal. In addition, they have to deal with lots of unexpected problems of students. From time-to-time, they have to face parents who complains about their work. Some teachers resign or change jobs after a few years on the job. Therefore, the loss of the existing teacher is much more serious in some Hong Kong primary schools. The drainage of teachers brings serious effects to the basic

education. That is, the life situation of teachers should be taken seriously.

Compared to students on the Mainland, it is easier for Hong Kong students to have contact with some negative social phenomena, such as drugs, compensated dating, etc. And these phenomena have their existence and development of soil in Hong Kong society because of the lack of life education. Police have warned of “an alarming increase” in drug dealers who sell to schoolchildren, reported by the South China Morning Post in 2013 (Carney, 2013). Those customers could be as young as 14 years old. It meant that more and more students were fooling around with drugs. In fact, some anti-drug education did not work at all in some schools. Some students admitted that the anti-drug lecture was outdated and very boring. However, they were kicked out of schools to protect the school reputation if they were exposed.

9.2 Life Education Challenges in Jiangsu

As mentioned in Chapters 5, 6 and 8, although School 3 and School 4 in Jiangsu have realized that life education is important to the health and all-round growing for all students, their actual performance is far from good. Although there were some activities related to life education, their contents were superficial and imperfect. These were caused by many factors among family, school, society, etc.

Family education is the first stop of children’s life education. The guidance in daily life and the penetration everywhere of life education of family education has advantages for teaching not for the sake of teaching. A growing body of evidence shows that what parents say and do has a subtle effect on their children. According to my survey and students’

response, I found that families did not fully play its strong role for life's responsibilities and frustration education. Frustration is inevitable during our life, and frustration education should be carried out among primary schools. It is an important content of mental health education in schools, the goal of which is to cultivate students' anti-frustration ability.

According to the interview of students and teachers, I found that the schools did not do well to help students to overcome setbacks, to build positive emotion, and to set life responsibility. This was probably led by the teaching principle guided by intellectual education. Generally, schools always neglect the psychology development of students.

Furthermore, the students from rural areas have less life consciousness than the students from urban families. This shows that the level of life education in rural areas is lower than that in the urban areas.

From social information, it is difficult to find enough positive reports on life reasonability, life value, death education and frustration education. There is not enough promotion of life education on the network, TV, papers, and other social medias.

For the overall education system in China, it is still examination-oriented. Although China is carrying out a nine-year compulsory education movement, and students do not need examinations to enter primary and secondary schools, the college entrance examination is still an unavoidable challenge. Moreover, entrance examination is one kind of selective examination, which is oriented and confined powerfully to education. With its demanding parents, ambitious students, and test-obsessed culture, China's nine-year schooling is probably the most rigorous in the world. Most of the studying time is divided to some basic subjects, such as Chinese and mathematics. Under such an education atmosphere, it is not

realistic to spend large amounts of time on life education. In terms of costs and time-constraints, it is quite uneconomic for schools and teachers to provide too much life education to all students. After all, only a few cases can be ascribed to the lack of life education.

In the teaching of most primary schools, the dominant mode of instruction is generally traditional, with teachers presenting formal lectures and students taking notes. The teacher was center in the traditional teaching mode, which inhibited the students' enthusiasm and initiative, thus, bounded the development of innovative talents. It is undeniable that the traditional teaching mode has lasted for thousands of years and is effective for some subjects. However, it may be not right for life education. For life education, it is far beyond teaching and learning because there is no unified life pattern for all people. The teacher should guide and inspire students to think more about life rather than to learn what the life is.

Actually, almost all parents were willing to cooperate with schools about life education of their children. However, most of parents had little concept of life education. If there were some activities or workshop in school, they would learn more about it. Therefore, I suggest that schools give more chances for parents to enter schools. Parents can learn life education from teachers. At the same time, parents can be asked to prepare some short presentations based on their own careers. These presentations can widen the exposure of students.

9.3 Reconsideration of Life Education

In the paper writing process, I read many papers and publications which gave me a deeper understanding of life education theory. The guidelines of my supervisors and other

education experts improved my research levels. After I contacted the principals, teachers and students in different primary schools in Hong Kong and Jiangsu, I approached with a fuller understanding of the real state of life education development. All of these have urged me to reconsider the life education situation.

Education is life! Education is not just a preparation for life, but it is life (Lindeman, 1926). Education and learning is a lifelong journey. If you are going to do something for life, shouldn't it be more fun?

Education is considered by many to be preparation for “real life” and that you do not need education once you enter real life. Traditional education is something that has to be endured, and it typically turns off individuals once they have completed it. They do not want to further participate in education once they leave school. Many believe it is only for the young and it is not necessary for adults. However, individuals learn throughout their entire lives. Individuals who stop learning will rapidly lose what they had once learned. For individuals to succeed, they need to continue learning.

Life is not an isolated subject learned independently. Life is a mixture of many subjects, experienced at the same time. Education should be enjoyed and looked forward to. We need to explore different methods for educating.

Education is more than skills development, education is what gives meaning to life, not just for the sake of knowledge. Education continues where vocational training stops. Additionally, education is the link to situations rather than subjects. We will learn when there is a problem to solve or an obstacle to negotiate. The focus of education is the learner's experience. Learners develop by expanding on their experience. They gain experience by

doing things, and reflecting upon the processes. The curriculum must adjust to the student, rather than the student adjusting to the curriculum.

Dewey also thought:

Life began and ended in humans' experiences; that is, humans using appropriate methods could successfully cope with life's confusing, obscure, and indeterminate situations. The key to coping with such difficulties was using insights to define problems, establishing a set of possible solutions, determining the likely consequences of each possibility, and then evaluating the best possibility through observation and experiment. (Dewey, 1922)

According to Dewey's teaching concepts, education should be not confined inside the classroom. Students need to know what is happening in the classroom and the world outside of it. The theory and practice in "Education is life" should be bridged together to connect the ideas in the classroom to the experience outside of classroom.

Xingzhi Tao thought that life is education (Tao, 1930). Life reflects human's real education demands. The returning of life education to the life world is to the return to the subjects. Life and education complements one another; life decides education, and education transformation life. Both of them promote to mutually develop.

Moreover, life education should be contextual. Its content and implementation should be kept consistent with the social environment, culture background, political system, and so on. Although the "four sectors" and "four dimensions" of life education were used to compare the state of development of life education in Hong Kong and Jiangsu, they are not the only criteria or standard of life education.

In practice, life education ought to be treated as a long-term, systematic, overall, personalized education project. I also should notice that the influence to people by life education is retarded by time. Education of life, by life and for life is a longtime and systematic project.

- Education of life: It tells us what life is. We can learn the basic life phenomenon of us, of the nature and of the universe.
- Education by life: We should be able to sense the beauty of this rhythm of life, to appreciate any form of life, to enjoy every moment in our life, as we do in grand symphonies, its main theme, its strains of conflict and the final resolution.
- Education for life: Life education should be a very broad concept which includes, but not limited to, education of the life and by the life. It plays a fundamental and critical role in enhancing the process of man's socialization life and can by no means be replaced by any other form of education. On the contrary, any education program which is benefit for our better life can be classified as education for the life.

Promoting the idea of holistic life education, some educators in Taiwan thought that the meaning and value of life lie in four basic relationships, i.e., Transcendent, Community, Nature and Self. They cover the four properties of human beings: naturalness, human rationality, virtue and sociality. They inform the teaching contents of life education.

For the implementation of life education, there are four dimensions: Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional and Practical. They are more about the teaching process.

Education of life and by life should include all the contents and four relationships of life

education. Education for life plays a fundamental and critical role in enhancing the process of man's socialization and can by no means be replaced by any other form of education. And to be effective, the four dimensions of life education must be involved in the educational process.

9.4 Limitations

To survey and compare the life education in Hong Kong and Jiangsu, I visited four primary schools in two areas. It was my honor to discuss life topics with some experts and educators who have devoted themselves to life education for many years. I have benefited a lot from principals, teachers and students. They widened and deepened my knowledge of life education. However, due to time restrictions, my study only focused on a small sampling which, maybe, cannot reflect the overall situation of life education. Although I met several parents in Jiangsu, I did not receive any response from parents in Hong Kong. Therefore, the comparison between parents in Jiangsu and in Hong Kong had to be removed from this thesis. Moreover, there must be some flaws, even totally wrong viewpoints, of life education in this thesis because of my knowledge restrictions.

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Appendix 1

Life Education Curriculum of School 1: Let life fly

Grade 1	Grade 2
Personal 1. I am growing up 2. My new life 3. Good habits 4. To be honesty	Personal 1. I am just me 2. My advantages and disadvantages 3. Raise emotionally intelligent 4. Be a modest man
Social 5. Hello, classmates 6. Help each other 7. Keep order 8. Appreciate others	Social 5. Love my family 6. Peace and friendship 7. Use computer profitably 8. Appreciate other's talents
Life and beyond 9. Where did I come from 10. Know yourself	Life and beyond 9. Selfless love 10. Love God and others
Community 11. My hometown 12. My motherland 13. The Chinese nation 14. I am as you are 15. The preacher in China	Community 11. My family name 12. China's traditional festivals 13. Chinese traditional virtue 14. Mutual help among neighbors 15. Pray to the God

16. Love the nature	16. Love the animals and the plants
Grade 3	Grade 4
Personal 1. My talents 2. To be honest 3. To be thankful 4. To treat others with sincerity	Personal 1. My strengths 2. Overcome adversity 3. To be patient 4. To be responsible
Social 5. The power of language 6. Love neighbors and classmates 7. Unity and cooperation with others 8. No nicknames	Social 5. A good listener 6. Understand each other 7. Respect others 8. Learn from each other
Life and beyond 9. Don't waste time 10. My family	Life and beyond 9. The four season of life 10. Missing loved one
Community 11. Conquers myself 12. Work hard 13. Cares about other people 14. No discrimination 15. Preacher: James Legge 16. Treasure resources	Community 11. Sun Yat-sen 12. Union is strength 13. Scientists and inventors 14. Protect children's rights 15. Preacher: John Wesley 16. Adaptability

Grade 5	Grade 6
Personal 1. Strengths and weaknesses 2. Time management 3. Money management 4. Independent views	Personal 1. Thoughts and action 2. Prepare for middle school 3. Release stress 4. A positive life
Social 5. Feel for others 6. Make good friends 7. Appreciate difference 8. How to use internet	Social 5. Choose friends 6. Goodbye, primary school 7. Look before you leap 8. Embrace love
Life and beyond 9. Turn grief into strength 10. Stages of life	Life and beyond 9. A colorful life 10. The value of life
Community 11. Love my motherland 12. Crisis in China 13. Natural disasters 14. Globalization 15. George Piercy 16. Protect the earth	Community 11. Cultural practitioners 12. The rise of China 13. Small stories with big deal 14. Wealth and poverty 15. Samuel Pollard 16. Save energy and resource

Appendix 2

Life Education Curriculum of School 3: Life education before twelve years old

Shuangjin Sun

Table of content

Grade 1	Grade 2
Recognize life 1. Plants and fruits 2. Little ants 3. Where did I come from?	Recognize life 1. Edible vegetables 2. Little tadpoles and frogs 3. Our face
Safety 4. Kitchen safety 5. Road safety 6. When you are alone	Safety 4. Strangers outside the door 5. School safety 6. Swimming safety
Explore life 7. Do your best 8. Control your emotions 9. Develop imagination	Explore life 7. Make progress 8. Identify faces 9. Learn exercises
Good manners 10. Speak politely 11. Act courteously 12. Eat gentlemanly	Good manners 10. Treat people thoughtfully 11. Make friends 12. Classmate friendship

Grade 3	Grade 4
<p>Recognize life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plants in school 2. Soil and animals 3. Our body 	<p>Recognize life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flowers on balcony 2. Love small animals 3. Related to other people
<p>Safety</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Electricity safety 5. Sports safety 6. When the lift stop 	<p>Safety</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. If bitten by a dog 5. Annoying mischief 6. Bus safety
<p>Explore life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Believe yourself 8. Failure isn't fearful 9. Pay attention 	<p>Explore life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. I am brave 8. I became clever 9. Full of creation
<p>Social communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Tell the truth 11. Be happy 12. Independence 	<p>Social communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Respect people 11. How to face unfair things 12. Cherish the time

Grade 5	Grade 6
<p>Recognize life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life in harsh environment 2. A variety of species 3. Use your brain healthy 	<p>Recognize life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Genetically modified food 2. Extraterrestrial life 3. Physical changes of your body
<p>Safety</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Alert network trap 5. Self-protection in earthquake 6. Prevent fire accidents 	<p>Safety</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Face strangers 5. Self-help in floods 6. Travel tips
<p>Explore life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Believe yourself 8. Failure isn't fearful 9. Pay attention 	<p>Explore life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. I can do it 8. Adapt to the environment 9. Relax and no nervous
<p>Pursue life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. My future is not a dream 11. Our happiness 12. Attitudes toward money 	<p>Pursue life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Beauty and ugliness 11. Freedom is important 12. Death

Appendix 3

Life Education Curriculum of School 4: Moral and Life; Moral and Society

Chief Editor: Jie Lu

Jiangsu Education Publishing House

Grade 1 (1 st Semester)	Grade 1 (2 nd Semester)
<p>Nice to meet you</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know new classmate 2. Our campus 3. A flag raiser 4. Start school life 	<p>I love my family</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My family 2. I am one of my family 3. Growing with care of parents 4. Play house
<p>Happy every day</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. On your way to school 6. When you are late 7. Learning is funny 8. The class was over 	<p>Good daily habits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. I lost a tooth 6. Eyes and ears 7. Drinking water 8. Eat nicely
<p>Growing like young trees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Where did I come from 10. Act with energy 11. Don't lie 12. Do things carefully 	<p>Action of love e</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Care for the old 10. They need love 11. Hands in hands 12. Care about plants
<p>Winter is coming</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Where is winter 	<p>Summer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. It is raining



14. Play with snow and ice	14. Small bugs in summer
15. Happy Chinese New Year	15. Relieve summer heat
16. A gift to new year	16. Take a summer holiday

Grade 2 (1 st Semester)	Grade 2 (2 nd Semester)
Happy birthday	Civilization
1. Happy birthday to you	1. Greeting guests in home
2. Celebrate National Day	2. Be a guest
3. Some old stories	3. Watch a play
4. Birthday of Red Scarves	4. Make a phone call
Autumn	Spring
5. Autumn is coming	5. Where is spring
6. Autumn outing	6. Seeding in spring
7. Art of autumn	7. Playing in spring
8. Mid-Autumn and Double Ninth	8. Spring in my heart
Growing	My interest
9. Let's try it	9. Interest is the best teacher
10. I am brave	10. I love games
11. Without self-willing	11. I like small animals
12. Good daily habits	12. I like reading
Explore your brain	I grew up
13. A clever house	13. No procrastination

14. Research work	14. Arrange each day
15. A little creativity	15. Grow-up diary
16. Beautiful campus	16. Better and better

Grade 3 (1 st Semester)	Grade 3 (2 nd Semester)
Classmates 1. My self-portrait 2. Classmate relationships 3. How to study well 4. Studying methods 5. Follow the rules	Neighbors 1. Friends in the neighborhood 2. No trouble to neighbor 3. Happy neighborhood lives
Security and growth 6. Return home safely 7. Stay away from danger 8. Call emergency call (110)	Growth in school 4. Introduce my school to you 5. Beautiful classroom 6. Thank you, teachers
Growth at home 9. Family tree 10. Love from parents 11. What can I do at home 12. Family memory 13. What do I want	Growth with other people 7. Labor is honor. Labor is fun 8. Respect for labor 9. Protect public facilities
	My hometown

	10. Where is my hometown 11. Welcome to my hometown 12. Lovely hometown people 13. Our common home
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Moral and Society

Grade 4 (1 st Semester)	Grade 4 (2 nd Semester)
We are together 1. Cooperation 2. Real friendship 3. Share with you 4. Bullying and threats	Can I help you? 1. Civilization and comity 2. Caring for the disabled 3. Support each other 4. Contribute your love
Growth without pains 5. Overcome the difficulty 6. Say no to plagiarizing 7. To be honest 8. Reject superstitions	My home is changing 5. Protect the environment 6. China's traditional festivals 7. Fundamentally changed
Clever buyers 9. Shopping 10. Food and clothes source 11. Plastic products 12. Save water	Connection with the outside 8. Roads and transport 9. Internet and TV 10. Newspaper 11. Evolution of communication

Grade 5 (1 st Semester)	Grade 5 (2 nd Semester)
<p>Who am I?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know more about myself 2. Be independent 3. Set an example 	<p>Family problems</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pressure of parents 2. Troubles in my home 3. Communicate with parents 4. One-child family
<p>Gets along with people</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Appreciate other people 5. Difference between boys and girls 6. Follow rules 	<p>My right and responsibility</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Public affairs 6. Citizenship 7. Learn and use laws
<p>Ownership of the class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Individual and the class 8. My right 9. My responsibility 10. Work together 	<p>China's recent history</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Decay of Qing dynasty 9. Overthrow the feudal society 10. Chinese Communist Party
<p>The same heritage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Ours ancestors 12. Ancient inventions 13. Ancient culture 	<p>Anti-Japanese War</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Japanese invasion 12. Fight against Japanese 13. New China was founded

Grade 6 (1 st Semester)	Grade 6 (2 nd Semester)
New issues with growth	Small earth

1. Colorful after-school life 2. No smoking and drinking 3. Keep away from heresy	1. Beautiful earth 2. The map of China 3. Made in China 4. The internet
Grow with country 4. Improvement of China 5. Develop primary-level democracy 6. Taiwan	The earth is sick. 5. Greenhouse effect 6. Natural disasters 7. Protect rare species 8. Species invasion 9. Natural resources
Foreign countries 7. India 8. Egypt 9. Greek 10. To be a volunteer	Problems of the world 10. Endless wars 11. Science and technology 12. The United Nations
Culture difference 11. Different customs and habits 12. Spring festival and Christmas 13. Different races and ethnicities	End of primary school life 13. Growth record in 6 years 14. Look around in secondary school 15. Graduation ceremony