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## **In search of a guidance curriculum for Hong Kong schools**

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### **Abstract**

Importing a Western curriculum to another culture is contentious. Through a content analysis of guidance materials in selected primary schools, in this paper we explore the appropriateness of adopting a Western guidance curriculum in Hong Kong. Using a multi-dimensional framework derived from Lawton's (1973) model of curriculum development, we report the sociological contextual features of the materials and present a content analysis to develop an understanding of the different approaches to psychology embodied in the curriculum. Three forms of the same Western guidance curriculum (Radd 1993), as used in three Hong Kong primary schools, are analysed to illustrate how Western notions of 'self' do not fit within an 'East meets West' context such as Hong Kong.

We argue that because of the 'East meets West' context of Hong Kong, there is a need to develop a 'hybrid' guidance curriculum that draws on a psychology guided by an understanding of the 'hybrid self', and that reflects the social and psychological contexts of Hong Kong. Implications of the findings for countries with Confucian heritages are discussed.

### **Introduction**

In 1996, the Education Department of Hong Kong started a pilot classroom guidance curriculum based on a Western model, Radd's *Grow with guidance system* (Radd 1993), in a few primary and secondary schools. This initiative followed the

international trend towards broad developmental guidance programs (Hansen & Gysbers 1984; Gibson et al 1993; Munro 1977; Myrick 1993; Othman & Bakar 1993).

Guidance and counselling services have been in place in most of the Hong Kong secondary schools since the 1950s. Over the years, they have evolved from career guidance in the 1950s; through a casework approach supplemented by various group programs in the 1970s and 1980s (Hui 1991); to a whole-school approach (WSA) in the 1990s. The WSA involves all teachers in helping students to identify and overcome their problems, and is viewed as a way of facilitating the personal development, social adaptation and adjustment of students in schools.

In the ten years since the introduction of the WSA, school guidance in Hong Kong has evolved from a remedial, casework approach to a more preventive and developmental approach (Luk & Lung 1999). During this period, the government offered funds to schools to provide whole-school developmental or preventive programs. Thus, WSA guidance curricula slowly emerged in a few secondary schools in Hong Kong.

However, there has been almost no such development in the primary schools (Chow & Chan 1999) in the same period. Thus, the decision of the Education Department to introduce Radd's (1993) *Grow with guidance system* as a guidance curriculum for primary schools in 1996 was significant. Radd's materials were chosen by the Education Department as a model of guidance curriculum for a pilot project involving seven primary schools. During the pilot phase, the Education Department produced an adaptation of these materials; and schools also produced their own materials from Radd's original model and the Education Department's adaptation.

Whether materials developed in an Anglo-American context such as Radd's are suitable for use in Hong Kong, where the population is predominately Chinese, is a moot point. Luk (2001) has argued that the competing contexts of Hong Kong – which can be described as 'East meets West' – result in many confusions and contradictions in the development of personal and social education (ie guidance) in Hong Kong. The content analysis we present here of Radd's original materials, the Education Department's adaptation and the curriculum materials used in three of the pilot schools, provides points of reflection and insight about such issues.

### **Sociological contexts of Hong Kong and the USA**

This section is a brief background of how the sociological context of Hong Kong can be called a hybrid in the sense that it is a mix of 'East' and 'West' in a societal as well as a historical and geographical sense. It is thus very different from the American context where Radd developed her *Grow with guidance system* curriculum.

In the 150 years of British rule of Hong Kong, Western (British) culture was grafted onto a predominantly Chinese population, and the education system reflects

that privileging of Western worldviews. Given that about 96% of the population in Hong Kong is of Chinese ancestry, such an anomaly is now being addressed in recent educational policies and plans (Education Commission 1997, 1999).

### **The notion of hybrid in culture**

'Hybridity' in this paper refers to the nature of contexts and phenomena that involves a mix of apparently opposite differences (eg in culture, time, practices and systems). In horticulture, 'hybridity' refers to the crossbreeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third 'hybrid' species. In this paper, 'hybridisation' is used mainly with respect to cultural forms. Rowe and Schelling's definition is useful. They define hybridisation as 'the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in practices' (1991, p 231). Pieterse suggests that 'a theory of hybridity does not concern [itself] with establishing boundaries or demarcations, but instead focuses on fuzziness and mélange, cut-and-mix, crisscross and crossover' (Pieterse 1995, p 55); and 'hybridisation as a perspective belongs to the fluid end of relations between cultures: it is the mixing of cultures and not their separateness that is emphasised' (p 62).

### **The broad context in the USA**

The *Grow with guidance system* developed by Radd in 1993 reflects the general trend of guidance curricula development in the USA which, since 1960, has been focused on personal development (Gysbers & Henderson 1994) and shaped by national and local perceptions of what society requires from schools. In the USA, there is a huge diversity of cultural groups experiencing significant major societal changes, including the increasing use of information technology, changes in family structure and family life, an increasing rate of crimes and violence among adolescents (Myrick 1993), and increasing numbers of youths dropping out of school. Accordingly, there is a public demand that schools produce a high academic performance from their students as well as help them to become responsible citizens who can live socially productive lives (Stone & Bradley 1994). So, in Radd's model, there is an emphasis on the process skills deemed necessary for the prevention of societal problems and the intention that these skills be developed systematically according to the age of the students.

### **The broad context in Hong Kong**

On the surface, it seems that the contexts for the development of guidance in Hong Kong differ little from those in America (Hui 1991). The official policy document, *Guidance work in secondary schools* (Education Department 1986), lists a number of reasons for introducing guidance curricula in schools: increased variation in children's background; increased developmental, personal and social problems; lack of motivation towards school work; disruptive behaviour in the classroom; and the rise in juvenile delinquency. Parallel to the Western experience, widespread social problems such as drug abuse, pre-marital sex, teenage pregnancy, gangs, hate-related violence, youth suicides (Loekmono 1993), and the degeneration of moral

and ethical values (Chiu 1993; Education Department 1997; Othman & Awang 1993), have all been used to justify the development of guidance curricula.

Many youth problems can be seen as universal and related to stress on youngsters caused by rapid sociological changes with modernisation and urbanisation. Problems such as changes in family structure, information overload, maladjustment and alienation are as prevalent in Hong Kong as they are in the West. The increase in rates of divorce and child abuse, and in the number of single-parent families and dual-career families, are similar to those in the West, although the actual figures may be smaller. Thus, the introduction of guidance curricula is also a response to the perception that school children in Hong Kong experience similar problems to children in Western countries.

Upon closer examination, however, the sociological contexts of Hong Kong are rather different from those of Western countries, since Hong Kong is a place where 'East meets West' and where colonisation and globalisation have led to a hybridisation of cultures. As Pieterse (1995) observes, globalisation is a multidimensional process that unfolds the multiple realms of existence simultaneously. The nature and intensities of social problems in Hong Kong are similar to and different from those of the West.

Hong Kong's history of colonisation has resulted in a lack of identification with China. Although society in Hong Kong is not as multicultural as that in the USA, it experiences the problems related to the large number of newly arrived children from Mainland China since the political changeover of sovereignty from Britain to China in 1997. Hong Kong parents have high expectations of their children, but many experience practical difficulties in caring for them – there are increasing numbers of working-parent families, single-parent families, cross-border/'astronaut' families, and adults having fewer children. Yet, in comparison with the trend in Britain, fewer youths in Hong Kong drop out of school. In fact, there is a reverse trend; most Hong Kong Secondary year 5 students fight for a place for the matriculation course after secondary school. To gain entry into a matriculation class, many students repeat the Secondary 5 year twice, even three, times.

Academic stress is perhaps the most serious problem for children in Hong Kong, where the Chinese regard for academic achievement coincides with the emphasis on credentialism and competition in a capitalist global economy. Even a Primary 1 pupil experiences significant academic pressure. Parents, teachers and the whole of Hong Kong society perpetuate these tensions, and feel the stress together. Helping children – perhaps also parents – to cope with academic pressure, or finding ways to change attitudes, is one important issue that the guidance curriculum might address in Hong Kong.

The unprecedented number of adults committing suicide in Hong Kong recently, because of financial difficulties (*Ming Pao Daily News* 2000) resulting from the Asian economic downturn, does not have a parallel in contemporary Western societies, where unemployment might be dealt with in a different manner.

While a very limited amount of social welfare is available in Hong Kong, societal disapproval of its use is strong. Unemployment is difficult to bear for the young and old in Hong Kong; losing face might be just as consequential as losing the job itself.

Above all, the meeting of Western and Chinese cultures creates hybrid values in Hong Kong society, schools and families, which leads to tensions, ambivalence and sometimes even conflict. In society, autonomy coexists with familialism and filial piety. In schools, individualism and collectivism, holism and reductionism coexist in values and practices. In the family, Chinese values continue, but differences between traditionality and modernity often create conflicts between parents and children. It might, however, be possible to evolve a useful, harmonious integration. Hence, in considering guidance curricula for Hong Kong, the contexts, and the cultural- and situational-specific responses to the contexts, must be taken into account.

### **‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ traditions of the self in guidance curricula**

Guidance as a discipline developed from the field of educational psychology, mainly in the ‘West’. The underlying assumptions that drive decisions about the curriculum seem related to developing an ‘individualistic self’ and to meeting the developmental and transitional needs of students (Hamblin 1978). The dominant approach in such traditions is to treat people as isolated units, focusing on the importance of the individual, his/her autonomy, and finding a ‘true self’ (Hamblin, in Gothard & Goodhew 1987; Ivey & Ivey 1999). This has largely been assumed to be universally true, across all societies and cultures.

Recently, numerous studies have also shown that the conceptualisation of self is different in different cultures, if starting from non-Western assumptions (Blustein 1994; DeCreamer 1983; Josselson 1988, 1992; Lerner et al 1980; and Markus & Kitayama 1991). Luk (2001) has compared the Chinese (Confucian) and Western views on personal and social education curriculum<sup>1</sup>.

According to Luk (2001) (See Table I), in personal and social development in Western traditions, the core focus of guidance is the development of self to its full potential. Western traditions advocate a positive sense of self, positive feelings and positive attitudes to life; thus enhancing students’ self-esteem, self-respect and cooperation with ‘individualistic others’ (Ryder & Campbell 1988). Elementary school guidance curricula aim to help children understand themselves, others, their learning environment and the world.

On the other hand, Confucian traditions present a ‘relational’ or ‘embedded’ self, focusing on self-cultivation, self-examination and self-correction. Whereas Western traditions focus on respect for individual differences, individual autonomy and conflict resolution, Chinese traditions are other-oriented, hierarchical and role-directed, emphasising familialism and brotherhood/sisterhood, and harmony in human relationships.

In terms of skills, Western traditions emphasise communication, decision-making, problem-solving and conflict management (Morganett 1994; Paisley & Hubbard 1994; Ryder & Campbell 1988; Vernon 1989); while Confucian traditions emphasise will, practice and the application of knowledge to life. In terms of a relevant knowledge base, Western traditions draw from psychology, philosophy and sociology, whereas Confucian traditions emphasise learning and applying the classics in life. In terms of pedagogy, Western traditions emphasise experiential methods, analysis and rationality, while Confucian traditions focus on study, reflection and practice. The former favours a more reductionist approach, whereas the latter encourages integration and a more holistic approach.

For career development and choice, Western traditions seem to focus on individual ability and interest, and Chinese traditions on economic ends; whereas for educational development, Western traditions focus on ability, and Chinese traditions focus on effort (Cheng 1995).

While this ‘binary’ between ‘East’ and ‘West’ is an analytical device and not universally true across all people and groups in either category, it is a useful differentiation for examining aspects of guidance curricula in Hong Kong. It is important to remember that people in Hong Kong speak Chinese and are strongly embedded in Confucian traditions of family, work and identity – despite 150 years of colonial status and contemporary high-level engagement and performance in the globalised economy and cultures.

**Table I: Comparison of Chinese and Western views on guidance curricula (adapted from Luk 2001, p 82)**

| Features of PSE |                                 | Western traditions  | Chinese traditions<br>(Confucian traditions)   |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Main domains    | Personal and social development | Emphasise individualist self, individual differences<br><br>Are more individualistic in style<br><br>Emphasise equality, communication, conflict management | Perceive self as interdependent<br><br>Avoid individual differences<br><br>Focus on the family and males |
|                 | Career development              | Focus on interests and ability  | Focus on economic ends   |

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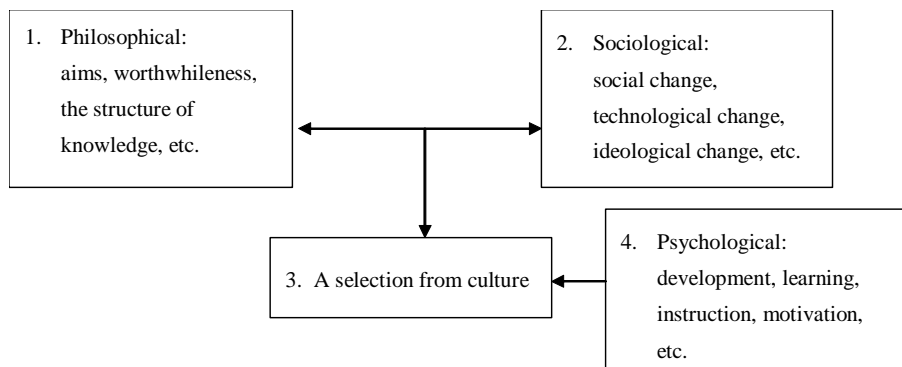
|                       | Educational development | Focus on ability   | Focus on effort   |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|---|
| Substantive structure | Values                  | Emphasise self-esteem, self-respect, cooperation between independent selves                          | Emphasise self-realisation and cultivation; an embedded and relational self                                     |
|                       | Skills and processes    | Communication<br>Decision-making<br>Problem-solving<br>Conflict resolution<br>Reflection<br>Transfer | Will<br>Practice<br>Self-examination<br>Reflection<br>Self-correction   |
|                       | Relationships           | Self in relation to others<br>Respect for differences<br>Individual autonomy<br>Conflict resolution  | Five cardinal relationships<br>Familialism and brotherhood<br>Authority<br>Harmony                              |
| Syntactical structure | Learning methods        | Experiential<br>Analytic and rational  | Involves study, reflection and practise<br>More didactic in approach<br>Focused on relationships and discipline |
|                       | Important processes     | Awareness of dualisms:<br>Thinking–feeling<br>Academic–pastoral<br>Personal–social                   | Learning is holistic; it involves thinking, feeling, will and behaviour   |

### The conceptual framework of the study

The conceptual framework used to establish the questions for this study was derived mainly from Lawton’s model of curriculum development (1973). Lawton argues that the sociological and philosophical factors of a society will affect the psychological factors which will, in turn and in conjunction, affect the development of a curriculum in relation to the culture. We chose to examine Lawton’s model because it addresses the dimension of culture (see Figure 1). Consideration of his model led us to formulate the following key research questions for this study:

1. Are the contents of the guidance curriculum selected according to a Western or a Chinese conception of self-other relationships? (In Lawton’s words, what are the philosophical underpinnings of the curriculum?)
2. How do sociological factors of ‘East meets West’ in Hong Kong affect the selection of guidance content in the various settings at home, in school, in the community/Hong Kong, in China and in the world?
3. What psychological factors need to be considered for the selection of content of guidance materials in Hong Kong?

**Figure 1: Adapted from Lawton’s (1973) model of curriculum development**



### The research methodology

This study is a qualitative content analysis of Radd’s guidance materials, the Hong Kong Education Department’s adaptation of them, and their implementations in three schools. The Education Department chose Radd’s materials as a model for a Hong Kong guidance curriculum for a pilot project involving seven primary schools.



We used guidance materials from three of these pilot schools for the content analysis of this study.

Schools 1 and 2 use the same materials, for they belong to the same Christian organisation – one being an AM school and the other a PM school with the same name. The two schools use the same campus located in an estate in the New Territories. Both schools are coeducational and of average size, with 24 classes. The schools are headed by two different principals.

School 3 is smaller, belonging to a large school sponsoring body with no religious affiliation. It has six classes and is a coeducational, whole-day school. It has been operating for over 40 years and is located in the urban area of Kowloon. The school does not have its own set of guidance materials. However, its sponsoring body has prepared guidance materials for all of its schools, and these were used for the content analysis.

### **The guidance curriculum**

In the pilot schools, a new weekly guidance lesson of 30–35 minutes was created to implement the adapted versions of Radd's (1993) *Grow with guidance* system. In Hong Kong primary schools, academic subjects such as Chinese, English and Mathematics form the core curriculum, with general studies, arts, music and physical education at the periphery. Different teachers teach different subjects but the class teachers are responsible for the pastoral care of all students in the class, and are hence responsible for teaching the guidance lessons.

### **Radd's *Grow with guidance* system**

The *Grow with guidance* system is a student-centred, holistic approach to guidance which focuses on affective processes such as behaviour management and self-talk. Classroom group work is the foundation of the guidance system and represents 40% of the time allocated for all guidance activities in a primary school. The core values underpinning the content of the system are as follows.

1. Each person is special and valuable because he/she is unique and different from any other person.
2. Because each person is unique, he/she is responsible for helping and not hurting him/herself or others.
3. Each person is responsible for 'watching' his/her actions to determine if he/she is remembering the *truth* that he/she is special. (Radd 1993, pp 13–15)

Radd's system demands that these 'steps' are taught and integrated for all students through guidance activities and all other experiences in schools. Radd states that this system:

- encourages career development and maximum growth in all domains, including learning;

- enhances children's positive self-concept, individual choices and decisions;
- is prevention- and growth-oriented.

Radd's model represents a typical guidance curriculum in the Western tradition, with emphasis on the worth of an 'individualistic self' and individual differences.

### **Curriculum materials**

Radd's *Grow with guidance system* includes a very comprehensive package of curriculum materials. There are nine folders altogether, including guidance worksheets, catering for children from Level 1 to Level 9. There is also a diagnostic tool called 'Children's Affect Needs Assessment' (CANA) for determining the individual needs of pupils in each class and hence deciding on the kind of guidance curriculum the class requires.

The Education Department's adaptation is a box of curriculum materials (mainly worksheets) for schools to use as samples to cater for children in the upper and lower primary levels. It is not intended to be an exhaustive set of curriculum materials. Schools 1 and 2 have produced six curriculum booklets, each a compilation of worksheets to be used for one year of primary school. School 3 uses materials developed by its sponsoring body, which to date covers one curriculum folder for Primary 1.

### **Key research questions and procedures**

The key questions guiding the content analysis were:

1. What framework has been used in the organisation of the contents?
2. What contents have been selected from either the Radd originals or the Hong Kong adaptation?
3. What is the frequency of the appearance of such contents (if any)?
4. What is the significance and prominence of such contents in terms of the emphasis and space given to them?

Frequency counts were made of specific content in all the worksheets in the Education Department's adaptation and those used by Schools 1 and 2. Owing to the immense number of worksheets in Radd's curriculum package, we analysed the CANA. We chose this because, as a diagnostic tool, it best reflected the basic assumptions and core content of the curriculum package. Below, the frequency of occurrence of each item in each topic area is indicated in brackets to show the relative significance of topics in the guidance curriculum (see Tables IV, V and VI). The guidance content in School 3 was not broken down into frequencies, because only Primary 1 guidance materials were available in this school.

### Limitations of study

This study only covers one Western guidance model and the guidance materials adapted by the Education Department as used in three schools. The scope of study is very small and thus the findings of the analysis cannot be considered representative of guidance materials used in other schools in Hong Kong. Moreover, the lack of comparable materials in different settings renders comparison difficult. However, our concern in designing this study was not to make generalisations about the selection of guidance materials in Hong Kong, but to raise issues about the adaptation of Western guidance for Hong Kong schools, using the thick data generated through the in-depth analysis of guidance materials in the sample cases.

### Findings

#### Framework for the organisation of content

The intention with Radd's model (1993) and the Hong Kong versions was to present developmental and preventive guidance programs. Two of the Hong Kong versions (Education Department and Schools 1 and 2) share the values promulgated by Radd (see the theoretical background section of the Hong Kong *Grow with guidance system* manual (Education Department 1996) – also adopted by Schools 1 and 2). The only difference with the Hong Kong versions is that the materials have been translated into Chinese. The guidance materials used in School 3 do not include a theoretical background section.

#### Selected content

Table II is a summary of a comparison of a selection of content from Radd's model, the Education Department's adaptation and its implementation in the two schools.

**Table II: The main domains in different guidance curricula**

| Radd's model                | Education Department's adaptation/Case Study Primary School <sup>1</sup> | Case Study Primary School <sup>2</sup> |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Self                     | 1. Studies   | 1. Self-concept                        |
| 2. Other awareness          | 2. Problem-solving   | 2. Communication                       |
| 3. Self-control             | 3. Communication   | 3. Problem-solving                     |
| 4. Decision-making/problem- |  | 4. Studies                             |

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| solving              |  |  |
| 5. Group cooperation |  |  |

An examination of the domains in Radd's model (1993) and in the Hong Kong versions reveals that the former is entirely different from the latter. Radd's model has five domains: 'self', 'other awareness', 'self-control', 'decision-making/problem-solving' and 'group cooperation'. From the definition of the categories, it can be seen that there is an emphasis on the 'individualistic self' – on the ability of a child to describe his/her own feelings and attitudes or opinions about self. In terms of self-control, a child should be aware of his/her own needs, abilities and limitations, and be able to remain within boundaries and display acceptable social behaviour.

The Radd model also defines the 'others' category with respect to the individual. It stresses a child's awareness of the uniqueness, differences and needs of other people as that child's ability to describe the feelings of others in relation to specific experience. Cooperation means the child's perception of how he/she relates to working with others in a group. 'Problem-solving/decision-making' refers to the child making choices from alternatives based on his/her awareness of the consequences, and that child's awareness of personal and family values. Overall, the model emphasises cognitive, verbal and affective dimensions based on autonomy and choices.

Although the objectives of their guidance materials include the development of a positive self-concept, mastering of study skills, life skills (including problem-solving and communication skills) and career guidance, the Education Department has selected content focusing on three main domains: 'studies', 'problem-solving' and 'communication'. The versions used by Schools 1 and 2 follow the domains of the Education Department exactly. In these two versions, self and other are subsumed in the 'communication' and 'problem-solving' domains. A 'relational self' emerges in the document: '... from the relationship with peers to understand self and relationship with others' (Education Department 1996).

The content selection used by School 3 is similar to that of the Education Department and Schools 1 and 2, except that a separate domain of 'self-concept' has been added and the importance of developing a students' self-concept has been highlighted. Moreover, the sequencing of topics has been reversed to: 'self-concept', 'communication', 'problem-solving' and 'studies'. We suggest that this sequence represents the school's idea of what should come first (either because they think 'self-concept' is more important than 'studies' or that, if a child has a good 'self-concept', then 'communication', 'problem-solving' and 'studies' will follow).

In the three Hong Kong versions, there is also a greater focus on skills; for example, study and life skills. The Hong Kong context of competition and examination is reflected in the content selected for the Hong Kong versions. Overall, there is a strong sense of equipping children to cope with the Hong Kong social

situation and expectations, and of acquiring knowledge and skills necessary for growing up within such a context.

### Frequency of appearance of selected content and its significance

The analysis of CANA showed that ‘self’ (18 items) and ‘other’ (13) are the most important domains selected, followed by domains like ‘decision-making’ (6) and ‘group cooperation’ (5), which appear less than half as frequently. The nine items relating to ‘self’ describe an ‘individualistic self’, with particular emphasis on self-worth and emotion. The other nine items of ‘self-control’ also stress an autonomous self. The 13 items relating to ‘others’ highlight an ‘individualistic other’; stressing difference, listening and emotions.

The six items on ‘decision-making/problem-solving’ stress autonomy, personal choices and alternatives. Of the five items in the ‘group cooperation’ section, the important components relate to group self-discipline, awareness of others and listening to others (see Table III). The contexts for development mainly include self (three items), friends (seven items) and school (19 items). Careers and educational development are not covered in this Core curriculum, but in the Enrichment curriculum.

**Table III: Breakdown of CANA test items with respect to the main domains in Radd’s model**

| Domain             | Frequency | Content  | Context   |
|--------------------|-----------|--|---|
| 1. Self            | 9         | Self-worth/value (5)<br>Emotions (3)<br>Studies (1)                                      | School (4)<br>Self (3)<br>Friend (1)<br>Teacher (1) |
| 2. Other awareness | 13        | Emotions (5)<br>Differences (4)<br>Listening skills (2)<br>Environment (keeps quiet) (1) | School (5)<br>Friend (4)<br>Anyone (4)              |
| 3. Self-control    | 9         | Monitors own work (4)  | School (7)  |

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
|  |   | Controls temper (2)<br>Learning environment (1)<br>Is self-disciplined (1)                             | Friend (1)<br>School/home (1)                   |
| 4. Decision-making/<br>Problem-solving | 6 | Is autonomous (2)<br>Independent self (1)<br>Makes choices (1)<br>Explores possibilities (2)           | School (2)<br>Anything/anyone (3)<br>Friend (1) |
| 5. Group cooperation                   | 5 | Completes work (1)<br>Cooperates in play (1)<br>Group discipline (1)<br>Takes turns (1)<br>Listens (2) | Any condition (4)<br>School (1)                 |

Radd's selection of content focuses mainly on 'self and other development'. The self and others refer to the 'individualistic self' and 'individualistic others', which emphasise individual differences, autonomy and personal choices, and represent the dominant 'Western' traditions in guidance. This notion of 'individualistic self' is assumed to be universally applicable. Radd's model does not leave space for the inclusion of values with regard to 'interdependent' or 'relational' selves, which might be more suitable for Hong Kong.

The model does not allow for the specific contexts of Hong Kong schools and society, where values about education, family and citizenship differ from those in the USA. It is not surprising, therefore, that the children working with the material could not understand many of the questions; and that their results could not be explained when the CANA was translated and used during the initial stage of implementation of Radd's *Grow with guidance system* in Hong Kong (Luk 2002).

A detailed analysis of the Education Department's adaptation (see Table IV) shows an almost even distribution of the items in the three specified domains: 14 items in 'studies', 16 in 'problem-solving' and 15 items in 'communication'. The introduction of the 'studies' domain makes this curriculum very different from Radd's model. The 'studies' domain in this curriculum is focused on the development of examination and study skills (8), and on time and stress management (7). These seem to relate closely to the orientation towards examinations, education selection and the chase for academic qualifications in the

Hong Kong educational system. The focus is on helping students to cope with and survive examination pressure and requirements. There is little emphasis on the development of self-control and autonomy in school work, except in the design of a personal timetable.

In the ‘problem-solving’ domain, the dominant emphasis is on the appropriateness of actions in different situations with different people such as friends, family members, classmates and teachers. Very often, materials prompt the ‘right answers’ rather than personal preferences and inclinations. In the ‘communication domain’, ‘understanding self and others’ is included in three items as a single entity rather than separated into ‘self’ and ‘other’, which highlights the relationship between self and others and introduces an implicit ‘relational’/‘embedded’ self instead of the ‘individualistic self’ and ‘individualistic others’.

‘Communication skills’ emphasises ‘listening’, with three items. A new item, ‘self-disclosure’, was included, perhaps representing a desire to confront the reluctance to disclose that is characteristic of the Chinese culture of Hong Kong students. Apart from a description of emotion, there is also an emphasis on emotional management. Little attention has been paid to careers guidance; only two items have been included, each of which focuses on students gaining knowledge about the occupations of different people. The adaptation does not include activities related to understanding personal interests and abilities with regard to future work.

**Table IV: Education Department’s adaptation**

| 1. Studies   | 2. Problem-solving  | 3. Communication  |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study skills (4)</li> <li>• Examination skills (4)</li> <li>• Cooperative learning (1)</li> <li>• Careers (0)</li> <li>• Knowledge of other occupations (2)</li> <li>• Time management (3)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision-making skills (7)</li> <li>• Conflict resolution (3)</li> <li>• Stress management (4)</li> <li>• Mutual help (2)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening techniques (1)</li> <li>• Peer support (1)</li> <li>• Effective self-disclosure (3)</li> <li>• Management of emotion (3)</li> <li>• Accurate communication (2)</li> <li>• Knowledge of self and others (3)</li> <li>• Cooperation (2)</li> </ul> |

In summary, the content selected for the Education Department’s adaptation features:

- a new ‘studies’ domain that focuses on examinations and coping skills;
- an emphasis in communications on self-other development of a ‘relational self’, rather than an ‘individualistic self’ and ‘individualistic other’; and
- options to choose ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ rather than make ‘a personal choice’ in decision-making/problem-solving.

On these points, the Education Department’s adaptation significantly deviates from Radd’s model.

Table V shows that the selection of content by School 1 and 2 is very similar to the Education Department’s adaptation, with the same three main domains. This also suggests that schools depend on the Educational Department for support in creating resources and in framing their own developments. However, the ‘communication’ domain includes many more items (29 items), and ‘understanding self and others’ has emerged as a significant component in the domain of ‘communication’. An important element regarding enhancement of the self-concept of students has been added to this component, on the assumption that self-concept is very much related to academic self-concept and achievement (Lau 1995).

**Table V: Implementation in Case Study Schools 1 and 2**

| 1. Studies   | 2. Problem-solving   | 3. Communication  |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study skills (8)</li> <li>• Examination skills (2)</li> <li>• Cooperative learning (1)</li> <li>• Time management (3)</li> <li>• Knowledge of other occupations (1)</li> <li>• Careers (0)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision-making (8)</li> <li>• Conflict resolution (4)</li> <li>• Stress management (2)</li> <li>• Cooperation (2)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of self and others (13)</li> <li>• Self-discipline (2)</li> <li>• Listening techniques (1)</li> <li>• Peer support (1)</li> <li>• Effective self-disclosure (4)</li> <li>• Emotional management (1)</li> <li>• Effective communication (2)</li> <li>• Cooperation (5)</li> </ul> |



In the materials for School 3, 'self-concept' is differentiated as a separate domain. The strengths and weaknesses of 'self' are emphasised, in terms of maximising potential and correcting 'weak' points. Under self-concept, there is reference to 'positive attitudes to life', which raises the question: what constitutes 'positive'?

Other domains include 'communication', 'problem-solving' and 'academic studies', which are similar to sections of the materials selected by the Education Department and Schools 1 and 2. In the domain of 'communication', points regarding family life, school life and relationships with peers have also been added. The context of where the learning of communication is to take place is specified.

**Table VI: Implementation in Case Study School 3**

| 1. Self-concept   | 2. Communication  | 3. Problem-solving   | 4. Academic studies  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self</li> <li>• Understanding of strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Self-acceptance and appreciation</li> <li>• Maximising of potential, correction of weak points</li> <li>• Formulation of positive attitudes to life</li> <li>• Puberty</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of self and others</li> <li>• Family life</li> <li>• School life</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Peer support</li> <li>• Effective self-disclosure</li> <li>• Emotional management</li> <li>• Accuracy of communication</li> <li>• Cooperation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation</li> <li>• Decision-making</li> <li>• Conflict management</li> <li>• Stress management</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study skills</li> <li>• Examination skills</li> <li>• Cooperative learning</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Knowledge of other occupations</li> <li>• Careers</li> </ul> |

Interestingly, the academic studies domain has been placed last in the sequence, which may be an attempt to de-emphasise that domain.

Overall, the notion of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ – rather than just ‘differences’, as in Radd’s guidance materials – is conveyed in the guidance materials of School 3. Many of the materials require students to choose the ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answers.

### **Analysis of findings**

The Education Department’s adaptation of the Radd curriculum materials, and their further development on-site by Schools 1 and 2, all espouse the same basic values and theoretical framework of Radd’s system – which is predominantly Western. School 3, on the other hand, does not present any theoretical framework with its materials.

However, the actual selection of the content of guidance materials in all the Hong Kong versions deviates so markedly from Radd’s that, when looking at the materials in isolation, one would hardly know that they are derived from her version. The discrepancies are marked.

The analysis is presented in relation to each of the three research questions, as follows.

*1 Are the contents of the guidance curriculum selected according to a Western or Chinese conception of self-other relationships?*

The content selected by those responsible for developing the Hong Kong curriculum differs from the original US material and shows a responsiveness to the culture in which the schools operate.

The Hong Kong examples, in part, reflect the Chinese tradition of stressing academic studies which is present in the Hong Kong education system. The philosophical underpinning of such a curriculum requires students to adjust to the academic curriculum, because the academic curriculum is not responsible for meeting the individual needs of students.

In the personal and social development of students, the notion of a more ‘related self’ compared with Radd’s ‘individualistic self’ is evident. There is an emphasis on ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. Self-improvement is encouraged, being fundamental to the Confucian idea of perfectibility for all and the emphasis on moral education in Eastern cultures (Cheng 1990, p 166; Lee 1996, p 28). The correction of weak points is a very Chinese concept, evident in Tsang’s words:

I daily examine myself on three points: whether, in transacting business for others, I may not have been faithful; whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have not been sincere; whether I may not have mastered and practised the instructions of my teachers.

This is in line with the Confucian belief in a lifelong commitment to the process of continuous self-cultivation.

The emphasis on family, school and peers can also find its roots in Confucian notions of the five cardinal human relationships, as explained in the Analects:

The 5 duties of universal obligations are those between sovereign and minister, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder and younger brother, and those belonging to the intercourse of friends.

Although the actual application of the five cardinal human relationships today may be very different from that in Confucius's day, the emphasis on human relatedness is still present. Weber's (1951, p 235) idea that the Confucian man [sic] can be seen as basically a social being whose fundamental task is to learn to adjust to the world seems to hold true. The overall concept may be summarised in a pragmatic Chinese saying: 'Knowing yourself and knowing others, you will win every battle' [Zhiji Zhibi, baizhan baisheng]. Subtly, the Chinese framework of cardinal relationships in different contexts remains.

All of the above clearly represent deep-rooted Chinese traditions in Hong Kong. On the other hand, concern for the development of the self-concept of students is apparent in the three schools and in the Education Department's guidance materials. Many of the guidance materials focus on understanding the personal characteristics, likes and dislikes, and strengths and abilities of individuals. These inclusions may reflect assumptions that the 'individualistic self'/ 'autonomous self' is at the core of guidance; or be a response to an emerging need in Hong Kong society for individuals to exercise autonomy in education and employment.

2 *How do the sociological contexts of 'East meets West' in Hong Kong affect the selection of guidance content in Hong Kong in various settings?*

The education system and components of the basic infrastructure, such as the law, have introduced many Western values to Hong Kong, such as equality and the rule of law. Sociological and economic changes in Hong Kong as a result of globalisation and capitalism – introduced particularly under British colonial rule – may have called for the development of a more 'autonomous self' layered 'on top' of the Chinese traditions of 'embedded self'. It is clear that the curriculum materials developed in Hong Kong are significantly responsive to the local context and its cultural practices and ideologies. Since the context of Hong Kong can be considered a meeting of 'East' and 'West', it is likely that an appropriate guidance curriculum will be 'hybrid' in nature.

3 *What kind of psychology is necessary for content selection of guidance materials in Hong Kong?*

Psychological factors, according to Lawton's model (1973), include development, learning, instruction and motivation. The issue in the present study is how to frame the psychology and how adequate the assumptions behind the psychological factors in the Western traditions of guidance are for the Hong Kong context.

Radd's model of guidance curriculum follows dominant Western (American) traditions in human development theories, which seem best represented by cognitive development theories. Cognitive developmental theories assume that people progress through different stages as they interact with the environment. Cognitive stages are hierarchical and qualitatively different from each other, each stage being more abstract and flexible than the previous one (for example, Erikson 1963; Gilligan 1982; Havighurst 1972; Kohlberg 1969; Piaget 1950; Sprinthall & Collings 1988).

Associated with the theories are lists of descriptions of characteristics of children at each age and the kinds of guidance appropriate for them (Gibson et al 1993; Muro & Kottman 1995). According to cognitive developmental theorists, changes in cognitive structures are possible through interaction with carefully planned environments. Development is not automatic; appropriate interaction with the environment is needed for a particular stage to occur.

The idea of looking at human development as a universal phenomenon is attracting increasing criticism. Kagitcibasi (1996) contends that human development involves socialisation and maturation – occurring in context, not in a vacuum. Recent publications put human development within its socio-historical and cross-cultural contexts (Damon 1989; LeVine 1988; Nsamenang 1992; Valsiner 1989; Woodhead 1991). Hence, childhood, like many other concepts, is socially defined (Kagitcibasi 1996). Kagitcibasi contends that the perception of 'childhood' differs at different times and in different cultures. This has particular relevance for guidance in Hong Kong, given Hong Kong's unique context.

Research on the self-concept of primary children in Hong Kong confirms the need to examine contexts when looking at children's development. A number of Hong Kong studies show that children begin with a high self-concept and retain this until Primary 3, when there is a sudden and steep decline (Board of Education 1997; Lau 1995). This is consistent with international literature on the self-concepts of children (Lau & Leung 1992; Stevenson & Lee 1990). In contrast to other places, this decline of self-concept in Hong Kong is most noted in the academic domain.

Lau and Leung's study also shows that children's social self-concept correlates significantly with peer acceptance. This differs from Harter's (1986) findings in the USA that a composite of scholastic competence, athletic competence, physical appearance and peer acceptance are the salient factors defining self in middle and late childhood; and Burnett's (1994) findings about Australian elementary school children that general self-esteem is related to physical appearance. In Lau's (1995) study, a strong association is found between the evaluations of teachers and parents and the self-evaluations of children, which is again consistent with other findings (Berndt et al 1993; Lau et al 1990).

The stress on academic matters in Hong Kong schools and the relatively harsh evaluations of students by teachers and parents from primary school onwards (Chan et al 1999) may be specifically related to elements of Chinese culture (Chan et al 1999; Stevenson & Stigler 1992). Inevitably, what a primary school student in

Hong Kong is capable of differs from that of a student in a Western country. As children in Hong Kong are taught to follow rules and routines right from Primary 1, their ability to sit still and listen to teachers is well developed. Going deeper, Biggs (1996) suggests that the Chinese learn in a different way. Indeed, they study hard; for they attribute academic success not only to ability, as in Western traditions, but also to effort.

If the psychological factors in Hong Kong are distinct, then the guidance needs of children in Hong Kong are different and distinct – seeing human development in context is a more appropriate approach for a guidance curriculum in Hong Kong than importing a model from another culture. In the materials examined for this study, the philosophical underpinnings relate to and interact with the sociological context as well as psychological factors and vice versa, making the situation multi-dimensional and complex.

Radd's model assumes a universal psychology and that 'an individualistic, autonomous self' can operate independently of the social and philosophical contexts. This appears to be a simpler approach than Lawton's (1973) model of curriculum development, which allows for selection from the culture, taking into consideration philosophical and social factors. Radd's model needs adapting for Hong Kong, where the concept of self is more 'relational' than 'individualistic'. On the other hand, the social contexts of Hong Kong might also call for inclusion of the 'autonomous self', and thus Radd's model may have an important and relevant contribution to make.

### **The hybrid self**

The selection of content for Hong Kong reflects a *hybrid self*; one that incorporates the 'individualistic' and 'embedded' self. The curriculum recommends activities that incorporate both Western and Chinese traditions. Thus, the content includes activities that:

- encourage a child's understanding of the strengths and weakness of the self, maximise her/his potential and correct 'weak' points (Chinese)
- encourage/demand self-disclosure (Western)
- encourage a child to accept and appreciate the self as an individual (Western)
- stress action (Chinese)
- encourage/demand descriptions of feelings and emotions (Western), etc.

This coexistence of contradictory traditions within the curriculum content is not necessarily a problem. However, failing to acknowledge such contradictions and conflicts leads to contextualised practices that increase student and teacher confusion and reduce the capacity to achieve integration.

The findings of the present study highlight the need to provide for a hybrid self and to develop the self-concept and coping skills of children in the rapidly changing and often stressful Hong Kong contexts. The Hong Kong versions of Radd's *Growth with guidance system* have already attempted hybrid selections to tackle problems more common among children with a Chinese background; in particular, a low self-concept, subjection to high examination pressure, and a lack of self-disclosure.

## **Conclusion**

### **Theory and practice**

In this paper, we have shown that the conceptual framework of guidance materials selected in the Hong Kong versions follows Radd's theory, but the actual selection of guidance materials for Hong Kong schools represents a mix of East and West. This is similar to Cheng's (1995) finding that Western and Eastern ideas coexist in the Hong Kong education system. He argues that stated education philosophies, which are shared by most teacher trainers and advocates of education, often represent the Western end of the balance. Parents at the grassroots, and society at large, still expect education to support traditional values. Thus, there are constant contradictions, or even conflicts, between theory and practice in education in Hong Kong. We propose that there is a need to make the professed aims of guidance curricula consistent with the content in guidance materials used in Hong Kong schools.

### **Implications for guidance curricula in Hong Kong**

From this study, it can be seen that contextual factors and cultural factors are very important in determining the selection of guidance materials for Hong Kong students. This paper also highlights some future directions that policy makers, curriculum planners, practitioners and teacher-educators might consider. It also questions the fundamental issue of 'exporting' Western practices to a place with different cultural elements and contextual features.

For policy makers, there is a need to address Hong Kong contexts in policy documents; in particular the context of 'East meets West', and that of an examination-oriented education system. Different versions of 'self' are embedded in the different curriculum materials, and Hong Kong curricula need a mix of the 'interdependent' and 'autonomous' self. Kagitcibasi's (1996) notion of an 'autonomous related self' coexisting with 'individual and family/group loyalties' amidst societal and family changes in a modernising Chinese majority society is a clear example of hybridity, and may be a useful construct for developing guidance materials in Hong Kong.

For curriculum developers, there is a need to ensure a consistency between the aims and actual selection of guidance content. Further questions to debate in the selection of guidance materials include 'Who selects these guidance materials?';

'How?'; and 'For what purpose?' It is hoped that through constant negotiations between different stakeholders – society, schools, parents, teachers and students – a better answer can be provided for each unique situation.

For practitioners, the realisation of possible discrepancies between values taught in schools and at home is a significant step in bringing more coherence to children's education. Many parents in Hong Kong may assume a 'relational-interdependent self' rather than 'individualistic self', expecting their children to be obedient to them. If schools teach children that they are of unconditional value, and that they should be independent and think for themselves, this may conflict with the traditional values held by many parents. Similarly, if schools teach the value of the individual – whereas, a child's worth at home depends more on academic results and good behaviour dictated by appropriate role expectations – this may create tensions and contradictions for parents and children. Many teachers face this same conflict or confusion in their own value system. Though potentially liberating, Western guidance values may not fit with the ideas of Hong Kong students if they have grown up deeply rooted in the Chinese culture.

Front-line practitioners must be aware of the possible differences in values, and provide channels by which such differences might be negotiated and even integrated. Schools need to allow parents' input into guidance curricula, and parents must also be informed about what is taught in such curricula. Cooperation between the home and the school, with the interests of students at the forefront, is one possible way to resolve differences.

It is important for teacher-educators to question the contexts of Hong Kong and its educational system, and the relevance of such contexts to the guidance curriculum and actual selection of guidance materials.

Education in Hong Kong is faced with a number of dilemmas. Guidance materials are needed because the city's changing contexts create significant pressure on its citizens, especially young people. The special Hong Kong context of 'East meets West' requires the development of a guidance curriculum that is grounded in the hybrid self and Hong Kong's hybrid contexts. Only then can the guidance curriculum help students to address their developmental problems adequately and appropriately. This echoes Edward and Payne (1997)'s call for theorising guidance practices as a set of socially, economically and culturally located practices rather than as a form of person-to-person interactions.

This paper is a report of an examination of the application of Western guidance materials in Hong Kong and has raised issues about the appropriateness of adopting a Western model in a context with a different set of cultural traditions. We hope that it may furnish a basis for stimulating discussions of similar issues in parallel settings as well, particularly in other countries of Confucian heritage.

## Notes

The fundamental core concepts, values, content and pedagogies in the terms *guidance curricula* and *personal social education* are very similar. Whereas the term *guidance* is used more commonly in the United States, *personal and social education* is more commonly used in the United Kingdom. The two terms are generally used interchangeably. The core domains in *guidance* include: educational development, career development, and personal and social development (Gysbers & Henderson 1994; Schmidt 1996).

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**Appendix 1: Domains of assessment in CANA**

| <b>Code</b>                             | <b>CANA item number</b>                        | <b>Items assess</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| S (self)                                | 9, 13, 16, 25, 1, 10, 15, 18, 21               | Ability to define and describe feelings related to specific experiences. Conscious activity in relation to personal feelings. Opinion of and attitude toward self. Willingness to accept self and find his/her place in the group in a positive way.           |
| OA (other awareness)                    | 3, 8, 31, 35, 6, 26, 27, 29, 5, 12, 24, 37, 40 | Awareness of the needs of others, willingness to acknowledge those needs and to function accordingly. Awareness of the uniqueness and differences of others. Ability to define and describe feelings of others related to specific experiences.                |
| SC (self-control)                       | 2, 7, 11, 17, 22, 20, 32, 39, 41               | Awareness of personal limitations and needs. Extent to which the child can assess his/her abilities and skills. Awareness of own ability to set and remain within limits or boundaries and established values; ability to display acceptable social behaviour. |
| DM/PS (decision-making/problem-solving) | 4, 14, 19, 23, 34, 36                          | Ability to make choices from alternatives based on awareness of consequences; awareness of personal and family values.   |
| GC (group cooperation)                  | 28, 30, 33, 38, 42                             | Perception of how he/she relates to other members when working in a group.   |