



Hong Kong – the Worst in School Bullying Among 72 Countries and Regions

By **Dr. Annis FUNG Lai Chu**
Associate Professor

In a 2017 worldwide survey of 540,000 schoolchildren, the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA), Hong Kong was ranked the worst for school bullying amongst 72 countries and regions (OECD, 2017). More specifically, 32.3% of Hong Kong students reported that they had experienced an act of bullying; this was three times greater than the rate in Taiwan (10.7%) and approximately double that of the United States (18.9%). Furthermore, 26.1% and 9.5% of students reported that other students made fun of them and others hit or pushed them, respectively. The number reflected that Hong Kong students regularly encounter dangerous situations, as well as being a poor predictor of rates of violence and crime in Hong Kong, as childhood aggression is positively associated with criminal behaviour in adulthood; an individual's level of aggression at age eight is the best predictor of criminal events over the following 22 years (Huesmann, Eron, & Dubow, 2002).

Typically, when one talks about bullying, people instantly associate the one with aggressive behaviour is the bully, which is oversimplified and misleading. The fact is that bullying is definitely more complicated. A precise definition of bullying is any well-planned action intended to harm a victim, including physical violence, verbal threats and discrimination, and so forth, in order to gain a "benefit", which is not limited to something tangible, like money, but can also include something intangible, like power or a sense of control. Therefore, some of the "bullies", identified in the one-factor model, are not precisely bullies but only driven by hot temper, anger, and impulsivity. Given this, since 2006, Annis has shifted to adopt the pioneering approach on the two-

factor model in distinguishing aggressors into two subtypes: Proactive Aggressors (bullies) and Reactive Aggressors (non-bullies). After identifying the at-risk children and youth with a specific subtype, a specific innovative intervention based on that subtype would be provided particularly. Back in 1987, three decades ago, Dodge and Coie first categorised aggression into two subtypes: (1) reactive aggression and (2) proactive aggression (1987). Continuous studies have well-documented the fact that reactive aggression is correlated with hot-bloodedness, impulsivity, hostile attributional bias, attention problems, anger arousal and deficits in social-skills (Raine et al., 2006; Cima & Raine, 2009), whereas proactive aggression is associated with cold-bloodedness, goal-orientation, callous-unemotional traits, narcissism, delinquency and anti-social personality traits (Brendgen et al., 2006; Fontaine, 2006). It was found that reactive and proactive aggression can be developed as early as 4.4 and 6.8-years-old, respectively (Dodge et al., 1997). If there is no early intervention for these children, negative short-term and long-term impacts would be generated in schools, families and societies, for instance, school bullying, peer victimisation, family violence or even killing and homicide.



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As previously mentioned, bullying is much more complicated than a person simply attacking another. Similarly, when investigating the factors that influence the development of reactive and proactive aggressors, it is not that easy. Annis has been working on the local high-risk factors of placing our children at risk of school bullying and childhood aggression. Below is a list of the high-risk factors experienced by Hong Kong students:

Narcissism – There is a strong positive association between psychopathy and narcissism. The higher the narcissism score, the higher the rate of committing a crime, even murder. According to our team’s study on narcissism, conducted in 13 primary and secondary schools, the narcissistic index of Hong Kong students in general (3.89) is 30-60% higher than that of American (2.9), British (2.36) and Australian (2.81) students. Moreover, the narcissistic index of proactive aggression among Hong Kong students (6.23) is remarkably close to the index of American youth criminals (6.90) and even higher than youth offenders in Canada (5.93). The above statistics reflect the fact that Hong Kong students’ narcissistic tendencies are more severe than those of Western nations. Thus, it is predicted that high levels of narcissism are a solid indicator of proactive aggression or, to put it simply, the existence of bullying.

Parenting Style – Authoritarian parenting styles (monster parents) and permissive parenting styles (helicopter parents) are positively related to both reactive and proactive aggression. On the other hand, neglectful parenting styles are highly correlated with reactive aggression, respectively. Numerous longitudinal studies have supported the transmission of parenting style continuity from one generation to the next (Conger, Neppl, Kim, & Scaramella, 2003). Therefore, it is not only important to handle the problem within the individual generation of children, but it is also crucial to intervene in their home environment, especially with their parents.

Family Income – Students whose family income is higher than \$30,000 have a larger tendency of narcissistic traits ($r = .049, p = .000$) and proactive aggression. On the other hand, students whose families receive Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) or have a low income show no narcissistic traits and have a greater likelihood of becoming reactive aggressors. Consequently, it is important to note that the higher the family income, the greater the probability of the children with proactive aggression, the real bullies, who bully others driven with personal goals.

Family Structure – Intact single-father, single-mother, stepfather and stepmother family structures are the most protective factor preventing children from becoming reactive and proactive aggressors. Particularly, the stepmother structure has the highest risk of having children with proactive aggression, anxiety/depression and delinquent behaviour regardless of gender. In fact, an interaction effect between sex and family structure was found; stepmother families have a higher risk of having reactively aggressive and anxious/depressed boys but not girls. Therefore, frontline professionals should draw attention to those children with a nonintact family background, especially boys in stepmother structures.

To deal with the aforementioned issue, since 2006, my research team and I have started a number of global pioneering intervention projects prioritising the reduction of reactive and proactive aggressive behaviours in children, with various diverse approaches in school settings. The most notable projects that we have completed were Project C.A.R.E. based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Chinese Martial Arts combined with Moral Education, the Consumption of Omega-3 Supplements, and the Group Storytelling Intervention; the details are as follows:

**Quality Education Fund (QEF) 2006-2014 Principal Investigator
– Project on Children and Adolescents at Risk Education (C.A.R.E.)
(Cognitive-behavioural Approach)**

More than 32,100 P.5 to F.3 students in 77 primary and secondary schools benefited from this study, and the result was extraordinary. This project aimed at identifying and disputing irrational beliefs of cognitive distortions among children and youth with high-risk reactive and proactive aggression. This project received several different awards: the Outstanding Project Award (EDB), the Knowledge Transfer Award (CityU: CLASS) and the International Research Award (National Anti-bullying Summit, United States).

**General Research Fund (GRF) 2014-2017 Principal Investigator
– Traditional Chinese Martial Arts Training in Reducing
Schoolchildren Aggression (Physio-moral Approach)**

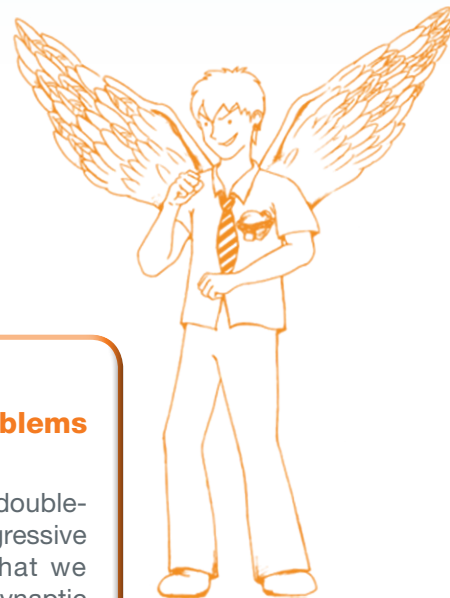
By practising traditional Chinese martial arts and its ethics, children have redefined the meaning of aggressive behaviour after enhancing their moral standard in 13 primary schools. The result of the research is so significant that students' reactively aggressive behaviour, proactively aggressive behaviour, delinquency and attention problems had been reduced by 42%, 65%, 55%, and 40%, sequentially. This project won a Knowledge Transfer Award (CityU, CLASS, Certificate of Merit).

**General Research Fund (GRF) 2015-2018 Principal Investigator
– Taking Omega-3 Supplements to Reduce Externalising Behaviour Problems
in Risk-taking Adolescents (Neurobiological Approach)**

More than 300 students participated in this neurobiological, placebo-controlled and double-blind study aimed at enhancing the brain executive functioning and then to reduce aggressive behaviour by taking omega-3 dietary supplementation. Consuming omega-3 that we consume from daily meals, enhances brain structure and function, such as boosting synaptic functioning, reducing cell death and regulating neurotransmitter functioning and expression. In other words, omega-3 could remove the brain dysfunctions that predispose one to aggression.

**General Research Fund (GRF) 2018-2020 Principal Investigator
– Group Storytelling Intervention to Reduce Reactive and Proactive Aggression in Schoolchildren
(Social Information Processing Approach)**

This project was collaborated with the Hans Anderson Club, adopting the Social Information Processing (SIP) Model in reducing young children with reactive and proactive aggression through storytelling intervention in 19 primary schools. Children could model the characters in storybooks to imitate their social skills, anger management skills, and emotion regulation. Through storytelling, the intervention is expected to strengthen children's responsiveness to social cues, empathy, problem-solving competence and prosocial skills.



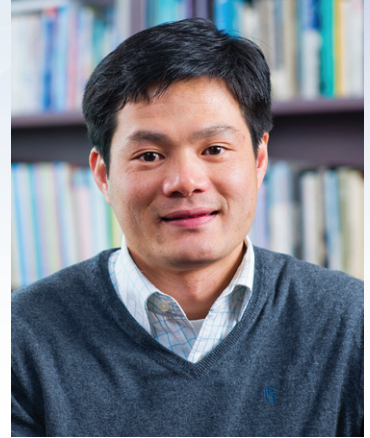
Given that all the current and past projects focus on the children's ability to self-reconstruct, as well as internal psychological improvement, future studies would aim to explore external factors in reducing childhood aggression. In a family system, researchers and frontline professionals tend to overlook the role of fathering in reducing childhood aggression. The effectiveness of fathering is believed not only to have a more continued and in-depth improvement in children's anger control, but it is also beneficial to the father himself, his spouse and marriage satisfaction. On the other hand, due to rapid technological changes, Annis's team is executing a pilot study with the usage of filmmaking techniques as a medium to reduce youth aggression and hopefully to illustrate that a single skill or interest can be positively used in the future.

Education

Social Work Education in SS Department of CityU

Dr. Jerf Yeung

Assistant Professor



Social work education in SS department has launched since 1988, in which the department began to conduct its first intake of Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Social Work in 1989, and two years later, Bachelor of Social Work was conducted its first intake in 1991. Now SS department has developed to offer various types of academic programmes from undergraduate level to PhD degree in the discipline of social work. In fact, SS department is one of the largest training and educational centers in Hong Kong to offer academic programmes recognized by Social Workers Registration Board as registered social workers (RSWs). In SS department, quality social work education is believed to achieve with three main components. They are 1) systemically and professionally oriented curriculums; 2) diverse and competent social work expertise of faculty; and 3) various community and culturally exposed learning activities for students.

The curriculums of social work programmes in SS department are organized in a way that emphasizes both scholarly and practical needs of the social work profession, in which SS department offers professional courses including such as “Working with Individuals and Families”, “Working with Groups” and “Working with Organizations and Communities” that are all combined with theoretical approaches and to be supported by related laboratory courses with practices. Of this systematic organization of the courses, social work students can be equipped with necessary theoretical perspectives and practical skills to handle various challenges and issues in the frontline social work settings and related services. In addition to systemically and professionally organized social work curriculums, each social work student would be assigned with a faculty member in the department as his or her academic advisor, which can let the learning student consult not only her/ his study but also her/ his future career and professional prospect. Moreover, social work students in SS department can choose to study some other elective courses relevant to their professional development. To name some, these elective courses include “Working with Young People and Offenders”, “Working with the Communities and People with Special Needs”, “Working with People with Disabilities” and “School Social Work”.

For academic expertise and research backgrounds of social work faculty members in SS department, there are 24 academic staff in the department who are not only of strong frontline experiences and network but also pioneer their own scholarly and research work the areas of family and children, elderly services, youth development, mental health and rehabilitation, medical social work, offenders and

substance abuse, as well as school social work respectively. Among these 24 social work faculty members, 23 of them hold a PhD degree in social work or other closely related social science disciplines and two teachers, who are Professor Alice CHONG and Dr Elaine AU, were also conferred the UGC Teaching Award in 2013 and 2014 respectively. In fact, holding two UGC Teaching Awards simultaneously in the same department of social work discipline is incomparable in local higher education.

What's more, SS department will organize and offer study tours, local and non-local internships, exchange programmes with overseas higher institutions, Mentor & Mentee Scheme, overseas conferences, career-related alumni sharing activities, Project X and City Youth Empowerment Project (CYEP) to broaden the horizons and learning experiences of social work students and students of other majors in the department. Specifically, to take some of these various learning and exposing activities as an example, we will organize an overseas conference entitled “British Conference of Undergraduate Research” of the aim to promote undergraduate research applicable to social welfare to let them have an chance to applying what they have learnt in the department in real society; and this conference can be deemed as a valuable exchange experience of students in SS department to exchange with overseas international students for enhancing their personal growth. This named overseas conference will be held on April 2019 in South Wales of United Kingdom. In addition, Mentor & Mentee Scheme has a long history in SS department to train up leadership capability and professional career development of students in the department, of which a series of training sections will be held from January to March 2019 to equip students with more self-understanding, team-building spirit, and reflections to achieve the main goal of personal and professional development. Specifically, students from the Mentor & Mentee Scheme will transform from a mentee to mentor, which may confer them a chance to learn how to take care other new entrants in the department. In sum, all the above-mentioned community

and culturally exposed learning opportunities in SS department can be fertile ground to help students have whole-person and all-round development, successfully preparing their contributions in society in the future.



Activities and Society

Training Camps 2018/19

A Taste of Learning Excellence with SS Elements for Newcomers

By **Ms. Jodie Ng**
Project Officer

Every summer, a team of SS mentors organises training days and training camps for BDSS and the newcomers of each major as an orientation programme. This aims to welcome the newcomers to the SS family, but also offers them a chance to learn about the social sciences in a fun and exciting way.

This year, after the combined efforts of 32 mentors and 22 alumni, a series of training days and training camps for BDSS and each major were held, each with its own theme; consequently, 103 newcomers joined. Aside from the team-building activities creating cohesion between the mentors and mentees in each major, the mentors initiated many creative ideas to facilitate the learning of mentees in their own major. Ultimately, participants began to understand more about our basic values, beliefs and personal traits, thus allowing them to become a better person in the society; this scheme not only benefits the mentee but also mentors them throughout the planning and implementation process.



"Blindman" was a team challenge which allowed the newcomers to experience our sensations and levels of perception, as well as the processes of the brain. Blind people can perform better in hearing and touching because they practice these senses on a daily basis, and so the brain re-wires itself to use the visual cortex.



"Guess Who I Am" allowed participants to understand how labelling affects our perception. Labelling could happen verbally or even in a discriminatory sense.

BDSS Training Day – The SS Landscape

Mentors from four different majors contributed to designing a fruitful day for freshmen to experience what kinds of knowledge they would gain in their first year. Social work mentors helped them to understand "labelling"; psychology mentors introduced them to how "memory" works; while criminology-sociology mentors invited them to participate in an experiment studying the "norms" in the university.

Social Work Training Day – Be Imprisoned!

During a simulation of being a prisoner, select mentors acted as prisoners with freshmen, while some acted as guards in jail, participants experienced a number of situations that ex-offenders might encounter. After that, mentors took the freshmen to visit homeless people in the community at night. Through the community visit, mentors demonstrated how to reach out to minorities and encouraged the newcomers to go beyond their comfort zone.



"Sorry, madam!" A prison simulation taking participants' freedom as well as their dignity by forcing them to obey commands.

Training Camp – Looking at Society through a Social Work Lens

Before entering the social work profession, mentors found it important for mentees to study their own personalities and values; these, for example, might be the product of their own nurtured backgrounds. Accordingly, a number of self-understanding exercises were designed. To introduce a social work perspective when studying social issues, mentors prepared a detective game which guided freshmen to oversee aspects such as sexuality issues, domestic abuse and mental health when studying cases through the use of clues.



The detective team interviewing a “school social worker” of a student who had committed suicide to discover why. Meanwhile, by exploring the basic needs of the victim, participants reflected on moral expectations, social norms and ethical issues.

Psychology Training Camp – Side-By-Psy

As part of the Side-by-Psy theme, mentors promoted an atmosphere of being with each other, not only among the psychology major but also with the community; particularly where community members experience mental illness. Through the detective game, participants illustrated how people with mental illness go about their daily life by integrating elements of psychology.



A clue is granted for completing a team challenge! Getting closer to the mystery of people living with “multiple personalities” – Dissociative Identity Disorder.

Criminology and Sociology Training Day – Variety of Future

After a series of hunting games at CityU, participants knew more about our campus and were filled with team spirit as a result of their achievements. Thereafter, it came to alumni sharing, the most anticipated part of the day; four alumni were invited to share their career developments with the participants. With their unique work experience, participants showed an interest in the alumni and were inspired to explore the unknown, be open-minded and brave enough to dream for the future.



Miss Iris HEUNG , Mr. Guyman HUI, Mr. Noc CHOI, Miss Glorious CHAN

Training Camp – Be Critical of What you Perceive

Vast amounts of information explode into our daily life, and what we perceive constructs our minds, our beliefs and eventually comes to a consensus to form our society. Mentors interviewed participants to discover what kind of stereotyping, crime and discrimination happens in our society, how it affects us and what functions it serves to widen society. Through the use of interactive games, participants reflected on how not to simply believe in what they see but be critical.



Participants experiencing social immobility in the Soci-game; during this task, they attempted to find a better job with a specific background. It was not easy!

Mentors' Words

HIP Wai Leung, James

(Major in Social Work, Year 3, Cohort 2017)

The spirit of the social work mentors and mentees is inherited. As a mentee last year, I learnt a lot from my mentors. The sense of mutual assistance and harmony with others is what I enjoy most. This year, as a mentor, I hope my mentees get the same feelings. We hold the training camp not just to teach them how to be a social worker, but to help them prepare for the journey of social work. Although there may be bitterness and fatigue within the process, it is worth it seeing mentees enjoy the camp and understand the messages. Let the spirit continue!



LEE Siu Fung, Sky

(Major in Criminology, Year 4, Cohort 2017)

The criminology and sociology training camp was inspirational, which served as a momentous opportunity to impart my knowledge and experience to the freshmen. At first, I was recruited as a student helper, but after meeting my hard-working and enthusiastic peers, I was really impressed by their attitude. They aimed high and strove to be tremendously successful. I seized every chance to associate with my colleagues and juniors. Gradually, I adjusted my role to a mentor; I not only cared about my mentees, but also designed various major-related games to facilitate bidirectional learning. Throughout the process, I was able to easily observe the importance of both being a mentor and my personal growth. Since then, my sustainable contribution to and participation in the mentorship scheme has really enlightened my university life!



Participants Sharing

YUEN Ka Lam, Kellie

(Major in Social Work, Year 2, Cohort 2017)

Generally, the camp was really inspiring. Apart from meeting new friends from our major, I have learnt a lot about social issues in the camp. The camp was meticulously designed by our mentors to help us explore an array of social issues like offender issues and teenage suicide. Through games and activities, we got to know what our strengths and weaknesses were, which helped us to gain a better understanding of ourselves.

After the training camp, I always thought about how I could serve the community as well as the school. It was really a thought-provoking camp; I hope that the legacy of the camp can be passed on.



HO Yeung Pan, Joe

(Major in Psychology, Year 3, Cohort 2018)

Back in July, I received a message from a mentor asking if I was able to join a psychology training camp. Since it is my first year at CityU and due to my eagerness to make more new friends, I replied 'yes' without a second thought.

The camp lasted for three days and was filled with lots of activities. For example, the detective game was memorable because I had to run around the campsite to solve puzzles with my groupmates. One thing I found interesting after this camp was that people with psychology or social science majors are actually cool in the sense that they have high levels of acceptance and are warm-hearted. During those three days, all the mentors and helpers were actually really caring, leaving me with the slight regret that I should have been more relaxed to meet new people in the first place.

All in all, students from psychology should really take this camp into account, in addition to the orientation camp. The training camp is an endearing memory for me because of the sheer dedication from the mentors, the helpers and the supervisors.



LAI Yu Tin, Martin

(Major in Criminology and Sociology, Year 3, Cohort 2018)

Hello everyone! I am Martin, a new student majoring in Criminology and Sociology (CRSO). This summer, I joined the criminology and sociology training day organised by the mentors under the coordination of Project X. As a mature new student, I wanted to make new friends and to know more about criminology as my major programme by joining the training day. We had a lot of fun when playing the ice-breaking games, and I met some good friends on the day. Moreover, the alumni sharing session was very useful and informative; we now know how to prepare for further study and career planning. The training camp is definitely worth joining for all CRSO newcomers: see you all next summer!



Message from Head

Prof Wing Lo

Head of the Department of
Social and Behavioural Sciences



Our department was renamed the Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences in July 2018. As such, a renaming ceremony was held on 16 November 2018. More than a hundred alumni, students, guests, departmental advisors and university administrators attended the event. In the ceremony, we briefly reviewed our departmental history. We began as the Department of Social Administration in 1984 and were renamed the Department of Applied Social Studies in 1988, with a focus on training professional social workers. Over the last three decades, we have grown into a large department spanning five academic disciplines: social work, sociology, psychology, criminology and counselling, and ten academic programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels; the development is our response to the changing social needs of Hong Kong's society. A group of students and alumni have composed a song entitled "Our Humble Response" to celebrate the renaming. The words are so touching and reflect the spirit of many faculty members, alumni and students. I would like to share them with you here:

微小的回應

Our humble response

曲 & 詞 / Music & Words: City Skylines

面對著無常的迷茫
Facing constant uncertainty

人世間似暗淡無光
Losing faith in humanity

胸懷信念 掩蓋悲傷
Live for our dreams Not the sorrow

靜默中逆風尋晴朗
After the rain comes the rainbow

絆腳的東西總不少
No one said life would be a breeze

漩渦中自處 忘了笑
Underneath the surface Can't feel at ease

意義何在 時間太快
If hope is a lie And we'll all die

把迷失的自己 找出來
Then who's voice is this telling me to try

** 我們相信 我們願意
*** Ho --- we believe That we can be*

這是我們選擇回應社會的方式
This is our answer to all the negativity

難走的路 是堅持初心的記憶
The hardest road Brings out the best in you and me

教我們永遠不放棄 **
*Let's fight till this day you'll see***

靈魂在世界中跌盪
A lost soul wandering alone

多困難仍有我在旁
Searching for one that's like your own

燃亮生命 信念發光
The courage like fire Compassion that inspire

手牽手決定一起去闖
We'll walk together No matter how dire

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The hardest road Brings out the best in you and me

教我們永遠不放棄 **
*Let's fight till this day you'll see***

Rap:
我們不放棄 在這條真理路
We'll never give up Just think what we can do

我們在學習 前輩寫下的書
We'll keep learning The theories and models our teachers drew

我們在研究 改變社會難處
We will research Better society and CityU

我用 RAP 把指責自責都刪除 *yah wo*
This is our song Our rap Will make this world less blue

壓力在每個人心頭 束縛著他們的自由
Stress and sadness are unavoidable Caging us from what we're capable

改變在心裏的污垢 我們盡力伸出援手
But fam Small changes are possible Life is all about error and trial

wo 這條路我們一起走
We'll walk together I know we're unbreakable

走過看得見的山丘
Because after this trial Life would be a stroll

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*** Ho --- we believe That we can be*

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This is our answer to all the negativity

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