

## What is Positive Education?

Dr Sylvia Kwok is Associate Professor and the convenor of the positive education laboratory at the Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences. Integrating positive psychology and ecological perspectives, Dr Kwok's mission is to enhance well-being and prevent mental health problems. She has collaborated with over 200 schools and conducted over 20 positive education projects with pre-primary, primary, secondary school, and university students since 2010. Examples of the projects include: 'Enhancing hope and gratitude to alleviate anxiety and depression in primary and secondary school students', 'Application of positive psychology for whole person development of pre-school children', 'Integrating positive psychology and elements of music therapy to alleviate anxiety and depression of students', 'Application of positive education to nurture wellbeing and enhance mental health of primary school students', 'Whole school positive education project to nurture flourishing secondary schools', and 'Enhancing University students' well-being and positive learning experiences—Application of positive education'.

To implement positive education, the positive education laboratory provides consultation and services, as well as conducting research in schools. The laboratory team helps schools to: analyse their strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T), identify their



existing programmes/activities in student guidance and life education, and discuss with the core team of the school what needs to be launched in order to achieve the objectives of enhancing positive emotions, relationships, engagement, accomplishments, meaning of life, and character strengths. The core team is comprised of

one or two teachers, usually from the student guidance team, who are well-versed in the concepts of positive education, together with those teachers who are interested in implementing positive education in schools. Although following the same theoretical framework of positive education and experiential learning, programmes/activities are adjusted for different schools with different characteristics and students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Some schools will integrate their school motto/vision and mission with the concepts of positive education.

In practice, there needs to be a consensus in implementation from the school board, school management, principals, teachers, parents, students, and even the caretakers. School policy needs to be modified to facilitate implementation, for instance with: staff development programmes, policies to enhance the wellbeing of teachers, an evaluation of staff and students, activities/programmes/a curriculum about positive education, parent education and parent-school collaboration, student evaluation, the language of teaching, and school culture.

Examples of student programmes are: experiential activities to search for the treasure of happiness, the practice of five languages of love; in addition there are programmes designed to enhance study motivation, to learn teamwork and co-operation, to face failure and challenges, and to strive for growth and improvement. Teacher training includes: (1) how to identify, increase awareness, and facilitate the application of students' character strengths, (2) how to live a flourishing life, (3) how to help students build up positive emotions and enhance their engagement, (4) how to help students promote their sense of accomplishment, optimism, and hope. Themes of parent workshops are: (1) how to identify children's character strengths, (2) how to increase children's confidence and self-efficacy, (3) how to help children build up positive emotions and enhance engagement, (4) how to cultivate children's study motivation, (5) how to improve the parent-child relationship. Parent-child activities such as wargames, and a candlelit parent-child dinner were also launched in the schools. Research found that the projects were effective in enhancing well-being and alleviating the mental health problems of students.

In addition, Dr Kwok has collaborated with the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong to pioneer 'The application of positive psychology to mental health setting—An holistic approach' project in the halfway houses for mental patients in recovery. She has also conducted training to increase well-being for the staff of MTR Corporation Limited. Two board games and two computer games were designed to promote communication among family members and increase awareness on the character strengths of children. Two websites, one on anxiety prevention and the other on positive family, were also developed. Moreover, a mobile app was developed to help people examine their cognitive functioning and emotions. Internationally, Dr Kwok is the regional representative lead in the Positive Education Division of the International Positive Psychology Association. Her contribution to positive education both locally and internationally is well recognised.

To learn more about the positive education laboratory, please visit the website:

[http://www6.cityu.edu.hk/ss\\_posed](http://www6.cityu.edu.hk/ss_posed)



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正向教育研究室  
Positive Education Laboratory

# City University of Hong Kong Department of Social & Behavioural Sciences Positive Education Laboratory

## Aims

1. To promote positive education for children, adolescents, parents, teachers in schools and helping professions.
2. To enhance subjective well-being of people so as to help them attain a flourishing life

## Tasks

1. To conduct training on positive education for teachers, social workers, counselors, parents and related professionals
2. To conduct research on positive education

## Our Services

1. Seminar and Professional Training
2. General Positive Education Seminar
3. Applied Research

## Online Resources & Training Materials



Online game based on Bowen theory



Online game based on Satir theory



Online Game "Positive Adventure"



Positive Family Website



Board Game on Differentiation



Board Game on Communication

## Publications



"Sun Teens" Manual on Adolescent Mental Health Scheme (for Secondary Schools)



Positive Ambassador Scheme: Manual on Positive Education (for Primary Schools)



Promoting Happiness: Manual on Promoting Personal Well-being (for Primary Schools and parents)



Happiness Enhancement: Learning Package to Alleviate Student Anxiety (for Secondary Schools)



Nurturing Happy Seeds: Manual for Pre-primary School Students (for Pre-Primary Schools)



Integrating positive psychology & elements of Music Therapy to reduce adolescent anxiety and depression (for Secondary Schools)

## Contact Us

If you are interested in our training or research in positive education, please contact **Dr Sylvia Kwok**  
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# STUDENTS

## SS Briefing Session for Student Exchange Programmes in 2020–21

The Department always welcomes and encourages students to gain valuable international experience by enrolling in an academic exchange programme. On 31 October 2019, more than 30 students participated in the SS Briefing Session for student exchange programmes in 2020–21. The session aimed to prepare students with information and details about exchange programmes in the coming semesters.

Dr Ben Li was invited to share his knowledge during the first part of the session. He spoke about application and selection as it relates to exchange programmes, and also reminded students of some key considerations and important dates.



▲ Dr. Ben Li explaining to students the different levels of exchange programmes.

During the second part of the session, two senior students and an alumnus who went on to study in overseas universities through academic exchange programmes in the past semesters shared their personal experiences with fellow students. It was the first exchange briefing session which included time for students to share, which made the session more interactive and fruitful. Students have gained more useful and concrete knowledge of what it is like to be on an exchange programme by listening to first-hand experiences. Students also gained valuable tips which will help them prepare before they go on exchange programmes in the future.



▲ Vanessa Ho, a Criminology and Sociology student shared her exchange experiences at the University of Sheffield during Semester B 2018–19.



◀ Social work alumnus Lala Tsui came back and gave useful advice to students.



▲ Students enjoyed sharing in a small group led by Crystal Fong, a current Psychology student who went on an exchange the previous semester.

# ‘That which does not kill me makes me stronger’ ~ Friedrich Nietzsche

This is an exceptional and challenging academic year. In Semester A, some classes were suspended due to the social unrest. In Semester B, the University has adopted online teaching to minimise social contact in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The resumption of classes was delayed for a week after the Chinese New Year break. It allowed time for our academic and teaching staff to learn about online teaching techniques and prepare online teaching materials. With assistance from the Office of Education Development and Gateway Education, and the Computing Services Centre, we gradually built our competence in online teaching.

As the Chinese saying goes, ‘crossing the river by feeling the stones’, we proceeded to this new arena cautiously together with our students. To ensure the quality of teaching, we have engaged a team of colleagues as the representatives of the College Resources Team. They are responsible for collecting feedback and good practices, and sharing them among colleagues for appropriate responses and actions. Students are welcome to provide feedback to us about online teaching via a designated email mailbox.

We were proud to learn from a recent survey by the University that both students and staff have responded to the online teaching and learning very positively. Many colleagues shared their observations that some students became more engaged in the lectures by participating in polling, answering questions in chatrooms, and by taking part in breakout room discussions.

As much as we are satisfied with the new mode of teaching and learning, we, as social scientists, understand that face-to-face interaction is powerful and probably irreplaceable. A hug and a pat on the back cannot be replaced by an emoji. I hope that the pandemic can be controlled and is over very soon. I also ask for everyone’s continued effort on good hygiene practices and social distancing. I look forward to the day we can return to face-to-face teaching and interact with our students in person. In the meantime, I wish you all health and strength, both physical and mental.



**Dr Ben Li**

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