

Joining hands and hearts to promote character building in students
Four schools share their experiences in moral education



responsabilidades”, neste ano lectivo. Incentivamos os alunos a responsabilizarem-se pelo seu mau comportamento, aprendendo a enfrentar a frustração, e, ao mesmo tempo, aconselhamos os pais a não se envolverem, pois não há necessidade de superprotecção nem de preocupação. Dado o nosso espírito de excelência, a maioria dos alunos obedece aos regulamentos, e o número dos que ganham prémios de mérito supera, de longe, o dos que recebem punições.

4. A passagem de testemunho: O que é excepcional na nossa escola é, mais do que a acção individual, conseguirmos congregar a força da escola, professores, pais, alunos e antigos estudantes, incorporando o espírito de amor à pátria, a Macau, a Deus e à população, em geral, numa cultura própria da Pui Cheng – a que chamamos “Espírito Azul-Vermelho”. Com esta nobreza de espírito em mente, os nossos antigos alunos perseguem os seus objectivos na vida e, deste modo, obtêm o reconhecimento da sociedade. Esta tradição cultural da Escola Secundária Pui Ching é realmente valiosa. É frequente os antigos alunos realizarem palestras e partilharem experiências com os actuais alunos, além de acompanharem, com regularidade, o comportamento destes, após o horário escolar, e elaborarem o respectivo relatório. Desta forma, os antigos alunos estabeleceram uma rede de apoio escolar, que serve de exemplo aos actuais, sobre os benefícios de uma boa conduta.

Professora Lau: No ano passado, a nossa escola realizou eventos de educação moral durante o “Dia de Acção de Graças”, quando incentivámos os alunos a elaborar cartões de agradecimento, como “exercício da gratidão”, e a participar em actividades entre pais-e-filhos, no sentido de os ensinar a valorizar quem os rodeia. Além disso, a escola tem procurado promover a educação moral junto dos pais. Além da realização de palestras e actividades regulares em que os antigos alunos partilham experiências (com os pais), abrimos a nossa biblioteca à sociedade, para que pais e professores possam ter uma interacção e comunicação mais próxima. Os encarregados de educação também podem servir-se das suas contas electrónicas de turma, para comunicarem com a escola e obterem informações escolares sobre os seus educandos. Esta prática tem o objectivo de facilitar o contacto, ajudando os pais a conhecerem melhor a filosofia e política de funcionamento da escola.



Na implementação do programa de educação moral, com a crescente influência (negativa) dos meios de comunicação, as escolas locais enfrentam uma série de novos desafios. Que mais será necessário fazer para desenvolver, com sucesso, uma boa conduta moral dos alunos no espaço-escola?

Directora Wong: A nossa escola preocupa-se com o comportamento dos alunos na vida quotidiana, e por isso ausculta as questões sociais polémicas. Por exemplo, saber como os alunos usam a *internet*, recolhendo dados sobre o tempo que passam no Facebook, e analisando o seu comportamento no ciberespaço. O nosso antigo director costumava transmitir os resultados das sondagens aos alunos, para os informar sobre as atitudes correctas e corrigir a sua abordagem das tecnologias de informação. Além disso, para proporcionar maior apoio aos professores que lidam com a educação moral e aos professores mais jovens com menor experiência, a nossa escola solicita aos professores mais experientes (do departamento de educação moral) que produzam material pedagógico, para os outros professores. Damos importância à “formação de novos professores”, proporcionando primeiro um estágio especial aos professores recém-recrutados e, em seguida, destacando um professor experiente na docência da mesma disciplina/nível de ensino, para orientar, durante um ano lectivo, dois jovens professores em início de carreira. Em suma, a implementação da educação moral no espaço-escola é uma tarefa generalizada e sistemática, que pode ser realizada através de meios variados mas requer tempo. Além disso, as chaves para o sucesso da educação moral residem na cooperação com os pais, no apoio de políticas governamentais adequadas e nas influências sociais (ajustadas) das nossas crianças.

Conclusão:

O nosso ideal comum é educar as crianças com um carácter nobre e de respeito por pais e idosos. Para alcançar este objectivo, temos de trabalhar juntos para “moldar” as mentes das nossas crianças e ajudá-las a aproximarem-se da perfeição!

※ Para obter mais informações sobre a educação moral, queira visitar o Espaço de Educação Moral na Escola – Inspirar Outras Vidas com a Sua Vida, Despertar o Amor dos Outros com o Seu Amor: http://www.dsej.gov.mo/~webdsej/www_cem/moral_edu.html

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**Joining hands and hearts to promote character building in students
Four schools share their experiences in moral education**

To continually advance the “Collaborative Model of Promoting Moral Education” (hereinafter referred to as the “Collaborative Model”), the Centre of Moral Education of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) organised, in February and again in November 2011, the Collaborative Model Study Programme for Promoting Moral Education”, as well as two sharing sessions on “There is always you and I on the road of Education”. Through the training courses, opportunities for practice, visits and sharing of experiences, teachers’ understanding of the importance of collaboration in moral education was strengthened and they were encouraged to put moral education into practice in their daily work in school. Five schools participated in the aforesaid activities, namely the Escola da Associação Geral das Mulheres de Macau, Pui Ching Middle School, Instituto Salesiano, Primary School Section of Hou Kong Middle School, and Escola Primária Luso-Chinesa da Flora.

In this issue, the Teacher Magazine interviews the directors and teachers from the four participating schools. They share with other educators their experiences of successful implementation of moral education, as well as other related achievements.

Primary School Section of Hou Kong Middle School
Assistant Director **Ho Tak Ching** Miss **Lei loi**



Please share the experiences and achievements of your school in conducting moral education through collaboration.

Director Ho: The moral education activities organised by the DSEJ helped us identify the key points of implementing moral education in a collaborative manner, which are: 1) We can mobilise the entire school for collaboration, rather than relying only on the administrative staff to initiate it and moral education teachers to implement it; instead, all faculty members, students and even parents can take part. 2) Based on students’ backgrounds, we design and organise moral education activities of different themes, while attempting to apply the concept expressed in 1) to our school-based moral education programme.

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Every academic year, we set the discipline work plan in accordance with our school's education philosophy, students' family backgrounds and the needs of the community. Most of our school students come from lower and middle class families, whose parents both work. As such, the parents often are neither strict with their children nor are able to spend enough time with their children. They also often like to compensate kids with money and material things. This approach could easily produce spoiled children that easily run wild and tend to imitate adults in speech and behaviour. In view of this, we try to establish a set of moral education goals taking into consideration the students' needs, and develop activities of preventive education.

Please briefly comment on the characteristics of your school-based moral education programme; have you had any difficulties in its implementation? What have you achieved so far?

Miss Lei: Last year we organised an activity aimed at 'fostering classroom discipline and assessing grooming', which proved effective and popular with students. In this activity, conducted by the 'little executives' of the Student Association and guided by teachers, student leaders were arranged to inspect schoolmates' grooming as well as the classroom discipline; those violating discipline were marked down and would lose points. At first, this was tried in classes; later on, we expanded it into a competition between grades, involving the whole school. At the same time, Quantitative Evaluation Tables were posted at the school entrance, alongside which grooming mirrors were also installed, so as to encourage students of the various grades to supervise and support one another, and thus foster a sense of responsibility and supportive spirit among schoolmates. Most outstandingly, the activity succeeded in stimulating students' initiative and boosting their enthusiasm. Since then, they have developed better living habits and became more disciplined in school.

Director Ho: Our school cherishes very much collaboration with parent. We regularly host talks for parents as well as parent-child exchange activities. However, we have faced many hurdles in encouraging parents to partake in these activities. Some parents simply do not show up, due to such reasons as being "busy with work", having "no time", "having to attend a training course", etc... We have to approach it by instilling the right moral concept in students, trying to arrange different themed lectures to prod them to motivate their parents. The themes have included difficulty in studies, way to get along with others, "say no to smoking", gender relationship and money management, as well as "promoting character building in students and parents".

With the increasing (negative) influence of the media, local schools are facing a lot of new challenges in promoting moral education. What else needs to be done to successfully shape the moral character of students in school?

Director Ho: Students usually behave well in school, but we have to rely on the support and collaboration from all sectors in society to monitor their after-school behaviour. As parents are too busy working, a majority of students are entrusted to crammed tutorial centres, where they revise their lessons. These tutorial centres vary in terms of facilities and quality of tutors, therefore the education authority should visit/inspect them more often and step up supervision. As a matter of fact, given its high population density, the Central district now is wanting in community education resources. Therefore, more facilities like parent-child education activity centres and study rooms should be built. Meanwhile, I'd suggest that the DSEJ creates a district-based "phoning service for homework guidance" service hotline, to provide students living in different districts adequate learning support.

Fu Luen School

Director Vong Iao King Miss Chan Un Peng

Please share the experiences and achievements of your school in conducting moral education through collaboration.

Director Vong: Our school philosophy is "running the school by virtue and putting student's character building in the first place" and "everything is for the development of children". By virtue of these principles, we attach importance to

student's moral education and character building; and we promote school-based moral education programmes, with an emphasis on ancient mottos and traditional virtues. Our school sets the objectives for moral education each academic year that are to be implemented by class teachers and other subject teachers. The aforementioned moral education event (held by the DSEJ) indeed inspired us, and so for the very first time we promoted a moral education programme in a collaborative manner, which had the support and cooperation of the principal, all faculty members, including the school director, class teachers, subject teachers, as well as social workers and form/class representatives who all joined hands to organise the relevant activities.

Please briefly comment on the characteristics of your school-based moral education programme; have you had any difficulties in its implementation? What have you achieved so far?

Miss Chan: Last year, a moral education activity which aimed to boost students' personal initiative to learn and to reduce their reliance on others was conducted in Grade Six, a level which I was teaching. The activity was carried out with the collaboration of the school director, teachers, students, social workers and parents. Everyone played a part in it: students created mottos and themed wall bulletins, teachers led the activity and observed student performance in the process, the director supervised and mobilised other teaching staff to actively collaborate and take part in it, and parents monitored and recorded students' behaviour at home, and reported it to school. Upon its completion, teachers were happy to see the significant changes in most students. Students would actively update their school diary, became confident enough to raise questions or doubts in classes. Students also improved their personal self-management skills, and were spontaneously sharing household chores with their family. In this activity, we adopted multiple evaluation methods, which involved teacher and parent evaluations, student self-assessment, as well as peer evaluation. During this process, students were able to carry out self-reflection and observe other classmates' progress, encouraging and supporting one another.

Director Vong: This academic year we've set the moral education target: "self-respect, confidence and self-reliance".

Through such means as various festivals and current issues, the classes designed, on their own, the format of promotion activities for moral education. While the school absolutely supports promoting character building of students, collaboration from parents is important as well. Hence, our school continues to organise training for parents to deepen their parenting knowledge and skills. These include art therapy workshops that enhance parents' understanding of their children's inner world through painting, as well as parental education which seeks to advise parents that no matter how busy they may be, they should spare some time to communicate with their children. I firmly believe that with a group of dedicated teachers who work hard to nurture the young generation, the quality of school moral education work will be further developed.

With the increasing (negative) influence of the media, local schools are facing a lot of new challenges in promoting moral education. What else needs to be done to successfully shape the moral character of students in school?

Director Vong: Teamwork is very important for successfully promoting moral education in schools. Apart from efforts by the school, positive collaboration from parents is also a key to success! Teachers should communicate regularly with parents in a caring manner and avoid giving the impression that a teacher contacts parents only for complaining about student behaviour, which stresses the family-school relationship. Therefore teachers should take the initiative to establish a sound collaborative relationship with parents. That will certainly benefit the fostering of students' noble character and good habits, and the effect will be obvious.

Moreover, although the DSEJ spares no effort in organising training to support moral education teachers, it should, where ever possible, try to be more considerate when scheduling courses. For instance, recently the DSEJ organised the "Macao Basic Law Study Programme" and the "Seed Teachers Training Programme on Life Education", which are quite helpful for moral education teachers to improve their professional knowledge and teaching skills. However, the scheduled programmes overlapped each other, forcing teachers "to choose one or the other" – which I think is a pity.

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Teacher Chan: We should also keep our eyes on students' lives after school, guiding them to take part in wholesome extra-curricular activities in their spare time, such as, reading, listening to music, doing housework, communicating with parents and teachers, etc. I hope the education authority may provide more rich and healthy hobby activities which are appealing to youngsters, so that students won't hang around on streets after class, or become addicted to the Internet.

Instituto Salesiano

Director Ng Vai I Miss Fung Oi Peng

Please share the experiences and achievements of your school in conducting moral education through collaboration.

Director Ng: Our school was founded by the Salesian Father of Don Bosco. We promote "Preventive Education", the philosophy of which is to educate students on the basis of "reason, religion and loving-kindness"; to help them grow healthily in knowledge, mental development, and spirituality. Therefore, our school stresses the fostering of students' moral character. The work of moral education in our school is mainly lead by the religion section, discipline section, counselling section, spirituality and moral education section, and leisure activity section. Only when these divisions work together and help each other, as well as all the teachers, students, and parents actively give us support, can the school effectively do the job. After years of conducting moral education, we firmly believe that as long as all the members of an educational group uphold a common philosophy and understand students' needs, they can educate students well as the saying goes "unity is strength". Only through concerted efforts can we help students develop a sense of belonging toward the school – This is one of the characteristics of "our big family". We gathered teachers from various schools in Macao to participate in our programme titled "Collaborative Model of Enhancing Moral Education", through which they have understood the importance of collaboration whether in classroom learning or during the visit to Hong Kong. Moreover, we have gained a deeper understanding of how other local schools conduct moral education through this programme and we've learned a lot too.

Miss Fung: In the "Collaborative Model of Enhancing Moral Education" programme, we tried to have students of Class D of the Third Grade engage in a moral education activity organised under the theme of "classroom management", aiming at greatly improving the students' performance in self-discipline, classroom order, and proper line up. We tried to achieve these by: 1. establishing classroom rules; 2. creating mottos for self-regulation and discipline; 3. teaching students a song titled "Keeping Good Habits"; 4. grading classroom order; 5. implementing incentive plans. All of these measures have helped maintain classroom order, which in turn has improved the students' learning. Many of them said that the related activities had caught their attention and helped to keep order in classrooms. Therefore, we will promote the song 'Keeping Good Habits' in the whole school.

Please briefly comment on the characteristics of your school-based moral education programme; have you had any difficulties in its implementation? What have you achieved so far?

Director Ng: Our school-based moral education programme is characterised by: 1) In terms of curriculum, we have two Religion lessons and one Moral and Civic Education lesson per week; 2) We've adopted the textbook "Moral and Civic Education" jointly compiled and published by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau and People's Education Press; 3) Teachers, school social workers and outside groups organise activities and lectures to address the needs of students of all ages. For first and second graders: "Know Your Body", "Self-protection", and "Discipline and Self-discipline"; for third and fourth graders: "Action for Protecting the Eggs", "Fun interpretation", and "Money Management"; for fifth and sixth graders: "Sex Education for Adolescents", "The Internet Culture", and "Return-to-Nature & Simple Life". Additionally, the Spirituality and Moral Education section also promotes themed activities every two months. For example, the theme for November and October is "Be a Good Student and Keep Good Habits". In this activity we invite teachers, students or guests to share their experiences on the subject in morning assemblies. Students also watch mini-videos or presentations on related topics in tutorial classes. After that, the class teachers will lead a discussion session to foster the moral development of students.

Miss Fung: In the past three years, our school has been paying special attention to cultivating students' politeness and manners. Chinese language teachers, art and craft teachers, and class teachers collaborated to hold Chinese writing, motto designing, drawing competitions and the prize winners' works would be printed as bookmarks and poster afterwards. We did it for publicity purposes on one hand, and on the other, we tried to raise students' awareness of good manners. We've managed to create an atmosphere of courtesy in school through daily interactions between teachers and students, sharing real-life examples in the morning-prayer sessions, and role playing activities. In addition, we also held charitable sales to get the entire school involved, with teachers making donations and food and students designing the stalls and games. Everybody worked together to raise money to help poor children in the mainland. We even mobilised faculty members and students to organise a trip to the mainland to spread the message of "love for all" and promote the spirit of "patriotism and love for Macao". While implementing the school-based moral education programme, we spent a lot of time and energy collecting moral education-related information and organising suitable activities. Despite the hard work, seeing that most students have improved their moral conduct through various activities, we know our efforts are worthwhile!

With the increasing (negative) influence of the media, local schools are facing a lot of new challenges in promoting moral education. What else needs to be done to successfully shape the moral character of students in school?

Miss Fung: Macao's economy is now growing rapidly, thus bringing about many social changes. We have many students whose parents both work, or students from single-parent families. Many parents even work in shifts, so they have to send their children to tutorial centres, thus spending less and less time with their kids. As such, teachers are sometimes the only persons students can really trust and talk with. I hope parents will cherish their quality time with their children, understand their needs, and accompany them while they grow up.

Director Ng: The government has been emphasising the importance of fostering students' moral character and civic literacy. In addition to establishing the "Centre of Moral Education" aimed at organising moral education-related activities, the government should continue to enrich the local moral education database to help schools promote different thematic activities related to moral and civic education. Furthermore, the negative impact brought about by the rapid economic development of Macao requires due attention.

Nowadays, students can access all kinds of knowledge through different channels, a situation that challenges teachers' educative methods and students' knowledge development. Therefore, teachers have to constantly adjust their paces and mindset on the road of education. In the past, we focused on "discipline, teaching, and training", and now we have to switch to "communication, listening, acceptance, tolerance and respect". If teachers can maintain a good relationship with students, it'll be easier for them to correct students' misbehaviour.

Let us encourage each other with the following mottos: collaborating in concerted efforts, building stronger teacher-student relationship, helping each other achieve goals, and living our lives to the fullest.

Pui Ching Middle School
Director Vong Kit Ping Teacher Au Siu Sam

Please share the experiences and achievements of your school in conducting moral education through collaboration.

Director Wong: This activity boosts our school's moral education work. Pui Ching Middle School has been adopting a collaborative mode in conducting moral education. We do it first in groups and then extend it to the entire school. The Principal, Director of Students, teachers, students, janitors/janitresses, along with parents and alumni, are all involved in this collaborative effort.

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Please briefly comment on the characteristics of your school-based moral education programme; have you had any difficulties in its implementation? What have you achieved so far?

Director Wong: We adopt a positive approach in the Moral education work of our school by taking preventive measures. Currently, it is divided into four parts: 1.Preventive efforts: We have several policies targeting the teachers, students, and parents, respectively. For example, we organise sharing sessions for our teachers; we have our students taking formal education courses, such as Life Education, Civic Education, and Religious Studies, and then get involved in Christian Fellowship, weekly assemblies, and Life Camps; we host talks on moral education, workshops, and parent-child activities for the parents. Through a variety of activities, we try to build a common concept to achieve successful experience of promoting moral education.

2.Development activities: We actively expand our extra-curricular activities by creating supplementary classes for character building and improvement of learning ability. For example, to better meet students' needs, we have replaced the tutorial classes, which were originally created for students from Grade 1 to Grade 3 to review their school work, with the new hobby classes covering various themes on moral education, such as self-care skills, communication skills, and how to get along with others. We hope to foster students' moral character, enabling them to have more fun in learning through these development activities.

3.Discipline measures: Our school has strict regulations with explicit rules for award and punishment which are rigorously enforced. Despite that, we cherish the principle of "incentive-first, punishment-second". In the current school year, our moral education focuses on "taking responsibility". We encourage students to be responsible for their misconduct and to learn how to deal with frustration, while telling parents not to get involved because there's no need to be overprotective and over-concerned. Since our school enjoys a positive ethos, most students follow the rules, and the students earning merits outnumber the ones receiving punishment.

4.Passing on the legacy: What's precious about our school is, rather than counting on individual actions, we've managed to rally the strength of the school, teachers, parents, alumni and students to incorporate the spirit of love for our country, Macao, God, and people into our school's culture – the 'Blue-Red Spirit, as we call it. With this noble spirit in mind, our alumni are pursuing their goals for life far and wide, and thus have obtained due social recognition. This cultural tradition of Pui Ching Middle School is indeed precious. Our alumni often come back to host talks to share experiences, and constantly monitor students' after-school behaviour and report to us. By doing so, the alumni have established a supportive network (for the school), which serves as a reminder for the students that they must behave well at all times.

Miss Au: Last year, our school held some moral education activities around the "Thanksgiving Day", which served as an occasion for students to make thank-you

cards, practice "gratitude exercises", and participate in parent-child activities to help them care about people around them and also relieve their stress. Moreover, we have been making efforts to foster moral education amid parents. In addition to hosting regular talks and experience sharing sessions of alumni, we open our library to the community so that parents and teachers can have closer interactions. Parents can also use their e-Class accounts to communicate with the school to find out how their children perform at school. This approach helps them know more about our philosophy and policies, which in turn enables the school to operate more smoothly.

With the increasing (negative) influence of the media, local schools are facing a lot of new challenges in promoting moral education. What else needs to be done to successfully shape the moral character of students in school?

Director Wong: We concern about how our students behave in daily lives and we probe into hot social issues. For example, we check how students use the Internet and we collect data about how much time they spend on Facebook, so as to profile their online behavior. Our former principal used to report the results to the students, to teach them how to correctly use information technology. Moreover, in order to give more support to moral education teachers and younger teachers who are less experience, we ask senior secondary teachers from the moral education section to compile school-based moral education teaching materials for other faculty members. We emphasise "coaching new teachers", firstly by offering specific training for newly-recruited teachers, and mentorship by an experienced senior teacher of the same subject/grade. Each mentor will provide teaching guidance to two younger teachers for one-year. In short, implementing moral education in school is a comprehensive and systematic task that can be done through many channels and requires time to achieve results. The keys to the effective implementation of moral education rely on parents' cooperation, support of government policies, and positive social influences.

Conclusion:

It is our common goal to bring up children of noble character and the virtue of respect for parents and seniors. To achieve this goal, we have to work together to shape our children's minds and help them move closer to perfection!

※ For more information on moral education, please visit the following website: Space for Moral Education in School – Inspire Others' Lives with Your Life, Arouse Love in Others with Your Love:
http://www.dsej.gov.mo/~webdsej/www_cem/moral_edu.html

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