

**A Study of the Relationship between  
School Guidance and Discipline  
in Hong Kong Secondary Schools**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Hong Kong secondary schools are concerned with the difficulty in integrating both guidance and discipline into schooling for promoting students' welfare. The aim of this research is to explore what elements make such integration difficult in a school, and what factors make the relationship between school guidance and discipline different from school to school. Its context includes Hong Kong policy on secondary education and Chinese culture. The research began with a preliminary study: ten teachers and ten students from five Hong Kong secondary schools were recruited for interviews, which adopted the framework of the definition of situation, proposed by Stebbins (1967, 1969, 1975). The preliminary study aimed to investigate how the respondents defined the situation in which they participated, and to identify the relationship between guidance and discipline, in terms of two orientations: integrated and fragmented. This study showed that the strength of each orientation, and the relationship between the guidance and discipline teams varied among the five schools.

After these findings, I went on to conduct the main study, which includes two case-studies of Schools B and E. It was ethnographic and descriptive, and used an organisational perspective to examine the elements which made the relationship between guidance and discipline different in the two schools at the three levels of the whole school, department, and classroom. Based on the ontology of interactionism and the social construction of reality, I, as a researcher, participated in the two schools for four months. Qualitative data were collected with the use of research methods, including participant observation, interviews, focus group interviews and textual analysis. Then the data were processed and analysed, as two bodies of data for Schools B and E, using a comparative analytical approach. The main study found that the arrangements for guidance and discipline at the levels of classroom and department were closely linked to organisational cultures and structure of the school. Then, the implications of these findings are given. Lastly, some appropriate recommendations for change are discussed.

**Dedication:**

To my mother,  
the greatest pastoral carer;  
and to all those who participated in this study,  
particularly those students  
who misbehaved in the classroom.

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## INTRODUCTION

During my four years of teaching experience in a Hong Kong secondary school, I found that school guidance and discipline were separated as two independent domains. It seems that each had a contrasting rationale on how to help students resolve their difficulties. They even transmitted conflicting values to students, and contradictory messages to the rest of the school organisation.

The separation of guidance and discipline in this school was reflected in the phenomenon that a corrective and punishment-based approach to school discipline was adopted for the purpose of socialising students to behave as members of society and for teaching and supporting the value of collectivism. In the processes of discipline, students were seen as members of a collective group; teachers felt responsible for maintaining the consistency of school rules, and for managing students' misbehaviour within a protocol of procedures so as to achieve the targets of justice and fairness. By contrast, school guidance aimed to promote individual students' welfare and personal growth. In the processes of guidance, students were seen as individuals who were able, valuable, and responsible; teachers should offer students in need empathy, care and support to help them to resolve their problems. Participating in this working situation, most teachers experienced considerable difficulties in integrating guidance and discipline, at both the individual and department levels. They generally emphasised discipline more than guidance, and admitted that there was no room for school guidance in the classroom. At the department level, the guidance and discipline teams rarely worked together to manage students' misbehaviour. Also discipline teachers were described by teachers and students as strict, tough, and firm, whereas guidance teachers were described as soft, kind, and caring.

According to many writers, there are similar difficulties in many Hong Kong secondary schools. Concern with the arrangements for guidance and discipline has been growing since the publications of the Education Commission Report no. 4

(Education Commission, 1990) and the Guidelines on the Whole School Approach to Guidance (Education Department, 1993, 1994). In relation to this, the aim of this thesis is to explore the elements which make the relationship between guidance and discipline different from school to school.

The thesis is a developmental account which describes both the changing design and the emergent concepts in this study. While the theoretical framework remains the same, the major concepts are expanded in line with the additional data and perspectives developed. The thesis is divided into six parts, as follows.

Part I offers a context for this research. It summarises recent developments in education policy, the secondary school system and the policy of discipline and guidance in secondary schools, and then provides a cultural context for understanding the social behaviour of Chinese people.

Part II reviews the existing studies on guidance and discipline, mainly those which have dealt with the UK and Hong Kong secondary schools. It distils much research about the factors which influence the delivery of guidance and discipline, and their relation with the school. It also includes a discussion of literature on the school as an organisation, and on the degree of schools' connectedness so as to offer an alternative perspective on the same issue.

Part III reports the preliminary study: an interview study of ten teachers and ten students from five Hong Kong secondary schools. It proposes the theoretical framework of interactionism, specifically the definition of the situation, proposed by Stebbins (1967, 1969, 1975), and the two orientations for the relation between guidance and discipline: integrated and fragmented.

Part IV is an account of the paradigm of the main study, which is based on the ontology of interactionism and the social construction of reality, and on the epistemology of ethnography. It clarifies the implications of this ontology for the

theoretical framework of the main study, and discusses the strategies and tactics which were used for collecting fieldwork data, and the approaches to processing and analysing these data.

Part V, the analysis of the findings, contrasts the relations between guidance and discipline in Schools B and E at the three levels of whole school, department and classroom. It provides a broad exposition of three aspects of school organisation: history, ethos and structure, and leads to considering the structural arrangement and the organisational culture of the Counselling and Discipline Departments/Teams. A particular focus is on teachers' and students' construction of classroom knowledge and its relation to the school organisation.

Part VI is a section of conclusions and implications. It summarises the preliminary and main studies, and continues by clarifying its implications for strengthening the integration between guidance and discipline. It throws light on the school as an organisation where all levels and sections are interconnected, and dialectically affect to each other. Then further research on guidance and discipline is suggested. Recommendations are made on promoting the integration of guidance and discipline within the school.

Throughout the thesis, Hong Kong terminology for primary and secondary education is used to preserve the regional characteristics. The equivalents of terminology used in the UK can be found in Appendix 1 (p.254). The terms like 'guidance' and 'counselling' in Hong Kong are equivalent to 'pastoral care' in the UK, whereas 'principal' in Hong Kong corresponds to 'head teacher' in the UK. Additionally, the schools and school participants involved in this study were kept anonymous.

# Chapter One

## **Hong Kong Secondary Education: the Policy Context**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Hong Kong, which now has an area of about 1,067 square kilometers, was first established as a British colony when Hong Kong Island was ceded from China in 1842 under the Treaty of Nanking. The New Territory on the mainland was added in 1898. In July 1997, sovereignty was returned from Britain to China. Under the Sino-British Joint Agreement signed in 1984, Hong Kong will preserve her present capitalist system as a Special Administrative Region under China for a period of 50 years (Hong Kong Government, 2000).

Demographically, from the 1940s to the 1990s, Hong Kong's population increased dramatically from an estimated 600,000 in 1945 to about 1.9 million in 1949, about 2.5 million in 1955, 4.3 million in 1974 and 5.8 million in 1992. According to Sweeting (1995), the economy grew in the same way. The figure for GDP per capita at constant (1980) prices shows this dramatically: 1966, HK\$11,961; 1971, HK\$14,812; 1976, HK\$ 19,895; 1981, HK\$ 28,936; 1986, HK\$35,604. These developments were reflected in the massive expansion of primary education in the 1950s to 1960s, secondary education in the 1970s and 1980s and tertiary education in the 1990s.

In this chapter, I intend to depict the features of Hong Kong secondary education so as to help readers understand the arrangements for guidance and discipline at the policy level, with respect to the questions initiating this study. Firstly, I will demonstrate the development of education policy, from the 1970s to the 1990s. I will

then turn to illustrating the development of the education system, especially of secondary education. Finally, the discussion will focus on the development of school guidance and discipline at the institutional level.

## **1.2 Recent Developments in Education Policy**

In Hong Kong, there are two statutory bodies for the governance and management of the education sector: the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and the Education Department (ED). Formally, the EMB is mainly responsible for the formulation, coordination and review of education policies, while the ED is responsible for the implementation of policies and the delivery of education services covering pre-primary, primary and secondary education. In addition to the EMB and ED, there is a large number of advisory bodies. The main ones which are relevant to this study are the Education Commission and the Board of Education (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2001a).

### *In the 1970s*

For more than a century after Britain colonized Hong Kong in 1842, the colonial government did not pay much attention to education. Significant changes to the educational system only occurred in the 1970s. Since then, the education system has been expanding in relation to the pressure placed on it by economic and demographic changes.

Within this period, one of the vital educational changes is commonly considered to be the implementation of the policy of six years of free and compulsory primary education in 1971. This policy inevitably stimulated the escalating demand for secondary education. As a result of this, in 1978, the government extended the policy of free and compulsory education from primary to junior secondary education. Under this policy, nine years of free and compulsory education, that is, six years of primary schooling plus three years of junior secondary, are provided for all children between the ages of 6 and 15.

*From the 1980s to the 1990s*

In the 1980s, Hong Kong experienced a period of consolidation and refinement in its educational development. This was marked by the establishment of the Education Commission (EC) in 1984 as a non-statutory body to advise the government on the overall development of education according to community needs (Education Commission, 2001). From the 1980s, the government put more emphasis on long-term planning when formulating and implementing education policy.

In Cheng's (1999) review of the development of Hong Kong education from the 1980s to 1990s, two 'waves' are identified in terms of the orientation of educational development stated in the seven reports issued by the EC, between 1984 and 1997. Precisely, the period during which Education Commission Reports (ECR) nos.1 to 6 were published, between 1984 and 1996, is classified as the first wave, whereas the period from the publication of ECR no. 7 (Education Commission, 1997) onwards is defined as the second wave.

In the first wave, Cheng (1999) claims, most policies were formulated under the assumption that there was homogeneity among schools. Therefore, it was usual that the policies did not take the school itself as the unit of change. Instead, as he contends, most policies in this period largely focused on '*piecemeal practices*' and resource input. The policy-makers seemed unable to recognize the differences between schools, and the features of individual schools. In the first wave, Cheng summarized the emphasis of education underlying the ECR nos. 1 to 6 as follows:

1. *Improvement of the quality of language teaching at the school site level...*
2. *Upgrading the quality of teachers...*
3. *Improvement of the private sector school...*
4. *Improvement of curriculum development...*
5. *Implementation of mixed-mode schooling...; improvement of teaching condition...; improvement of the physical environment;*
6. *Improvement of special education (pp. 14-16).*

In contrast to the first wave, the emphasis of education in the second wave has been placed more on individual schools, rather than implementing any standardized and universal policy for all schools. The importance of a school-based approach is emphasised by the government. Dimmock (1998) describes this period as a restructuring of Hong Kong's education system. According to Cheng (1999), there are two vital policies in this period; these are the School Management Initiative (SMI), and the Towards A Better School Movement (TABSM).

The SMI, introduced in 1991, aims to transform each school into a flexible, active, and goal-pursuing management system, and then to create and maintain a quality school culture (EMB and ED, 1991). According to Cheng (1999), the rationale underlying the SMI is that schools are significantly different from each other. Changes only occur if they are made on the basis of school-based features and circumstances, with the participation of all teachers in school management and the institutionalization of such school-based management.

In 1996, five years after the introduction of the SMI, the Education Commission published the ECR no.7 entitled Quality School Education (QSE) (Education Commission, 1996). This report adopted the school-based management concept and the rationale of SMI as desirable for the promotion of school quality and school effectiveness.

Parallel to the school-based management reform, a group of educators and officers of education department initiated a '*bottom-up*' movement entitled as the Towards A Better School Movement (TABSM) (Cheng, 1999). They established a '*self-help*' network which was intended to promote the quality of Hong Kong education. They share the view that each school is like an organism, which is able to fulfill, examine and improve itself. If sufficient time and efforts are given, schools can be developed as happy and healthy places where children can be educated, and as learning organizations where all school practitioners can learn and grow (Towards A Better School Movement, 1994).

In short, between the 1970s and the 1980s, the emphasis of education was placed more on quantity rather than quality. In the 1990s, there was a growing concern with the importance of school-based management and the quality of school education. With the introduction of a school-based reform, the government aimed to enhance the quality and effectiveness of education.

## 1.3 Secondary School System

In this section, I intend to sketch an overall picture of Hong Kong secondary education. I will firstly state the current aim of Hong Kong education. Then I will turn to illustrate the school system and the various types of secondary schools, and to explain the policy on the medium of instruction which has been applied in secondary schools.

### 1.3.1 Aims of education

In early 1998, the EC began to review the existing education system in Hong Kong in order to formulate a blueprint for the development of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. After the review, the government claimed that the aim of Hong Kong education is to provide an all-round education for children, which encompasses moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development; and the emphasis of schooling is placed on developing the capacity and aptitude for life-long learning. As the EC states, the aim of the education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is:

*To enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skill and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change, filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of their society, and contribute to the future and well-being of the nation and the world at large (Curriculum Development Council, 2000).*

### **1.3.2 System of secondary education**

The school system in Hong Kong has evolved under predominant British influence. It encompasses two or three years of kindergarten education, six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education, two years of senior secondary, and two years of education for matriculation (Information Service Department, 1999). At the secondary level, according to official records, in the academic year 1999-2000, there were a total of 519 secondary schools and 465,250 secondary students in Hong Kong. The population of secondary students is projected to rise by about 4% over the next ten years (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2000).

Regarding the school system, all students who have completed primary education should pass through a centralized system of selection, the Secondary School Places Allocation System (SSPAS), to be allocated into secondary schools. The system, administered by the Education Department, has been in operation since 1978 with no major changes. Under this system, all primary-six students are assessed internally in primary-five and primary-six, and also using the Academic Aptitude Test (AAT), and accordingly divided into five equal bands, each consisting of 20% of primary-six students. Students grouped into band one are the topmost, whereas those grouped into band five are the lowest according to this test. In a sense, as the public understand it, the allocation system is not only a way of streaming students according to academic performance, but also a way of streaming secondary schools according to the percentage of each band of students which they have been allocated by the SSPAS (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2001b).

After completing the three years of junior secondary education, students pass through another system of selection and allocation, the Junior Secondary Education Assessment (JSEA), to be allocated subsidized secondary-four places. The selection and allocation is made on the basis of two criteria: the academic performance of students in school internal assessments and parental choices (Government Information Centre, 2000).

Those students who have been allocated secondary-four places attend a two-year course leading to the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), which is equivalent to the GCSE in England. Successful HKCEE candidates may enter a 2-year sixth form course leading to the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) for admission to local tertiary institutions (Information Service Department, 1999).

Alternatively, those students who have completed junior secondary education may choose to continue their studies in post-secondary craft courses offered by the Vocational Training Council (VTC), the Construction Industry Training Authority (CITA) and the Clothing Industry Training Authority (CITA) (Government Information Centre, 2000).

### **1.3.3 Types of secondary schools**

Secondary schools can be generally divided into three categories, namely government, aided, and private. Briefly, government schools are directly operated by the Education Department. The staff are civil servants, and are therefore subject to normal civil service regulations. Aided-schools account for over 80 per cent of secondary schools. They are run by churches, private organizations and trusts with a constant subsidization from the government. These two kinds of schools have standardized inputs, such as curriculum, school buildings, ratio of teacher to pupils, qualifications of teachers, teaching equipment and educational resources, but both government and aided schools should strictly follow the government's instruction to run the school.

Private schools are run by private organization without receiving any subsidy from the government. They retain a higher degree of autonomy in financial and personnel matters, and management. To enhance the quality of private school education, the government introduced in 1991 the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) to encourage private secondary schools which have attained a sufficient educational standard, to join the scheme. In March 1999, this scheme was further extended to all government-

aided schools. According to the official record, in September 2000, there were a total of 31 DSS schools, including 30 secondary and one primary, of which five are international schools (Education Department, 2000a).

### **1.3.4 Medium of instruction**

The issue of the medium of instruction in secondary schools is controversial in Hong Kong society. From the 1970s to the 1980s, the policy on the medium of instruction was loose, even after mother-tongue teaching was introduced by the ED in the 1980s. The government has become more determined to put this policy in practice since the late 1990s.

In Hong Kong, secondary schools used to enjoy considerable autonomy in deciding their policy on the medium of instruction, in accordance with parental preference and students' academic ability. As a result of this, secondary schools have been divided into two categories according to which medium of instruction, Chinese or English, they were adopted. Those schools which adopt English as the medium of instruction are called Anglo-Chinese schools, and those which adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction are known as Chinese schools. Generally, parents prefer to send their children to Anglo-Chinese schools, rather than Chinese schools, even though they realize that their children may not acquire sufficient ability to learn in English. This helps to explain why about 90 per cent of secondary students are enrolled in Anglo-Chinese schools.

Although teachers in Anglo-Chinese schools were supposed to teach in English, according to Fung (1986), many of them used very little English in the classroom. Basically Chinese is still used, and at most subject-specific terms and some phrases and sentences are in English. One of the effects is that whenever students do not know the Chinese terms, they naturally replace them with English ones. Subsequently, they fall into the habit of speaking incomplete Chinese sentences that occasionally, and sometimes unnecessarily, included English words. This has

gradually become a common practice not only in schools, but also in the rest of social life.

In addition to this effect, it is commonly asserted that there is a growing number of students in Anglo-Chinese secondary schools who experience considerable difficulty in learning in English. The adoption of English as the medium of instruction is widely regarded one of the main factors leading to the proliferation of indiscipline problems in schools. In fact, the government formulated a policy for the promotion of mother tongue teaching since the 1980s. The policy aimed to enable students to learn effectively, and to be biliterate and trilingual, that is, to write good Chinese and English and to speak Cantonese, Mandarin and English fluently. However, the policy was only implemented loosely. In practice, schools were still very free to use whichever language they considered their students could cope with, and to use either language in different subjects and in different classes if they thought this approach was more suitable for their students. As a result of this, by following parental wishes, as noted earlier, most schools still preferred to use English as the medium of instruction, rather than Chinese.

In the 1990s, the government became more determined to put the policy of mother tongue teaching in practice. In September 1997, it issued the Medium of Instruction - Guidance for Secondary Schools. The guidance stated that all secondary schools should adopt Chinese for teaching and learning, starting with their secondary-one intake in the 1998/99 schools year, and progressing each year to a higher level of secondary education, unless a school had obtained approval to use English as the medium of instruction (EMI). Although the policy led to much debate among educators and also the discontent among the public, a large number of Anglo-Chinese schools have decided, not to adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction. As the official record shows, in the 1998/99 school year, in addition to the 77 existing Chinese-medium secondary schools, another 223 secondary schools switched to adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction (CMI) (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2000).

The features of secondary school system can be summarized into two points. Firstly, apparently, examinations serve as the backbone of the school system, as they dominate the system for the selection and allocation of primary-six and secondary-three students, the HKCEE and HKALE. As a result of assessing students' academic ability with examination, both students and schools are streamed. Secondly, with the introduction of the DSS, the government intends to give schools more autonomy in deciding how to allocate resources and tailor the curriculum in accordance with the needs and circumstance of individual schools. In terms of the policy for the medium of instruction, the government has become more determined to put the policy for mother-tongue teaching into practice.

## **1.4 Discipline and Guidance in Secondary Schools**

After reviewing the secondary education system, I will demonstrate the development of school discipline and guidance at the level of the Education Department with respect to my research focus. Particularly I will illustrate the role of the Whole School Approach in the promotion of guidance and discipline in schooling.

### **1.4.1 School discipline**

Concern with school discipline has been growing since the implementation of the policy of compulsory education in 1978. Many researchers and school practitioners have come to accept the view that since 1978, the number of students with learning and behavioural problems has been proliferating in most secondary schools; and compulsory education is closely linked to the prevalence of these problems in secondary schools (Chan, 1990; Kwok, 1997; Leung, 1991; Postiglione and Lee, 1997; Wong, 1994).

The ECR no.4 published in 1990 appears to suggest this view, providing evidence that the number of incidents of unruly and delinquent behaviour in 1989 was almost double that in 1980. The report revealed further that these problems were found more frequently in certain schools (Education Commission, 1990, para. 1.2.4.), especially those with a large number of secondary-one students with low academic achievement.

In addition to compulsory education, it was argued that there was a link between the proliferation of indiscipline and the abolition of corporal punishment in 1991 (Chung, 1998; Wong, 1997). Some claim that this abolition exacerbated the problem of students' disruptive behaviour in schools.

In relation to the proliferation of students' misbehaviour, in 1981, two years after the implementation of compulsory secondary education, the government set up the Standing Committee on Unruly and Delinquent Behaviour in Schools (SCUDBS). It aimed to monitor the trend of disruptive behaviour in schools, and advise both schools and the government on appropriate measures to tackle this problem. In 1991, the SCUDBS was restructured and renamed as the Advisory Committee on School Guidance and Support Services (ACSGSS). Unlike the SCUDBS, its functions are not merely to monitor and consult, but also to provide all students with guidance regardless of their academic and behavioural performance, and to enhance the growth of all students.

To further strengthen the support for school discipline, in 1994 the Education Department recruited two external agencies to promote the school guidance service, that is, the Social Welfare Department and the Royal Hong Kong Police Force. A list of support services for difficult students, prepared by these three departments, was written and distributed to secondary schools. In addition, in the same year, the Whole School Approach to Guidance and Discipline was introduced in secondary schools (Education Department, 1994). I will discuss this approach later in this chapter.

When reviewing the development of school guidance and discipline in the 1990s, there was a tendency that educational policies underrated the function of discipline but showed favour to guidance. Consistently, many schools and teachers accused the Education Department of insufficient support for school discipline, especially when they found that indiscipline problems have been proliferating in many secondary schools. In these circumstances, in 1996, the Student Discipline Section (SD) was set up to support schools on matters concerning student discipline. Basically the SD

functions as a consultant agency, with the provision of development projects, seminars, workshops, and information on student discipline (Education Department, 2000b). Apparently, no official document has yet clarified the link between the SD and the ACSGSS.

### **1.4.2 School guidance**

School guidance developed long before school discipline. Its development can be traced back to career guidance, introduced in the 1950s, based upon which a casework approach to school guidance has been developed. In most schools, school guidance is supplemented by various guidance programs. To strengthen the guidance service, in 1978 a school social worker service, provided by some voluntary agencies and the Social Welfare Department, was introduced into schools. Its overall aim was to reduce anti-social behaviour, and resolve the problem of juvenile delinquency. Despite the fact that school guidance has been developed since the 1970s, only a small fraction of secondary schools provided a guidance service for students in need in the 1980s. Rather, in most schools, the school discipline team was expected to manage students' problems.

The Education Department has become more determined to promote school guidance in schools only since the issue of a Suggested Guide for Guidance Work in Secondary Schools in 1986. According to this guide, apart from discipline teachers, all school practitioners, including the principal, guidance master, school social worker, guidance teachers and class teachers, are recommended to involve themselves in school guidance, helping students maximize their potential, and getting them to learn social skills, discriminate between right and wrong, and be better equipped for real life (Education Department, 1986). A review of the implementation of the suggested guide was published in 1988 (Education Department, 1988). The review points out two major shortcomings of guidance work in secondary schools: the lack of training opportunities for guidance teachers and the lack of resources to support schools. Accordingly, the Guidance Teacher Resource Centre was established in July 1988.

In the 1990s, many writers doubted the feasibility and effectiveness of the guide. Hui (1991, 1994, 1998a, 1998b), for example, states that it merely promoted a case-work approach to guidance, and encouraged schools to establish a guidance team merely for handling students' behavioural problems and then to offer students individual guidance and counselling. In most cases, school guidance is still described as a way of managing students' antisocial and delinquent behaviour. It merely provides help for a minority of the difficult students, instead of all students.

Likewise, Ko and Wong (1990) found that in most schools, guidance teachers still functioned independently as a guidance team. Some schools even preferred not to have any guidance teachers at all. This finding is supported by Luk and Lung's (1996) survey of 39 schools, showing that many guidance programmes were found to be very limited. Most schools admitted that the integration of guidance programmes with other subjects and coordination with other school teams were inadequate.

### **1.4.3 The Whole School Approach**

So far, I have reviewed the development of school discipline and guidance at the institutional level. It can be seen that from the 1970s to 1980s, there was no comprehensive and consistent policy for the promotion of school guidance and discipline. The situation has changed since the Education Commission proposed the Whole School Approach for schooling in 1991. The approach aims to involve all school members in creating a positive school environment for learning. In 1993, the Education Department issued two vital documents, demonstrating how the Whole School Approach can be applied to school guidance. One of these was the Guideline on the Whole School Approach to Guidance (Education Department, 1993, 1994). This endorses the view that the focus of school guidance provision should be on all students, rather than a particular group of students who exhibit behavioural problems. In 1994, the Education Department recommended the application of the Whole School Approach not only to school guidance but also to school discipline; also school guidance should be integrated with school discipline when schools plan how to manage students' affairs.

Since the Whole School Approach was advocated, many writers, educators and policy-makers have admitted that both guidance and discipline are vital elements in promoting students' holistic growth. For example, the Hong Kong Association for School Discipline and Counselling Teachers (HKASDCT, 1994) agreed that the goal of discipline and guidance is to help students build up a healthy personality, and particularly stresses that that cooperation between these two teams is important. Likewise, the Student Discipline Section (1996) stressed that

*Discipline and guidance, as curriculum and all other aspects of school life, should have the same educational aim of whole-person development and should cooperate to optimize learning experiences for students (p.4).*

In brief, there is a growing concern with the function of school discipline and guidance, and how they can contribute to the management of students' learning and of the behavioural problems which proliferated since the implementation of compulsory secondary education in 1978. In particular, since the introduction Whole School Approach to Guidance and Discipline in 1991, school practitioners have become aware of the relationships between school guidance and discipline at the whole school level.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have summarized the development of Hong Kong education policy between the 1970s and the 1990s. The discussion focuses on secondary education, and the development of school discipline and guidance at both the policy and institutional levels. All in all, three features of Hong Kong education are notable. Firstly, it is characterized by a strong colonial tradition in terms of the medium of instruction, the school system, the curriculum and the examination system. Secondly, the relationships between various educational bodies, both statutory and non-statutory, are not clear. According to Coopers and Lybrand (1998), the role and responsibility of the ED, the EMB, and the existing advisory bodies are ambiguous. Also co-ordination between different divisions and sections within the Education Department is patchy. Thirdly, most educational innovations are usually 'top-down'

and educational policies are formulated on the basis of western models. This feature is addressed in a speech by Mrs Fanny Law, Director of Education, as quoted below:

*Our education system has evolved in a pragmatic and incremental way. We have borrowed good practices from overseas and adapted them to the situation in Kong Kong. For example, we have made reference to the UK's national curriculum in our design of the target-oriented curriculum and borrowed the experience of Australia on school-based management. There are lessons to be learned in replicating international practices, which has not been very successful so far (Law, 1999, a speech made in the International Congress for School Effectiveness on January 5, 1999).*

In her speech, she highlighted the point that not all 'borrowed' educational models have been successfully replicated in schools. This suggests that resistance force in individuals, schools, and the society may hinder the success of such replication. In fact, as many writers claim, there is always a cultural issue in education. Whenever they formulate, adopt and implement 'borrowed' practices, policy makers and school leaders need to consider the receptivity of the host culture. As Dimmock (1998) stresses, the prospect of successful implementation of these 'imported' practices is enhanced when educational policy makers and school administrators adopt policies consonant with the characteristics of the societal culture.

Although most Hong Kong people claim that the contemporary culture of Hong Kong largely consists of Western culture, we cannot neglect the fact that, as Dimmock (1998) stresses, the majority of Hong Kong people have maintained their inherent Chineseness. Similarly, Lau and Kuan (1991) state that despite the westernization of Hong Kong education, Hong Kong people still identify strongly with their Chinese culture. In the light of this, it is worth considering the following questions before further transplanting Western-based educational policies and practices into Hong Kong secondary schools: will Chinese educational philosophy be undermined by the Western philosophies underlying these borrowed policies and approaches? Will tension develop in Hong Kong school systems between progressive and traditional school practitioners? How will Hong Kong social groups and school practitioners, such as teachers, principals and parents, reconcile Eastern and Western values? How

will these 'borrowed' policies and approaches be adjusted with respect to both Chinese and school-based culture?

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Social Behaviour of Chinese People: the Cultural Context**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Many social psychological studies on Chinese social behaviour have shown that in Chinese societies, like Hong Kong, Confucianism has significant impacts on individuals' social behaviour in various ways (Gabrenya and Hwang, 1996). In the context of Hong Kong secondary schools, there has not yet been any direct and detailed research into the social behaviour of Chinese teachers and students, and neither has there been any research looking at Chinese practices of socialisation in the schools. Nonetheless, many writers argue that the school is a significant arena where students are socialised into the values of Confucianism. Also, this cultural value still serves as a basis upon which school practitioners interact with each other and make sense of their own and others' roles and the situation in which they participate.

With this in mind, this chapter aims to summarise the features of Chinese social behaviour on the basis of the literature on Chinese social psychology. In doing so, it may provide us with a cultural context for an understanding of the social behaviour of Chinese teachers and students. I will begin with summarising the features of human relationships in Chinese society. A particular focus is on the hierarchical relationship between the senior and junior members in a social group. I will then show how collectivism and conformity are emphasised in Chinese society, and its association with the Confucianism. This is followed by reviewing the literature on Chinese childhood socialisation in order to find out how far the Chinese practices of childhood socialisation are applied in the process of guidance and discipline. Then the discussion will shift to a more dynamic dimension of social behaviour, and

specifically concentrate on how the issue of *'face'* causes Chinese people concern when they interact with each other.

## **2.2 Perspectives from Social Psychology: Social Behaviour of Chinese People**

The discussion below will be carried out under the following four sub-headings: 1) hierarchical human relationships of the WuLun; 2) collectivism and conformity; 3) Chinese practices of childhood socialisation; and 4) the social game of *'face'*.

### **2.2.1 Hierarchical human relationship of the WuLun**

Many studies have suggested that human relationships in Chinese society are normally structured within a hierarchy, in which the distinction between senior and junior is a prominent feature. As many writers argue, these hierarchical human relationships can be traced back to Confucius' classification of the five human relationships, the WuLun, which include the relationships between sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend. Although, nowadays, this classification is not precise enough to generalise the varieties of human relationships in Hong Kong society, the values underlying it still has a profound impact on how Chinese individuals relate themselves to others.

Many writers have agreed that human interrelationships among the WuLun are hierarchically structured. Bond and Hwang (1986), for example, state that in each relationship, people are generally classified into two groups: the seniors and the juniors. The seniors tend to be dominant. They are accorded a wide range of prerogatives and authority, and tend to perform their roles in rigid ways (Bond, 1991). By contrast, the juniors are expected to show submission to the seniors in any group. In most cases, the seniors tend to be the authority on morality for the juniors.

Similarly, Bond's (1991) review of the literature on the authoritarian behaviour of Chinese people shows that in Chinese society human relationships tend to be structured within a hierarchy, in which harmony, instead of conflict, is strongly emphasised. To achieve the notion of '*harmony within hierarchy*' (Garbrenya and Hwang, 1996, p.313), Chinese people are expected to show respect for tradition and obedience to authority. This helps to explain why, as his review shows, Chinese people consider the act of showing respect for authority to be upright, prudent and beneficial to society, and not cowardly, unprincipled or weak.

With this in mind, it is reasonable to suggest that under the impact of the WuLun system, teacher-student relationships tend to be structured within a hierarchy, in which teachers are the seniors, whereas students are the juniors. Teachers might therefore be more aware of playing a discipline, rather than a guidance role, especially when students fail to show conformity, submissiveness and obedience. In fact, many writers have come to accept this view. For example, Bond (1991) states that in Chinese society, a teacher is culturally described as a surrogate father or an emperor, who always holds a senior position, whilst the school is depicted as like an ancient court, in which human relationships are hierarchically structured. Culturally, students are expected to respond to teachers as to stern parents – with respect, obedience, attention, silence, and even fear. Also, they are not encouraged to question teachers, or challenge their judgements. Further reflection of the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students can be seen in a popular Chinese proverb, '*the seniors and juniors have their ranking*'. This may suggest that school practitioners need to perform their roles in accordance with the social positions they hold within a hierarchy of human relationships.

### **2.2.2 Collectivism and conformity**

As many studies suggest, collectivism and conformity are strongly emphasised in Chinese society. At one level, this phenomenon can never be separated from the hierarchical human relationships of the WuLun, as noted earlier, in which juniors are expected to show their conformity and subordination to senior. At another level, the

social norm of Ren-Yi-Li, some writers argue, is the root of Chinese collectivism and conformity.

According to Hsu (1953) and Ip (1996), 'Ren' refers to benevolent acts and conducts whereas 'Yi' represents the righteousness and appropriateness of individuals' behaviour, and 'Li' refers to a set of norms and rituals for social behaviour. The Ren-Yi-Li system provides individuals with a set of social and moral obligations, by referring to which Chinese people know how to present their roles and define their social relationships with others within the hierarchy of WuLun (Solomon 1971; Wilson 1981; Bond and Hwang 1986; Bond & Lee 1988; Yu 1996; Ip, 1996; Gabrenya & Hwang 1996). As Bond and Hwang (1986) stress, Chinese individuals are expected to conform to the social norms of the Ren-Yi-Li system. Ip (1996) endorses this view, and puts it as follows:

*Broadly understood, the Ren-Yi-Li normative structure, with its generated array of morally acceptable conducts, indeed provides an elaborated set of norms and moral directives governing and dictating conducts and attitudes in different aspects of an individual's personal and interpersonal life...Deviation from them will bring both personal and social sanctions, condemnation, alienation, ostracisation, marginalisation, and reprimands. They are the standards against which conducts and actions are judged, endorsed and sanctioned (pp.42-43).*

Brought up within the WuLun and the Ren-Yi-Li systems, Chinese individuals become strongly aware of the image of their social self, and feel an obligation to show their conformity to the social group to which they belong. Hence, many writers have pinpointed that Chinese society is characterised by 'group orientedness' (Wilson, 1981), or 'collectivism' (Ip, 1996). As Wilson (1981) states,

*In modern Chinese society, school training, the media, and associational pressures generally emphasise identification with larger groups such as brigades and communes and, of course, with society as a whole. The emphasis in training is on shifting identification to these larger secondary groups... (p.11).*

Many writers support Wilson's view that Chinese individuals are generally encouraged to prioritise collective over individual interests, and submit themselves to a group, such as their family and school. Because of their strong tendency to collectivism, they are used to taking personal pride in the success of persons from their inner circle, and feeling shame at their failures (Yang, 1986; Gabrenya and Wang, 1983; Bond and Hwang, 1986; Ip, 1996). As Yang (1986) put it,

*Basically it (collectivism) represents a tendency for a person to act in accordance with external expectations or social norms, rather than with internal wishes or personal integrity, so that he would be able to protect his social self and function as an integral part of the social network (p.161).*

Similarly, according to Ip (1996), any individual's interests should be suppressed so as to pursue the group interests, and achieve the notion of harmony within hierarchy. As he says,

*Indeed, the harmony thus espoused helped generate a kind of holism which in turn gave greater significance to the whole than to the parts... The manifestations of this holistic collectivism within an institutional setting were the family and the state, which took precedence over the individual in terms of values and importance (Ip, 1996, p.51).*

While some studies focus on the phenomenon of collectivism in Chinese society, some writers are concerned with its impacts on individuals' social behaviour. For example, Wilson (1981) suggested that under the impact of collectivism, Chinese individuals have a greater tolerance for life in a conformist society than for life in a society with an individualistic nature. Likewise, Argyle *et al.* (1984) found that Chinese people are unaccustomed to showing their own feelings of joy and sadness, and in most cases, avoid imposing their own feelings on others. This is suggested to be closely linked to the values of conformity and collectivism.

Further research evidence on the impact of collectivism on individual social behaviour can be seen in Bond's (1991) summary of the literature on Chinese individuals' sense of self. The summary shows that there is a clear tendency for

Chinese people to describe themselves in less positive terms than do Americans. Also when Chinese individuals think of themselves, they use more group-related concepts, such as, being attentive to others, than Americans do. At the end of his summary, Bond draws the conclusion that the social orientation of the Chinese individuals is reflected in the high endorsement they give to group-related traits and roles, as well as in the fact that their ideal self is closely involved in social relationships. The dimensions they use to perceive themselves and others are likewise focused on interpersonal concerns, not on mastery of the external world or absorption with narrowly personal processes.

In sum, under the impacts of the WuLun and the Ren-Yi-Li systems, the emphasis of Chinese moral values is strongly on conformity and collectivism. Much research evidence has shown that these values have traceable impacts on individuals' social behaviour, and determine how one performs in a social group and interacts with others. Although, as yet, no research has been done on the degree of collectivism and conformity which is formed in the process of school guidance and discipline, or the impact of these values on teachers' and students' behaviour, it is reasonable to suggest that both collectivism and conformity are as strongly emphasised in schools as in the root of Chinese society. It is likely that in the process of guidance and discipline, students are encouraged to develop their social self according to external rules and cultural standards, such as the social norms of Ren-Yi-Li. They are likely to be more extrinsically, rather than intrinsically, motivated to behave well. If so, it can be further inferred that in a Chinese secondary school, the place of school guidance, which emphasises both individuals' needs and intrinsic motivation, is more limited than that of school discipline; in other word, there is more favourable room for school discipline than for school guidance.

### **2.2.3 Chinese practices of childhood socialisation**

Many studies have found that in terms of guidance and discipline, Chinese people have generally used extensively disciplinary practices, such as control, punishment, and discipline, for socialising children to the social value of conformity and

collectivism. Children are expected to show conformity and obedience (Wilson, 1981; Bond, 1991; Ho, 1986; Yang, 1986). These studies suggest that the use of such practices is still evident in contemporary Chinese societies, though there are geographical variations, such as in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, in the practices of child-rearing (Yang 1986; Ip, 1996; Ho, 1986).

Specifically, Ho (1986) looked closely at what practices Chinese parents use for childhood socialisation. His study demonstrates that methods of affective manipulation like threatening, scolding, shaming, and punishment are indubitably acceptable and frequently used by Chinese parents. Similarly Yang (1986) found that Chinese parents' practices of socialisation overtly focus on discipline, control and conformity. He categorises these practices as follows:

*a) dependency training, b) conformity training, c) modesty training, d) self-suppression training, e) self-contentment training, f) punishment preference, g) shaming strategy, h) parent-centredness, and i) multiple parenting (every adult member in a family acting as a parent or parent-surrogate to a child)(Yang, 1986, p.150).*

While many studies have investigated the Chinese practices of childhood socialisation, many social psychologists are further concerned with the effects of these practices on child development. Wilson (1981), for example, stressed that these practices make children develop a very strong sense of '*social self*' rather than '*individual self*'. Likewise, Wilson (1974, 1981), stated that this kind of parental control and discipline may cause children to have a strong sense of dependency, and a moral orientation with a high internalisation of conformity to standards of behaviour, and to parental example.

In the context of Hong Kong secondary education, as noted earlier, little research has been done into Chinese practices of childhood socialisation and their impact on students' behaviour and development. However, Wilson (1974) contended that the school is an important arena where children are socialised in Chinese social values, and where all internalised control is strengthened and reinforced. In the light of this, it

can be postulated that in schooling, some Chinese practices of childhood socialisation, which is largely disciplinary in nature, might be used for both guidance and discipline, and that the impact of these practices on students might correspond to Wilson's account of the effects of parental practices.

#### 2.2.4 The social game of 'face'

So far, by reviewing the relevant literature, I have shown that in Chinese society, there is a close link between Confucianism and the hierarchical human relationships, and an insistence on collectivism and conformity. In most cases, disciplinary practices are used for socialising children into these social and cultural values. More than that, many studies draw our attention to the social game of *'face'* (*mianzi*). This is regarded as another element determining how individuals interact with each other. The importance of individuals' *'face'* in a social group can be seen from a popular Chinese expression, *'a man needs face as a tree needs its bark'*. Obviously a tree without bark cannot grow. Similarly, a man without face cannot function effectively in a social group. Understanding the social game of *'face'* can assist us to make sense of how teachers and students interact with each other in the processes of guidance and discipline.

As many writers have stated, in Chinese society, *'face'* carries special meanings in interpersonal interaction. In general, *'face'* refers to how an individual's self-image is perceived by others and, also, how each responds to other group members' expectations of him. Specifically, the meaning of *'face'* can only be interpreted according to the context in which the term is used. For example, Hu (1944) suggested that when one says that *'face'* is maintained, this means that individuals are able to define situations, their roles and others' roles constantly with the group's expectations of their roles. In this case, they can establish their social-self image among group members as they wish. On the contrary, *'losing face'* refers to situations in which individuals cannot perform their roles as they are expected to do in a social group. This is likely to have a negative effect on their social-self image; and as a consequence they are unable to function properly in a group.

In addition, '*enhancing one's face*', Hu (1944) suggested, refers to a situation in which individuals are assertive enough to know what behaviours and attitudes are most praised by others in their social network, and accordingly perform their behaviour in such a way. In doing so, they can manage others' impression of their social self-image as they wish. According to Hu (1994), the juniors in a hierarchical structure tend to play the role of enhancing the '*face*' of the seniors. Reciprocally, the seniors might give more '*face*' to the juniors, and attempt to increase a subordinate's prestige in front of other group members, so that both the seniors and juniors have '*face*' and keep the harmony of their relationship.

In contrast to '*enhancing one's face*', Hu (1994) suggests, the meaning of '*losing ones' face*' refer to a situation in which individuals lose their face, or cause another to do so, because of their failure to present the social roles that are expected. Such failure may cause them to feel deeply ashamed and embarrassed, and finally to lose confidence in interacting with others in the social group that they belong to (Bond and Hwang, 1986; Hu, 1944).

Since '*losing ones' face*' will cause such an undesirable effect, according to Hu (1994) normally individuals will react in such a way as to save everyone's face when falling in such a situation. As Chu (1983) suggested, various patterns of emotional arousal, consisting of anger, embarrassment, shame, anxiety, and self-blame, are closely related to various types of face-saving behaviours. The termination of face-losing behaviour, the reinterpretation of a situation in which they lose face, or seeking an apology from others are an examples of face saving behaviour. In some extreme cases, they may even react in aggressive and rebellious ways to express their dissatisfaction and the unpleasant feelings caused by the face-losing behaviour.

In short, it can be seen that there is always an issue of '*face*' when Chinese people interact with each other. In the process of schooling, it can be inferred that teachers and students are deeply concerned with their own and others' social self-image and '*face*'. Due to the fact that losing '*face*' will cause such undesirable effects, there is a

great potential for the issue to create a tense relationship between teachers and students, particularly when most students have not yet been well socialised to play this game properly; or when they, wittingly or unwittingly, make teachers lose *'face'* publicly. Further, the impacts of this social game, as mentioned above, might simultaneously occur upon school practitioners when they interact with each other in the process of guidance and discipline.

## 2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, by reviewing the literature on Chinese social behaviour, I have demonstrated the impacts of Confucianism on individuals' social behaviour, and on human relationships. A particular concern is to explicate the importance of collectivism, conformity, disciplinary practice in socialisation, and *'face'* in Chinese society. More than that, I have tried to show the extent to which the literature reviewed may relate to the context of Hong Kong secondary schools.

As many studies demonstrate, traditional Chinese culture still has profound influences on the social behaviour of Chinese people. These influences include the hierarchical teacher-student relationship, and the insistence on collectivism and conformity in schooling. Nonetheless, it is necessary to note that the degree of these influences may vary vastly from school to school. This means that practitioners in different schools tend to interact with each other in different patterns of social behaviour, though they are simultaneously influenced by Chinese culture. The reasons for this differentiation will be discussed below at three levels of change: in society, policy and schools.

At the level of the society, Hong Kong society has been undergoing change, often depicted as a process of modernisation, in the terms of education, family, politics, and economy. Many sociologists describe these changes, and suggest that in the course of social change, the social behaviour of Chinese individuals, including teachers and students, has been changing in the direction of becoming more democratic, internally controlled and less authoritarian in attitude. With this in mind, it is possible to infer

that the impact of Chinese culture on schooling is becoming less influential in Hong Kong because modernised values are intruding into the education system and influencing the social behaviour of school practitioners.

At the policy level, as discussed in the previous chapter, the government has continually imported western educational approaches and policies into Hong Kong secondary education since the 1970s. Undeniably, this importation also means the importation of new educational ideas and practices, and it is likely that the policy factors have potential influences on the existing pattern of teachers' and students' social behaviour.

At the school level, a great number of school-specific factors influence the social behaviour of teachers and students with respect to guidance and discipline, such as school background, history, structure, culture, and new programmes for school reform. It is unquestionable that these school factors may intensify the differences between schools. For example, the adoption of the imported religion of Christianity in schooling might drive school practitioners to be more concerned with the individual interests of students, instead of the collective interest of the school. Likewise, schools' specific organisational structure and social arrangements for guidance and discipline might determine how students in need are handled, and what practices of guidance and discipline are used for the promotion of students' welfare. Similarly, school climate has a potential strength in affecting teachers' and students' behaviours. For example, it is commonly accepted that schools which promote a positive, developmental and collaborative climate are more likely to promote positive, and less hierarchical relationships between teachers and students. By contrast, in schools with a negative, fragmented and conflicting climate, it is very likely that the teacher-student relationships will be more hierarchical and negative. However, I am not suggesting that Chinese culture is a direct factor making only for the prevalence of a negative culture and its side effects. Rather, I merely intend to highlight the point that the school itself and teachers are more accustomed to taking Chinese culture as the

reference for their behaviour if the strength of the new ideas imported into schools is not strong enough to constitute the main feature of school climate.

To conclude, schools vary in terms of the extent to which Chinese culture has an impact on the social behaviour of school practitioners. In the context of Hong Kong secondary schools, the extent of this cultural impact largely depends on how schools react towards changes, at the level of the whole society, education policy and within the school itself. It is believed that all these changes, which are dynamic and interrelated to each other, also have profound impacts on the social behaviour of teachers and students, while traditional Chinese culture still serves as the foundation of Chinese society.

## Chapter Three

### Relevant Studies on School Guidance and Discipline

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the major recent works on school guidance and discipline. The review should be considered as an illustrative rather than a comprehensive review of the work in these two areas. The literature review is composed of two sections. In the first section, most of the studies were done in the context of secondary schools in the UK; the focus will then be on how different writers define various meanings and dimensions of guidance and discipline, and their relationship in schooling. A particular concern is the demonstration of research evidence on schools' connectedness. The second section concentrates on Hong Kong studies. I will review the literature on guidance and discipline which deal with Hong Kong secondary schools, and continue with displaying the findings of these studies on the relationship between school guidance and discipline. As moving through these sub-sections, I shall synthesise the major themes in the guidance and discipline literature and draw readers' attention to gaps in the knowledge base, and issues requiring further investigation.

#### 3.2 School Guidance and Discipline

##### 3.2.1 School guidance

A search of the research literature on the relationship between guidance and discipline indicates that most of these studies were done in the 1980s, whereas comparatively little research into this area was completed in the 1990s; and also three terms, '*pastoral care*', '*school guidance*', and '*counselling*', have been used in many

studies, which are direct relevance to this thesis. It, therefore, is necessary to briefly review their meaning.

Regarding '*pastoral care*', Watkins (2001) explains that this term is commonly used in the secondary schools of England and Wales, and primarily refers to the systems of tutoring and curricular provision led by teaching staff. Many educators have suggested that it is a broad concept referring to educational activities, which aim to promote students' welfare and their personal and social development (Marland, 1974; Best *et al.*, 1977; Hamblin, 1978; Watkins, 1992, 1995). Best *et al.* (1980) and Marland (1974), for example, claimed that pastoral care embraces the disciplinary, pastoral, academic, administrative and organisational dimensions of schooling. The HMI report (1989) endorses the view that pastoral care is a vital aspect of schooling. It should be promoted through all possible areas of schooling, for example teaching and learning, school practitioners' interrelationships, pastoral structures, support systems, extra-curricular activities and the school ethos. Summarising other writers' views, Watkins (2001) claims that the terminology of pastoral care refers to the planned educational programme for students which aims to raise and explore the personal and social dimensions of their current and future lives.

In addition to interest in the theoretical aspect of pastoral care, a number of studies have suggested guidelines for its implementation at the practical level. For example, Marland (1974) proposed a general guide for good pastoral practice. Blackburn (1975) gave some advice for tutors who have to play the role of pastoral care provider. Similarly, Balwin and Well (1979, 1980, 1981) proposed tutorial work schemes for this purpose.

Apart from developing guidelines for pastoral care, many empirical studies have developed from a concern with the functions of pastoral care at the school level. Some have particularly focused on examining the discrepancy between the theoretical and practical levels of pastoral care. Woods' (1983) study of Oakfield School, for example, revealed that school institutions distorted the good intentions of pastoral

care. The finding was supported by another study of Rivendell School, by Best *et al.* (1983). Their study found that there was a discrepancy in pastoral care between these two levels, since the pastoral staff seemed more interested in building up the influence and professional status of pastoral care within the school hierarchy, rather than pursuing it for students' welfare. Likewise, other studies on students' experience of pastoral care suggested that the original intention of pastoral care was distorted, so that it became a form of control during schooling (Tattum, 1982, 1984; Lang, 1983, 1985).

Regarding '*school guidance*', many studies have endorsed the view that it aims to promote students' personal and social development, including physical, mental and emotional (Mathewson 1962; Milner, 1980; McGuiness, 1989). Wilson (1945), for example, suggested that the focus of school guidance should be on promoting students' optimum personal, vocational, cultural, and spiritual development. Similarly, Milner (1980) suggested that school guidance is aimed at:

*Helping young people to begin to find themselves, to develop their sense of identity, to begin to know who they really are, what they can do with difficulty and what they probably cannot do at all, in terms of education, occupations, relationship, values and society (p.123).*

Regarding '*counselling*', according to the view of many educators, this mainly refers to a process in which a counsellor helps individuals overcome their problems, such as confusion, indecision or distress. Its emphasis is largely remedial and therapeutic. In the context of schooling, as many educators have proposed, apart from getting students to learn, teachers are responsible for helping students resolve their personal and emotional difficulties. In doing so, they need to act as counsellors who are enabled to employ basic counselling skills and provide students with a supportive environment in which they feel safe to disclose their innermost thoughts and feelings (Nelson-Jones, 1982; Milner, 1980).

All in all, according to most educators' views, *'pastoral care'* is related to, but should be differentiated from *'school guidance'* and *'counselling'*. In general, *'pastoral care'* is regarded as a broad term for the non-instructional aspects of the teachers' roles, whereas the terms *'school guidance'* and *'counselling'* generally refer to personalised services including personal, academic and vocational guidance. However, this description may be too simplified and generalised to embrace all the meanings of school guidance and pastoral care. This is particularly true when the discussion moves to an international context, because the objective and organisation of school guidance, as Watkins (2001) points out, mostly differ from country to country, region to region, and school to school. According to his view, any attempt to explicate these differences should refer to the social, religious and economic contexts of each school.

### **3.2.2 School discipline**

Compared to research into pastoral care, the literature dealing with discipline comes from various fields, such as school management, educational sociology, educational psychology and discipline theory, and suggests wider varieties of definitions, characteristics and conceptual approaches to discipline. For example, some research has focused on the features of discipline strategies which are used by teachers in schooling, such as punishment, reward, control, and obedience (Rich, 1982; Anderton, 1979; Willower, 1973); whilst some has studied school discipline practices, such as the referral system and suspension (Stage, 1997; Badger, 1992; Evans, 1999). Other researchers have been interested in examining the students' undisciplined behaviour, such as bullying, school violence and disruptive behaviour in lessons (Galloway, 1983; Lawrence *et al.*, 1989; Wheldall and Merrett, 1988), whilst some have mainly focused on strategies for managing school discipline. Westmacott and Cameron (1981), for example, propose the Antecedents-Background-Consequence (ABC) model of behaviour. Watkins and Wagner (1987) propose a whole school approach to school discipline. Canter and Canter (1992) develop the well known assertive discipline programme.

Despite the diversity of its dimensions, most of the research into school discipline suggests the view that discipline can never be considered in isolation from the students' academic, personal and social growth. Regarding the relationship between academic work and discipline, some literature has endorsed the view that school discipline is essentially a means to create a necessary condition for learning (Feldusen, 1978; Shrigley, 1979). These studies have consistently shown that in the classroom, school discipline was recognised as a system or method for maintaining order and the rules for conduct. Its target was to safeguard the rights of individual school members, and most importantly to maintain social stability in the classroom so that teaching and learning could be facilitated without any interruption.

Apart from this, the wider relation between school discipline and students' social and personal growth has for many years been a subject of concern. In the early 1960s, Durkheim and Wilson (1961), for example, had depicted discipline as an instrument of moral education. Since then, a keen interest has been shown in school discipline as a negative form of control. Rich (1982), for example, was interested in the effect of punitiveness and obedience. Anderton (1979) conducted a study of the authoritative control in schooling, whilst Willower (1973) looked at how discipline restrained students' behaviour. Munn *et al.* (1992) considered that school discipline was a way to socialise students into, for example, values of honesty, courtesy and respect for others.

Some researchers have specifically pointed to the influence of discipline on the development of students' personal self, such as the promotion of self-control (Lewis, 1991), and self-discipline within students (Thomas Report, 1981, cited in Cowin *et al.*, 1991). Walsh *et al.* (1982) argued that school discipline is an inevitable process of learning, through which students' moral values and their attitudes to the culture which they inherit can be enhanced. Similarly, Rogers (1991) stresses that discipline is not an end in itself, but should be seen as a process which enables students to learn, particularly self-control and personal accountability. Many educators have also

claimed that in schooling, discipline can become a way to develop students' potential intrinsically, rather than extrinsically (Marland, 1974; Docking 1989).

### **3.2.3 The relationship between guidance and discipline**

The review of the literature on guidance and discipline indicates that many writers have argued against separating guidance and discipline in schooling. Their views suggest that although guidance and discipline are different, both inevitably have the same mission, the promotion of students' holistic growth in terms of their academic, personal and social selves. However, it seems that not many studies have been completed on the collaboration of these two domains, and the relationship between school practitioners' behaviour and the practices of pastoral care and discipline.

Nevertheless, it is possible to turn to some studies at the school level. Mostly their focus is not limited to either guidance or discipline, but is on the school as an organisation. The findings of these studies may help us to comprehend how the school itself influences school practitioners' behaviour at both the theoretical and practical levels (Hargreaves, 1967; Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Galloway *et al.*, 1982; Lawrence *et al.*, 1989; Reynolds, 1984; Munn *et al.*, 1992; Gillbron, 1993; Watkins, 1998; Watkins and Wagner 2000; Evans, 1999). Reviewing these studies may give us some insights into the relationship between guidance and discipline.

The research by Galloway *et al.* (1982) and Galloway (1983), which I will next review focused largely on the relation between the practice of pastoral care and students' disruptive behaviour. Galloway *et al.* (1982) investigated why the severity of disciplinary problems differed between schools. Together with the evidence from Galloway's previous research in Sheffield, the study demonstrated that disruptive behaviour could not be considered in isolation from the school organisation, since the school itself had a potential influence over students' behaviour. Regarding the relationship between pastoral care and discipline, the study showed that the specialisation of pastoral care was attributed to the '*spurious distinction between*

*pastoral care and discipline*' (p.70). In Galloway's view, the distinction became obvious when schools were reorganised according to the comprehensive system, because posts with special responsibility for pastoral care were established in comprehensive schools. School practitioners then began to talk about pastoral care, and perceive it as a specialist field. While pastoral care was being specialised, as the study demonstrated, the pastoral system was reducing the status of the basic provider of pastoral care, namely, the form tutor and subject teacher. In line with the evidence from other studies (Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Reynolds, *et al.*, 1976; Finlayson and Loughran, 1976), Galloway *et al.* (1982) proposed that both discipline and pastoral care should be accommodated at the basic level of pastoral care, which would mostly be the classroom, instead of through the formal organisation of the pastoral system.

Like the previous study, Galloway (1983) was concerned with the practices of pastoral care in school organisation. From the fourteen schools in Sheffield and New Zealand which were involved in two of his previous studies, four were identified, in which teachers least frequently reported incidents of disruptive behaviour. Using qualitative data, the studies showed that there was a spurious distinction between pastoral care and discipline in the four schools; teachers from these schools made an attempt to understand the reasons for problems, and took considered actions to prevent the same incidents from occurring again; they were discouraged from referring problems to other teachers, but were expected to seek advice and assistance from other teachers and school managers.

In contrast, in the other schools involved in two of his previous studies, there was an obvious distinction between pastoral care and discipline. As the study suggested, the distinction was reflected in the phenomenon that teachers in these schools were encouraged to distinguish between guidance and discipline problems, and accordingly make referrals to other teachers. This caused the year tutors and heads of departments to spend an enormous amount of time investigating and dealing with the students referred to them for resolving their behavioural problems. Under these circumstances,

a conflict arising between a student and a class teacher was transformed into one between a student and a member of the school hierarchy.

Unlike the two studies discussed above, Lawrence *et al.* (1989) particularly looked at students' disruptive behaviour, and moved beyond the pastoral system to examine the impact of school organisation on students' behaviour. They carried out a study in two comprehensive schools in England, and found that student disruptive behaviours varied between schools, and individual teachers. Because of this vast variability, students' disruptive behaviour, they claim, could not 'be accounted for solely, or mainly, in terms of students' inadequacies. Instead, it should be traced back to both inadequate teachers and the broad foundation of schooling, for example school structure, the curriculum, and school's relationship with parents and the local community.

In addition to the studies on the relationship between the practice of pastoral care and student behaviour, which I have reviewed above, some studies show a growing interest in three areas: discipline policies and practices at school level, its relations to school organisation and its impact on students' behaviour. Gillborn *et al.* (1993), for example, identified five urban secondary schools, located in areas of considerable socio-economic disadvantage in the South, Midlands and North of England, all of which had made progress in relation to discipline. They were regarded as well-disciplined schools. By analysing each school's experience independently, the study identified five effective discipline, including 1) maintaining the consistency of school values and practices; 2) building a trust between senior managers and teachers; 3) helping students with the use of positive dialogue; 4) giving students a sense of control over their own learning and behaviour; and 5) to establish a 'respect' relationship between teachers and students (p.89). As for the methodology of the study, Gillborn *et al.* did not explicate by which analytical method they obtained these findings from each case-study school.

Instead of examining schools' experience in discipline at a broad level, Munn *et al.* (1992) particularly focused on the differences in discipline policies and practices among four secondary schools in Scotland. The study indicated that discipline policies and practices, for example the application of rules, and the use of sanctions and rewards, were closely related to schooling factors, such as the schools' views of students, teachers' purposes in teaching, the system of management, and the amount of departmental and teachers' autonomy with respect to discipline.

What makes Munn *et al.*'s study different from the study by Gillborn *et al.* is that Munn *et al.* were particularly concerned with the relation between discipline and school management, whereas the concern of Gillborn *et al.*'s study is with identifying all the factors contributing to the effective discipline in each case-study school. Specifically, Munn *et al.* identified two approaches to the management of school discipline: contractual and consensual. The first, regarded as a hierarchical line management system, aimed to build up a precise system for school discipline, in which the school tended to be managed under clear rules of procedure, and discipline problems were handled within a formal structure. The staff working therein perceived that the inflexibility of discipline practices would intensify the problem of indiscipline. The second, consensual approach with a collegiate management system, was found to be more flexible. Common standards were reached by open discussion, negotiation, and re-negotiation of rules among the staff. The formal structure, to a great extent, became less important.

All the studies reviewed so far focus mainly on exploring how pastoral care and discipline are structurally arranged and managed in schools, and how they are practised at both the individual and school levels. But, apparently, less emphasis have been placed on how these arrangements and practices are linked to the school itself as an organisation, and how pastoral care and discipline function as systems within a school organisation. Both these issues are examined in two other studies: Power (1996) and Best *et al.* (1983). Although the aims of these studies are primarily to examine how the academic and pastoral systems were institutionally, conceptually,

and managerially constructed within a school organisation, both extended their discussion to the discipline system and its relationship with the pastoral and academic systems. Reviewing these studies helps us to understand why the pastoral and academic systems were divided, and how the pastoral system is linked to other components of schooling, such as curriculum and discipline, within a school organisation.

Best *et al.* (1983) studied pastoral care and its relationship with academic and discipline in a comprehensive school in England. Through interviews and observation, qualitative data were collected. Their study indicated that the school had established a pastoral structure to institutionalise the function of caring. The institutionalisation caused not only an academic-pastoral care split, but also a split within the pastoral system. Best *et al.* claimed that such a split was closely linked to the structural arrangement of the Year and House systems and other features of school organisation, such as the curricular structure of faculties and departments, the arrangement of '*schools-within-schools*' (p.45), the vertical system of House, and the horizontal system of Year.

Specifically, this study showed that in this comprehensive school, a number of teachers perceived the pastoral system as disciplinary and as a '*correction-centred*' referral system (p.124). The system was conceived by teachers in '*discipline-centred*' (p.70), or '*administrative-centred*' perspectives (p.80), rather than from the '*treatment-centred*' perspective (p.95). Teachers tended to understand the pastoral system as an institution imposing mainly negative sanctions to correct misbehaviour and maintain students' conformity. Within this system, the '*genuinely caring teachers*' needed to ignore, redefine, or bypass the system so as to meet students' needs (p.137), because the institutionalisation of pastoral care provoked a conflict of interests, status and interpersonal relations amongst them.

Unlike Best *et al.*'s study, Power's (1996) study looked at the relationship between the school curriculum and pastoral care in two schools: Elmfield and Kings Marsh.

Distinctively, she looked closely at how far there was a distinct pastoral pedagogy, how this was related to school subjects, and the way in which pastoral care reflected, reinforced or interrupted the distribution of power and principles of control. The theoretical framework of the study was grounded on the later work of Basil Bernstein on curriculum and pedagogy. As for the methods of data collection, she did not explain these much, but simply said that the data were gathered ethnographically.

Together with the evidence from other literature, Power claimed that the boundary between the school curriculum and the pastoral curriculum was split because of the rise of '*comprehensivization*' in the wider context of the British education system (p.19); also both the pastoral and academic were mostly in an oppositional relationship, which was caused by their distinctive pedagogy.

Specifically, in Elmfield School, the structures of the academic and the pastoral care were clearly demarcated. In addition, the responsibilities for academic and pastoral care were separated and demarcated. This was reflected in the phenomenon that teachers rarely held both academic and pastoral positions of responsibility; that in most cases, both the academic and pastoral staff needed to compete for resources, and experience some conflict in their rationale of learning. In contrast, Kings Marsh School attempted to blur the boundaries by strengthening the senior managers' collaboration and augmenting the priority of pastoral care. However, in Power's view, these changes seemed superficial and peripheral. Mostly the academic system still constituted the key domain of the school's educational identity. In her words, the pastoral-academic boundary remained marginalised and segregated.

So far, I have briefly reviewed relevant studies on guidance and discipline, and some research which dealt specifically with the relation between academic and pastoral care. It is indisputable that these findings have illuminated significant school realities. However, it is necessary to pinpoint some researchers, like Power, Best *et al.*, and Gillborn, tended to assess the view of school practitioners, such as those of teachers, head teachers, and students, on the basis of the assumptions or pre-conceptions about

the relation of these three domains, which are postulated by educators, policy-makers, and researchers themselves.

For example, Power borrows Bernstein's framework for her study of '*oppositional relationship*' between curriculum and pastoral care, which eventually came to be the dominant theme in her work and even pre-determined the finding of the study. As a result of this, the aim of Power's study, James (1996) remarked, appears to test Bernstein's theoretical framework about curriculum and pedagogy in the field of pastoral care, and then to provide an empirical validation of his work. Similarly, although Best *et al.* (1983) have tried to understand what pastoral care means for both the official policy-makers and the individual teachers in the case-study school, their study appears to be grounded upon most educators' assumption that there is a perceived boundary between academic and pastoral care, and that pastoral care systems and structure should not be split within a school organisation. Likewise, Gillborn analysed the experience of the five case-study schools on the grounds of a framework derived from the recommendations of the Elton Report (Elton Committee, 1989) and the concept of discipline advocated by Galloway *et al.* (1989), Hargreaves (1989), and Jones (1989).

### **3.2.4 Research on the degree of schools' connectedness**

In addition to the research into the relationships between pastoral care, discipline and academic, there is a growing interest in examining schools as organisations. The studies which I am going to review next are grounded on the assumption that all school's components, such as academic, pastoral care and school discipline, are closely connected as a whole, rather than fragmented into parts. As these studies have indicated, well-integrated, or collaborative schools, appear to have a stronger sense of communal organisation, which leads schools to have less difficult behaviour; further, the degree to which a school's components are connected, and teachers collaborate with each other is associated with school participants' view of schooling, the way they resolve problems and their response to difficulty. Hence, reviewing these studies

will give us another perspective in which to understand the relationship between school guidance and discipline within a school organisation.

Bryk and Driscoll (1988) were interested in analysing the meaning of communal organisation at the practical level. They discovered that those schools which operated as a community were characterised by a developed collegial relation. Staff in these schools tended to have a '*diffuse*' teacher role (p.3), which enabled teachers to frequently contact other staff and students in settings other than the classroom. The staff were also able to attend to students' academic and emotional needs, and activate them to engage in the life of the school.

Based upon this, Bryk, Lee and Smith (1990) moved on to investigate the variation in the degree of communal organisation in schools. Their study of 340 secondary schools in Chicago suggested that schools which scored higher on an index of communal organisation showed higher teacher efficacy and satisfaction, higher morale, higher teacher enjoyment of work, and lower teacher absenteeism. Students in such schools had a better academic achievement than in others, and were absent from schools less often, and behaved in a more orderly way. These findings were consistently echoed by other studies on organisational restructuring in high schools in the USA (Lee and Smith, 1994, 1995, 1996).

The two studies mentioned above showed that the degree of schools' connectedness was closely associated with school performance. Their findings can be further supported by Rosenholtz's (1989) sophisticated study of 78 elementary schools in Tennessee. Using questionnaire and interview data, she examined the social organisation of schools at the district, school, and classroom levels and its effects on school ambience and performance. Two findings are notable. Firstly, the study demonstrated that the degree of collaboration between staff in the school had an important impact on the patterns of behaviour at the organisational level. For teachers in the schools with a higher degree of collaboration, sharing information about particular students normally aimed to find ways to help these students to learn

effectively. By contrast, in the schools with a higher degree of isolation, teachers saw sharing information as a form of swapping stories about students' misbehaviour or sympathising with one another. Besides, teachers in collaborative schools sought help more widely, and tried to identify causes and then solve problems, whilst teachers in the isolated schools conceived the problems narrowly as behaviour problems, and punishment as the solution to these problems.

Secondly, the study found that the degree of teachers' commitment to the workplace was associated with the form of school organisation, which was identified as '*moving*' and '*stuck*' (p.149). The '*moving*' schools refer to schools where school performance, students' achievement and their behaviour are improving. Teachers in these schools shared a strong sense of community and were in the pursuit of continuous improvement, and insisted that they would break rules if they found that rules interfered with the best interests of their students. The '*stuck*' schools, by contrast, refer to the schools, which have no progress, growth, or development. Teachers in these schools felt a low sense of community, perceive school life as a repetition of something which had been done before, and foresee no hopes for the future in their professional goals.

Similarly to the three studies reviewed above, Sergiovanni (1994) was interested in considering community-building in schools, and the practices which achieved it. He intended to find out how the school could be built up as a community through all possible areas of schooling, such as the promotion of practitioners' relationships, the identification of school needs, the design of the school curriculum, and the establishment of a positive classroom climate. Like the evidence from other case studies and school examples, the study suggested that a strong sense of community provided school practitioners with '*a unique and enduring sense of identity, belonging, and place*' (p.xiii).

According to Sergiovanni (1994), the sense of community refers to a sense of membership, purposefulness and coherence. In schooling, these qualities become the

principles for a varied range of actions. With a strong sense of community, both teachers and students had a strong sense of belonging, which simultaneously helped them to become active members of the community. In doing so, all school practitioners felt trust and respect, and were enabled to identify the purposefulness of school life created by having a principal and prominent goal of schooling. Coherence was enhanced by a strong attachment to the principal purpose. Hence, as Sergiovanni claimed, building up a school as a community was a way to transform the present discipline policies and practices, targeting control and conformity, into community strategies, focusing on building moral character and developing caring adults.

Particularly interesting in examining schools as organisations must be Watkins and Wagner's study of school behaviour (2000). They adopted a broad perspective to examine how schools managed the difficult behaviour at the three levels of individual, school and classroom. Supporting the evidence from other studies, they come to the conclusion that schools, in terms of pastoral care, discipline, and students' behaviour, could be improved if a change was made at all these three levels of schooling. As with the other studies reviewed previously, this study leads us to realise that school organisation itself has potential influences on students' behaviour.

To summarise, a search of the literature indicated that an argument for a close link between guidance and discipline has been imposed at the theoretical level. However, few direct and sophisticated studies have been made to illuminate the practices of this link at the school level. To bridge this discrepancy, I have turned to review existing studies on schools as organisations, because their findings have revealed how the relationship between school guidance and discipline could be built up to achieve the claim of enhancing student welfare and holistic growth within the school which is organised as a community.

### **3.3 Hong Kong Studies**

The following section reviews Hong Kong studies on guidance, discipline and their relationship in Hong Kong secondary schools. Since the 1980s, much research has

been done on school discipline and school guidance. Increasing over the past ten years, there has been a growing interest in the relationship between these two domains of schooling. Most of the studies take the form of student dissertations submitted for Master of Education degrees, mainly in the Faculty of Education, at Hong Kong University. Not only are they difficult to access, but also they form in a corpus of disconnected, small-scale studies.

### **3.3.1 School guidance**

The studies which I shall next review have focused on school practitioners' perception of both the function of the guidance team and the practices of school guidance in some Hong Kong secondary schools. Most of these studies were quantitative in nature, and the strategy of survey was employed.

Lee (1995) was particularly interested in examining teachers' and students' perception of the implementation of the guidance programme in a secondary school. Data were collected by the methods of questionnaire and interview. Two findings are notable. Firstly, Lee suggested that '*the academic/pastoral split*' was dominant in this school (p.187), because the majority of the respondents perceived guidance teachers as those who were particularly responsible for students' academically and non-academically related problems. Their perception was linked to the practice that the teacher respondents tended to rely on the guidance team to manage students' non-academic problems, such as '*student disruption*', even though they realised that they themselves had '*a caring role*' as well (p.iii). Secondly, the findings indicated that the teacher respondents perceived personal counselling as the most important service provided by the guidance team. However, the student respondents did not think in the same way, and perceived that the benefit they acquired in preventive developmental guidance programs was more than just personal counselling. Regarding this, Lee did not further explore the reasons underlying this discrepancy.

Hui (1998a, 1998b) moved away from a case study of school experience, and tried to sketch a generalised picture showing how the guidance teams functioned in most

Hong Kong secondary schools. Hui (1998a) surveyed 2,045 students' and 267 teachers' understanding of school guidance, using a questionnaire. The study demonstrated that teachers and students shared a similar belief about school guidance, and perceived it as *'problem-solving and developmental'* and as *'managing discipline and students' behaviour'* (p.444). In general, they endorsed a proactive problem-solving rather than remedial approach to guidance.

In addition, two findings are notable. First, echoing Lee's study (1995), Hui (1998a) found that handling referral cases and the provision of personal counselling were perceived as the main tasks of the guidance team. The teachers in the guidance team were mostly concerned with the distribution of workload, the sufficiency of counselling training, the co-ordination of resources and the involvement of non-guidance teachers. Secondly, in identifying the divergence between students' and teachers' view of school guidance, her study showed that the teachers perceived guidance as *'a form of eliciting professional support'*, and *'a way of alleviating teachers' difficulties in dealing with challenging students'* (p.445). The students, by contrast, regarded school guidance as a counselling service where students were involved in a process of referral, and admitted that the referral process had a labelling effect on them; hence, mostly they tried to avoid getting involved in it.

The importance of handling referral cases in the guidance team was consistently echoed in Hui's other study of the guidance focus in 32 secondary schools (1998b). The findings indicated that handling case work and organising group programs were the major guidance activities. Consistently, the respondents assigned a high priority to handling cases referred by other teachers, followed by cases initiated by students.

While most studies have been done on the function and practices of school guidance, Hui and Chan (1996) particularly investigated the difference between the stress experienced by guidance and non-guidance teachers. In the study, 415 teachers from ten secondary schools took part. Quantitative data were collected, using a questionnaire designed by the authors. The study found that the guidance teachers

tended to experience more stress than the non-guidance teachers. Stress was mainly caused by the additional workload, and also by the role conflicts in teaching and guiding students and in handling guidance referrals.

To summarise, the studies reviewed above have demonstrated in a general way that school guidance played an important role in personal counselling and handling referred students. At this stage, there is still some uncertainty concerning the function of school guidance in the following four areas: why the guidance team is structurally arranged as it is, why a referral system is built up for helping students manage behavioural and academic problems, how the guidance team interacts or co-operates with other teams or teachers who are used to making referrals to them; and how guidance interrelates with other dimensions of schooling within a school organisation, such as discipline, teaching and learning.

### **3.3.2 School discipline**

In this section, I will present relevant studies on the practices of school discipline at the three levels of the individual teachers, the discipline team and the whole school. At the level of individual teachers, there have been a number of studies on the use of personal discipline practices. Chow (1994), for example, paid particular attention to the discipline practices used by two groups of teachers: experienced and novices, in a secondary school. The study leads to the unsurprising conclusion that different strategies were used by these two groups of teachers.

Another study on personal discipline practices was Leung's (1991) quantitative study of teachers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of rewards and punishments in eight secondary schools. He discovered that rewards were considered significantly more effective than punishment. Also the attitude of students from band 1 and band 2 schools towards school and teachers were more positive than students from band 4 and band 5 schools. However, the study did not further explore reasons for these findings.

Like the two studies reviewed above, Chan's (1994) study was interested in school discipline at the individual level, and aimed to examine the relationship of unruly students with their teachers and parents. The sample included seven students, expelled from school because of their unruly behaviour, and 15 teachers from a secondary school. No explanation of the sample selection in the study was given. His study was grounded on the theoretical framework of the pedagogy of oppression, advocated by Freire and Ramos (1972) and Regoli and Hewitt (1991), and the assumption that the relationship of students with teachers and parents with students was constructed as the oppressed versus the oppressor. Without making any justification of this assumption, the study reached the predictable conclusion that the students' unruly behaviour was caused by teachers' and parents' oppression; in addition, the oppressing relationship was consistently maintained by the discipline system, where the students were placed in a powerless, inferior and oppressive position. In relation to this conclusion, Chan (1994) did not show further how the system and the oppressive relationship were established and maintained in the school.

Moving away from the level of individual teachers, I shall consider some studies focusing on the level of the discipline team. Regarding this, two studies by Kwok (1997) and Chan (1990), deserve a mention. Kwok (1997) particularly looked at the discipline teachers' practices of school discipline. He conducted a questionnaire study to explore the management style of 42 discipline teachers. The study showed that most of the teachers tended to manage school discipline in a custodial style, and perceived themselves as advisers on students' conduct problems and the supporters of other colleagues in managing student behaviours. Regarding the use of disciplinary measures, the study demonstrated that these teachers considered it as having immediate and most useful effects in deterring students' disruptive behaviour. In this study, Kwok did not explicate which discipline strategies were used by the teachers and in which contexts these strategies were practised.

Unlike Kwok's study, Chan (1990) set the focus of his study narrowly on four heads of discipline teams, respectively selected from four secondary schools. Specifically,

he studied their working practices and roles in managing school deviance. By interviews and the analysis of working diaries, the study suggested that the emphasis of their work was strongly placed on handling sporadic incidents of students' misbehaviour. Also, similar to the findings of Kwok's study (1997), most of their discipline practices were punishment-based. However, Chan did not illustrate further the various kinds of discipline systems which these heads of the discipline teams worked within and how these were related to their roles and discipline practices.

While some studies investigated the practice of discipline at both the individual and team levels, the number of research projects into its practice at the whole school level has been growing. Wong's case studies (1994), for example, described how school discipline was managed in three secondary schools at the three levels of whole school, classroom and individual. Wong's study showed that the effectiveness of school discipline was associated with four factors: school size, the intake of students, collaboration among teachers and the management style of the principal. However, Wong did not explore in depth why discipline staff in some schools were able to cooperate better than in others, how the school's size impacted on the management of discipline and why mutual trust and respect among the staff could be built in some schools but not in the others. Despite these limitations, the study revealed a general phenomenon, that the relationship among the teachers in the discipline team was closer than the relationship between the discipline and non-discipline teachers.

As with Wong (1994), the research of Chung (1997) and Pang (1992) investigated how school discipline was implemented at the whole school level in some schools. Chung (1997) carried out a case study to investigate the implementation of a whole school approach to school discipline. The study identified factors hindering its implementation, such as the absence of a '*mutual trust relationship*' between administrators and teachers. But Chung did not explore how the existing working rapport was established and what elements kept the school system functioning as it was.

While Chung was concerned with school policy on discipline, Pang (1992) focused on schools' discipline climate and practices. This study was quantitative in nature: 691 teachers and 25 principals from 29 aided secondary schools were involved. It aimed to identify the relationship between the school discipline climate and the characteristics of school rules, and also the relationship between that climate and the reward-punishment orientation of teachers. Three sets of questionnaires were designed by the author by adapting the questionnaires used in other studies (Halpin and Croft, 1963; Willower *et al.*, 1973; Cohen and Thomas, 1984; Natriello, 1982; McNamara, 1986, Wilson, 1971). They were used to explore teachers' and principals' perceptions of school climate, school rules and the use of reward and punishment. It is obvious that in this study Pang tried to assess school practitioners' perception of discipline in an outsider's perspective, instead of finding out how the insiders made sense of it and what discipline meant to them.

Two findings of his study should be mentioned. Firstly, the teachers from schools with a more positive discipline climate were generally more reward-oriented, whereas those from schools with less positive discipline climates were more punishment-oriented. Pang argued that there was a possible link between the teachers' perceptions of the discipline climate and the use of individual discipline practices. Nevertheless, he failed to explore the specific kinds of reward and punishment-oriented practices used by the teachers and how these practices were linked to the discipline climate. Secondly, the teachers perceived that there were some factors which might contribute to the formulation of the current discipline climate, such as formal school rules, the school value system, school policies, administrative procedures and the routine of daily practices. Apart from highlighting the point that the particular features of school rules had no effect on the school discipline climate and on teachers' attitudes toward the use of reward and punishment, Pang did not explicate how each of these factors contributed to the existing discipline climate in different schools.

In short, studies on school discipline have shown that in most Hong Kong secondary schools, school discipline carried negative characteristics, such as punishment,

oppression and control. Mostly, the discipline team played an important role in putting school discipline into practice and dealing with students' misbehaviour. Nevertheless, little research has yet been completed into the following areas with respect to the three levels of school discipline. At the level of individual teachers, no direct research has been completed on the practice of discipline in the classroom. At the level of the discipline team, not many research have been done on the operation of the discipline team, such as how the discipline team is structurally arranged in a school organisation, how it functions and is maintained as a system; and how it impacts on the classroom, other teams and the whole school. At the whole school level, the available studies have not revealed how discipline policies and practices impact on the whole school atmosphere and school itself, and visa versa. All these areas still remain obscure and are worth being further explored so as to enhance our understanding of the operation and practices of school discipline in a school organisation.

### **3.3.3 The relationship between guidance and discipline**

Hitherto, I have reviewed the relevant studies on either guidance or discipline. Few of them attend to the relationship between school guidance and discipline in a school organisation. Direct and detailed research into this relationship was not done until the late 1990s. The growth of interest in this area can be linked to the current pressures reflecting an increasing need to redress the balance between guidance and discipline in most Hong Kong secondary schools.

Before reviewing these studies, it is worth mentioning Tsang's Ph.D. study (1986) of the pastoral care system in two secondary schools, though this study was completed in the 1980s and its focus was mainly on guidance, and less on discipline. This is because in his study those findings which relate to the collaboration between the guidance and discipline teams in schooling may help us understand more how the two teams were linked with each other with the school. Using the methodological strategies of case study, interview, textual analysis, classroom observation and questionnaire, the central aim of the study was to examine secondary-three boys',

parents' and teachers' perceptions of the existing pastoral care system in the two schools. It is necessary to note that in the selection of the case study schools, as Tsang (1986) stated, the study aimed to seek for the similarities between these two schools, but not to investigate their differences.

The study found that school discipline was over-developed while school guidance was under-developed in both schools. There was little co-ordination among the guidance and discipline teachers; such co-ordination was commonly regarded as unnecessary. Comparing the guidance system to the discipline network, Tsang suggested that the caring system in the schools was rather loosely organised. When it became structured, in most cases, this was for disciplinary actions only. In contrast, school discipline systems were developed like a well-structured hierarchy. Problematic students were handled by different teachers at different stages of the administrative procedure. In this process, the positive aspect of the caring system seemed to be distorted as part of the provision for discipline.

Adopting a broad view and examining each school as an organisation, the study came to the conclusion that the guidance and discipline teams were developed in imbalanced ways. However, the study did not explicate further why and how school discipline was overdeveloped while school guidance was under-developed. Similarly, Tsang identified some factors, such as streaming, and certain school practices which seemed to hinder the caring role of the school, but he did not further make his suggestion explicit or show how these factors were associated with the existing relationship between guidance and discipline.

In addition to Tsang's study, two studies, by Wong (1997) and Chung (1998), have been done on the relationship between guidance and discipline. Wong's study focused on the school level, whilst Chung's study concentrated on the level of the guidance and discipline teams.

Wong (1997) conducted an interview study of teachers' perception of the relationship between discipline and guidance in a band 5 secondary school. The study showed that guidance and discipline were mostly separated and independent in this school, and co-operation between teachers from these two teams rarely happened, even though the guidance and discipline teachers shared the same values underlying the reward and punishment system.

Wong's (1997) study found that most teachers perceived that guidance and discipline were very different notions. In general, discipline stressed conformity to rules whereas guidance emphasised the introspective understanding of the self. Specifically, the guidance team was regarded as the supporting service by most teachers, and mainly specialised in the handling of students' emotional and psychological problems and in the provision of counselling service and support. Whenever teachers found students having any disciplinary problems which they might not be able to deal with, a referral to the guidance team would be made.

Regarding the discipline team, most of the teachers described it as a dominant department in the school; school discipline was a corrective means for handling students' problems. The study revealed that most teachers were used to relying on the team to manage students' deviant behaviours. Facing the proliferating number of students' deviance behaviours, these teachers asserted a need for the enlargement of the discipline team, because, as they expected, this would lessen their workload and the pressure induced by the attempt to manage students' deviant behaviour.

Like Wong (1997), Chung (1998) was concerned with the relationship between guidance and discipline. His study aimed to explore teachers' and students' perception of the co-operation between discipline and guidance teams. 600 students and 225 teachers from 15 secondary schools were involved. Two sets of questionnaires were designed respectively to investigate their perceptions of the functions of discipline and guidance in handling students' behavioural problems, and the co-operation of the two teams at the administrative level.

Two findings are notable. First, the two teams were separate, according to the notion of division of work. As with other studies, handling casework was the context where both teams could collaborate. '*Referral after punishment*' was commonly seen in the schools (p.iv), but paradoxically it was regarded as the most unfavourable strategy for discipline. Secondly, both teachers and students stereotyped both the guidance and discipline teachers. They described the discipline teachers as strict and firm, whereas the guidance teachers were seen as kind and caring. Chung argued that the separation and stereotyping of guidance and discipline teachers would decrease their effectiveness in handling students' misbehaviours. By and large, the emphasis of Chung's study was placed on generalising the pattern of co-operation between the two teams, rather than on identifying how the pattern of collaboration differed from school to school. More than that, the study merely enabled the authors to provide a description of the phenomena, and did not relate school factors up and then give an explanation for the relation.

In short, the three studies reviewed above have shown a consistent picture, that school discipline systems were over-developed; whereas school guidance was under-developed. Mostly, discipline is more dominant than guidance in schooling. Also, the teachers participating in the two teams have been commonly stereotyped, that is, the discipline teachers are seen as hard and strict whilst the guidance teachers are soft and gentle. Nevertheless, regarding the relationship between guidance and discipline, many areas still remain under-researched, such as why does the relationship between school discipline and guidance differ from school to school? What make collaboration between the guidance and discipline teams in some school closer than others? What make school discipline in some schools more positive than in others? How does a pattern of relationship or collaboration remain stable within the school organisation? These are areas which require further study.

### 3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed various studies on guidance and discipline. Many writers have claimed that in theory, both guidance and discipline play a crucial role in enhancing students' holistic growth and establishing a positive school climate. However, little direct and detailed research has been done on revealing the extent to which both guidance and discipline are actually applied in schooling. Despite this, the research into the degree of school connectedness has showed that well-connected schools have less difficult behaviour, and better performance in general. These findings suggest that we should direct our attention to the arrangements for guidance and discipline at the department or team level, but more importantly at the level of school organisation. Summarising these findings, we may conclude that the literature on guidance and discipline offers tentative support for the following propositions:

1. There is an inseparable link between school guidance and discipline in schooling.
2. Guidance and discipline are closely associated with other components of schooling, like the academic curriculum, teaching and learning.
3. Pastoral care provision and academic matters were segregated in some UK secondary schools.
4. The school itself has considerable impact on the practices of discipline and guidance at both the school and individual levels. Schools make a difference.
5. In the well-connected, or collaborative schools, it is more possible to create a close relationships between school components, for instance school guidance and discipline. Such schools tend to have less difficult behaviour.

In the context of Hong Kong secondary schools, most studies have been done on either guidance or discipline. Little research has been completed on the relationship between them. By and large, the Hong Kong literature provides primary support for the following propositions:

1. Most school practitioners see school guidance as positive, and by contrast, school discipline as negative.
2. Discipline tends to be more dominant than guidance in some Hong Kong secondary schools. As revealed in most studies, the guidance and discipline teams

are separated in terms of their structural arrangements, administrative procedures and roles in managing students' misbehaviour.

3. Co-operation between these two teams is mostly constructed within a referral system.
4. Some schools and school participants are concerned with redressing the balance between school guidance and discipline at both the level of department and that of individual teachers.

The above propositions require further validation and refinement. However, the following issues must be addressed before a better knowledge of guidance and discipline in Hong Kong secondary schools can be built up.

1. The guidance and discipline literature needs to address more clearly how school practitioners make sense of discipline and guidance.
2. There is a need to understand better how school guidance and discipline are related to each other within a school organisation.
3. The relationship between guidance and discipline, and school culture as a whole needs to be articulated clearly.
4. The impacts of school organisational frameworks on the practices of guidance and discipline at both the department and classroom levels need to be clarified.
5. There is a need to explore why the relationship between school guidance and discipline differ from school to school.

## Chapter Four

### **A Study of Teachers' and Students' Definitions of the Situation in Five Hong Kong Secondary Schools**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The preliminary study was descriptive and exploratory. Ten teachers and ten students from five secondary schools were recruited for interviews. The study used an interactionist perspective, and aimed to examine the relationship between school guidance and discipline in three settings of the classroom, guidance and discipline, and the orientations for guidance and discipline, whether fragmented or integrated. Specifically, the study focused on how the respondents defined the situation in the three settings, and to what extent the differences were associated with the orientations of guidance and discipline across the five schools. Then I moved on in depth to look at the different relationships between the guidance and discipline teams in these schools.

#### **4.2 Theoretical Framework:**

##### **The interactionist perspective**

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the ontology of interactionism. In the interactionist perspective, an individual makes sense of everyday life and gains the knowledge of social reality in the process of human interaction. As Blumer said, *'the empirical social world, in short, is the world of everyday experience'* (1969a, p.14). In the course of human interaction, conscious awareness allows one to view oneself as an object and distinguish between the existence of oneself and that of others. Because of this ability, one becomes conscious of the existence of the self.

Human interaction becomes possible. In what follows, I will illustrate the concept of the self, put forward by Mead (1934), Blumer (1962, 1966, 1969a, 1969b) and Cooley (1964), and continue with a discussion of two processes underlying human interaction: the interpretation of symbols and the definition of the situation.

### *Individual and the self*

Regarding the concept of the self, Mead (1934) claimed that it is constituted by the concept of the 'I' and 'me'. In most cases, both the 'I' and 'me' collaborate with each other to organise and direct an individual's social behaviour. In other words, the 'I' helps an individual make an immediate and spontaneous response to others. The 'me' draws one to perceive how others expect him to act in a group. It helps individuals to view themselves as objects that can be labelled, imagined, visualised, talked about and acted on (Hewitt 1984). As Mead stated,

*The 'I' is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the 'Me' is the organised set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes. The attitudes of the others constitute the organised 'Me'; one reacts towards that as an 'I' (quoted in Woods, 1992, p.347).*

Mead described this dimension of the self as the mechanism of 'indication to oneself', with which an individual is able to deal with his world by making indications to himself of things of which he is conscious. Based on what an individual indicates, he makes sense of the world and decides his acts. In this sense, the mechanism helps one to construct the meanings for something that one can indicate in its relation to himself, rather than something one has never seen or encountered with.

Like Mead, Blumer (1962, 1966, 1969a, 1969b) postulated that the self has a reflexive and self-interacting ability, with which an individual can take the role of others to see himself from the standpoint of others, in order to figure out what he can do next and how he can react to others. Therefore, human interaction can be seen as a process in which an individual learns how others perceive him, particularly from persons who are his significant others. Meanwhile, Cooley (1964) conceptualised the

self as the *'looking-glass self'*. This refers to one's potential of viewing himself like any other social object. In this process, an individual may constantly think about how he appears to others and how others might think of him.

The three concepts of the self, that is, Mead's *'indication to one self'*, Blumer's 'self-reflexivity' and Cooley's *'looking-glass self'*, make us aware that an individual has the ability to construct his conscious action in relation to how he interprets the acts of others. He can also identify the relation between his own action and the action of others by ascertaining the intention or direction of the actions of others. As a result of consciousness of the self, human interaction makes possible. In the course of their interaction, interpersonal relationships are established, and social groups are formed as direct consequence of these. A society is created in the end. As Blumer (1969) claims, interaction is the fundamental way in which group action takes place in human society. As he explains,

*Under the perspective of symbolic interaction, social action is lodged in acting individuals who fit their respective lines of action to one another through a process of interpretation; group action is the collective action of such individuals (p.84).*

### ***Interpretation and the definition of the situation***

After presenting the different views of the self, and its relation to the individual and others, I shall explain two further processes of symbolic interaction: the interpretation of symbols and the definition of the situation. In the interactionist view, a process of interaction is also a process of interpretation of the symbols, such as language and gestures, used by each individual. An individual lives with symbols in daily life. He must learn to understand and interpret these symbols, in order to help make sense of the world and to enable the construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann 1973; Mead 1934; Ritzer 1992). As Blumer (1969a) states,

*Human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions (p.79).*

The second process involved in human interaction, as Stebbins (1967, 1969, 1975) suggests, is the definition of the situation. Thomas (1937) defined this term as a process in which an individual tries to define situations in terms of what role he wishes to enact, what self-identify he seeks to present, and how he expects others to act towards him.

Stebbins argued that an individual acts towards situations rather than towards the whole of a culture or society. This is mainly a self-determined, subjective, and complex process, even though the social organisation that individuals enter may shape the situations in which one acts (Thomas, 1937; Blumer, 1962, 1966, 1969a, 1969b). In another words, how individuals act with each other is largely determined by how they perceive the situations in which they participate, rather than how the situation is objectively presented to them.

Stebbins (1967, 1969, 1975) proposed an epistemological framework for examining how an individual defines the situation in which he participates, and how one's definition of the situation governs the process of interaction. It is presented as twelve statements below:

*Perceptions of others:*

- 1) *Identification by the identity incumbents of the relevant others present and their behaviour.*
- 2) *The incumbents' perceptions of the evaluation those others have made of the situation as established with reference to the others' identifications of themselves, including their moral and moral or sentimental reactions to the immediate setting.*
- 3) *The incumbents' perceptions of the action orientations of the others while in the setting.*
- 4) *The incumbents' perceptions of the plans of action (strategies for arriving at the orientations) of the relevant others.*
- 5) *The incumbents' perceptions of the justifications or vocabularies of motives associated with others' plans of action.*

*In the looking glass:*

- 6) *The incumbents' perceptions of the identifications of themselves made by the relevant others.*
- 7) *The incumbents' perceptions of the evaluation of the situation imputed*

*to them by the others.*

- 8) *The incumbents' perceptions of the action orientations imputed to them while in the situation.*
- 9) *The incumbents' perceptions of the plans of action imputed to them.*
- 10) *The incumbents' perceptions of the justifications of the plans imputed to them.*

*Reactions:*

- 11) *The incumbents' evaluations of the situation as established with reference to their identifications of themselves, including their moral and emotional or sentimental reactions to the immediate setting.*
- 12) *The incumbents' plans of action. The incumbents' justifications of the plans (Stebbins, 1975, pp.18-19).*

At the conceptual level, Stebbins distinguished two situations, objective and subjective. The objective situation refers to the physiological and psychological state aroused when an individual initially participates in an immediate physical setting. The subjective situation refers to one's perception of the objective situation after participating in the setting. An individual's definition of the objective situation creates one's perceptions of the subjective situation, which may be totally different from the initial objective situation one has perceived. Stebbins (1975) explained the two situations as follows:

*The objective situation is to be seen simply as the total collection of situational elements and their interrelationships from which the actor constructs his subjective situation. [It is] ...the social scientist's picture of the objective situation in which the actor finds himself or as the aggregate view of the objective situation erected from the individual views of a number of participants (p.7).*

As Stebbins suggested, there are two factors affecting one's definitions of situations, namely personality-cultural and situational forms. The personality-cultural factor refers to the values, norms and culture deriving from organisation and society. These values and this culture are internalised into all individuals by the process of socialisation. The situational factor refers to the variability of social situations which an individual is not habitually familiar with or has never encountered before. Participating in such a situation, an individual needs to give it a new definition. In

doing so, he requires some reflections from the perceptual image of his own experience, others' experience, and his estimation of the completion of an act that he wants to perform (Stebbins 1967, 1969, 1975).

So far, I have explained the ontology of interactionism, specifically how an individual makes sense of '*the self*' and '*others*', and define the situation in which s/he participates. By adopting an interactionist stance, it helps me to examine how the reality of social world is constructed in the dynamic and ongoing process of human interaction. More than that, the epistemological framework of the definition of the situation, suggested by Stebbins, is believed to be applied at the empirical level for achieving this purpose.

### **4.3 Design of the study**

In this section, I will define the key terms used in this study, and then explicate the three procedures, which were used namely, data collection, data analysis, and translation. Finally, I will evaluate the study in terms of theoretical, methodological and analytical aspects.

#### **4.3.1 Terminology**

The special terms used in this study include the three settings of classroom, guidance and discipline, and the two orientations of guidance and discipline: fragmented and integrated.

The meaning of a setting refer not only to a definite location, but also to a context where teachers and students interact with each other and carry out various schooling activities. The classroom setting refers to the teaching and learning activity practised in the classroom. This is assumed to be the most common setting in which students participate in various guidance and discipline activities, because in the classroom, teachers perform several roles, such as teaching, guidance and discipline.

The guidance setting refers to guidance programmes organised and implemented by the guidance team, for example sex education, moral education, personal growth and newcomers' orientation programmes. Guidance activities also cover personal counselling and group counselling workshops. As a rule, all the teachers in the guidance team, as the counselling teacher in the preliminary study, were responsible for implementing these programmes.

The discipline setting is the context for activities organised and carried out by the discipline team. There is a wide range of discipline activities, such as checking school uniform and case investigation. Also some discipline programmes, for example leadership training programs and work on teacher-student committees, are offered for students. All the teachers in the discipline team are responsible for implementing these activities and programmes.

Apart from the three settings, two orientations, that is, fragmented and integrated, are conceptualised in order to examine the relation between guidance and discipline in various settings. The '*fragmented*' orientation refers to the independent, and less connected relation, whereas the '*integrated*' orientation refers to the interdependent, and more connected relation. Regarding the conceptualisation of these two orientations, it is important for me to highlight two points. Firstly, I avoid giving very specific definitions to the two orientations, but intend to explore how the respondents involved make their own meanings for the relation between guidance and discipline. Secondly, the conceptualisation of the two orientations does not imply that the relation between school guidance and discipline is always classified into two extremities of '*the integrated*' and '*the fragmented*'. Rather, they should be understood as a continuum, as shown in Figure 4.1 (p.66). This is because in reality, the relation between school guidance and discipline at the school level is more complex, and should not be simply generalised into one of these two orientations. It is likely that most schools should be classified between the two orientations, instead of at either end of the continuum.

**Figure 4.1 Continuum of the fragmented and the integrated orientations for the relationship between school guidance and discipline**



The concept of connectedness has been briefly mentioned in the literature review. This concept could be used to describe the relations between various objects or phenomena, and some authors use it to refer to people or to roles or to settings. To the extent that the concept of connectedness is used in this thesis, it will refer to practitioners' meaning of guidance and discipline. This can be applied in two ways. First, it refers to the connection between the meanings which emerge in the way that teachers and students describe their roles and social activities within a setting. Second, it refers to how the meanings identified in one setting can be seen across other settings. Although the degree of connectedness in different schools may vary, because of the structural and bureaucratic aspects of the schools, this study will maintain a focus on the connectedness of meanings.

#### **4.3.2 Data collection**

An interview guide was constructed based on an interactionist perspective and Stebbins' (1975) study. This has been attached in Appendix 2 (p.255). The interview questions were designed to explore teachers' and students' definitions of situations with respect to guidance and discipline. The sample schools were selected in terms of six dimensions of school features. These included their position in the banding system, geographical location, religion, length of establishment, funding base and policy of medium of instruction. I tried to recruit wide diversity of sample schools so that I could examine how far these school features relate to the relationship between guidance and discipline within the school.

I then went on to choose the five schools among the schools where the 35 teachers work whom I knew on the part-time course for the Certificate of School Discipline, 97-98, at Hong Kong Chinese University. To begin with, I telephoned the relevant teachers and conveyed my research plan to them. After getting their consent, I invited them to be my informants about their schools and, at the same time, requested them to ask for the school's permission to collect data in their schools on my behalf. Eventually, encouraging replies were obtained from the five targeted schools. They are indicated as Schools A to E in this study.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out in the five schools between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, 1998. In each school, one counselling teacher, one discipline teacher and two students were invited to interviews, which were all conducted in Cantonese. Each lasted about 20 minutes and was tape-recorded for further analysis. In total, ten teachers and ten students were interviewed. The features of the five sample schools and the background of the respondents are next briefly explained as follows. In particular, the features of these schools are summarised in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Features of the five sample schools**

Schools	Band of School	Funding Base	Religion	Geographical Location	Length of Establishment (in years)	School Policy of Medium of Instruction
A	1	Aided	Christian	New Territories	15	English
B	3	Aided	Christian	Kowloon	20	Transit to Chinese
C	4	Aided	Christian	Hong Kong Island	30	Chinese
D	5	Government	Nil	New Territories	10	Chinese
E	5	Private	Christian	New Territories	40	English

School A, a band one school, is an aided school, established by a Christian organisation. The school is located in a private residential area of Shatin, a new town in the New Territories (N.T.). It has been established for nearly 15 years. The school has a very good reputation in the region. According to the teachers, the students are characterised by their high academic achievement and good behaviour. The school adopts English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) policy for teaching and learning. Students are streamed into various classes.

School B, a band three school, is an aided school with a Christian background. The school is located in a densely populated residential area, very close to an industrial area at Cheung Shan Wan, Kowloon. It has been established for 20 years. One of the features of the school is that school building is attached to a block of public housing, the first three floors of which have been converted into classrooms. Most of the teachers and students show discontent with the school building and its surrounding environment. The school has been in transition from the EMI policy to Chinese as Medium of Instruction (CMI). Students are streamed into various classes.

School C, a band four school, is an aided school, established by a Christian organisation. The school is located in a densely populated private residential area and adjacent to a commercial area at Fortress Hill, Hong Kong Island. It has been established for almost 30 years. The CMI policy is adopted and students are streamed.

School D, a band five school, is a government school with no religious background. The school is located in a public residential area at Ma On Shan, a new town in the New Territories. It has been established for 10 years. As two teachers revealed, the school has acquired a quite notorious reputation among band five schools in the community. According to many of the teachers and students, some positive changes have occurred in the last two years. The CMI policy and streaming are adopted.

School E, a band five school, is a private school, established by a Christian organisation. The school is located in a village near the new town of Fan Ling, N.T. It has been established for 40 years. It used to have a bad reputation in the northern

district of N.T.. The school has seen positive transformations since the present principal arrived five years ago, and was fortunate enough to receive the support of most teachers. Two teachers and the principal claim that its progress can be seen from the continuous improvement of student behaviour and academic achievement. School practitioners apparently feel very excited to see these positive changes.

Concerning the features of the ten students involved (see Table 4.2, p.69), then were aged between 15 and 18. Five were females and five were males. Four of the students were in secondary-three (S.3) of the secondary school, and four were in secondary-six (S.6). The rest were in secondary-four (S.4). Five counselling and five discipline teachers were involved (See Table 4.3, p.70). The respondents were aged between 29 and 44. Six were females and four were males. Two were Heads of Guidance and three were Heads of Discipline.

**Table 4.2 Characteristics of student respondents**

Students	Year	Estimated Age	Sex
A1	S.3	15	M
A2	S.6	18	F
B1*	S.3	15	M
B2*	S.3	15	M
C1*	S.6	18	F
C2*	S.6	18	F
D1	S.3	15	M
D2	S.6	18	M
E1*	S.4	16	F
E2*	S.4	16	F

*The asterisk indicates that group interviews were used for data collection*

**Table 4.3 Characteristics of teacher respondents**

Teachers	Estimated Age	No. of teaching years in the school	Sex	Main teaching subject	Main school duty
AG	32	8	F	Geography(S.4-7)	Head of Counselling
AD	43	13	M	Chinese Literature & Chinese History (S.4-7)	Head of Discipline
BG	29	6	F	English (S.3)& Social studies (S.5-6)	Co-ordinator of the Personal Counselling Section of The Counselling Team
BD	42	21	F	English (S.4-5)	Member of the Cases Investigation Section of The Discipline Team
CG	42	6	F	Chinese Language (S.3-5)	Member of the Counselling Team
CD	44	5	M	Biology (S.4-7)	Co-ordinator of the Cases Investigation Section Of the Discipline Team
DG	38	5	F	Geography (S1-7)	Co-ordinator of the volunteer & Leadership training programme, of the Counselling Team
DD	32	3	F	Chinese Language & Chinese History (S.4-7)	Head of Discipline
EG*	37	14	M	Tourism (S.4-5) & EPA (S.2-3)	Head of Counselling
ED*	37	14	M	Chinese Language & Chinese History (S.4-5)	Head of Discipline

*The asterisk indicates that group interviews were used for data collection.*

### 4.3.3 Data analysis

The data analysis started by transcribing the audio data from spoken Cantonese to written English. In total, ten transcripts were produced. The process of data analysis was composed of five stages.

#### 1. Study of transcripts

Each transcript was studied individually so that I could get a general picture of each respondent's definition of the situation, and examine whether there were any main themes emerging from the data in relation to my research interests. Throughout this process, the focus was on explicating the symbolic meanings of the participants' responses, and how their definition was attributed to the different relation between guidance and discipline in different schools. All units of analysis and initial finding were recorded.

#### 2. Categorisation of respondents' roles

The next stage was to categorise the data with respect to the respondents' definition of the situation in relation to the three settings. I intended to look specially at the categorisation of the teachers' and students' definitions of roles, and the symbolic meanings embedded in these roles. In order to ensure the coherence and consistency of the each category and the reliability of the data produced, it was necessary constantly to compare and contrast each sub-set of data put into the same category. The results of this analysis are shown in Appendix 3 (p.259).

#### 3. Classification of roles

I then classified the categories of roles under three headings, two of which are the '*fragmented*' and '*integrated*' orientations, using the terminology discussed earlier. All the roles corresponding to these two orientations were classified accordingly. Another heading is 'the definition of situation: the orthodox view'. The term orthodox view is borrowed from Best *et al.*'s (1983) idea of conventional wisdom, to embrace the beliefs, which are shared by school practitioners, without questioning its validity or reasons behind. This heading was created in view of the fact that the respondents

might define situations in relation to the orthodox understanding of the situation, which was commonly shared by the respondents, and conventionally regarded as the culturally and socially acceptable ways to perform their roles. It is necessary to note that the roles classified under this heading might not necessarily imply either a fragmented or an integrated orientation.

#### 4. Construction of respondents' profiles

With the use of these three headings and the categories of respondents' roles, I re-examined each transcript further so as to construct a profile of individual teachers' and students' definitions of their roles with respect to the three settings in which they participated, that is, classroom, discipline and guidance. The use of these profiles, displayed in Appendixes 4 to 7 (pp.262-269), helped me identify the possible links between the individual respondents' definitions of situations and the different orientations of guidance and discipline in each school.

#### 5. Comparison of profiles

The profiles of the respondents from the same schools were constantly compared to each other. Afterwards, each school's profile were compared with those from the others so as to examine the different orientation of each school. At this stage, it was necessary to constantly move in and out the interview data and cross-check the units of analysis produced.

#### **4.3.4 Method of translation**

The data generated in this study are in two languages, Chinese (Cantonese) and English. Both transcribing the Chinese verbal data into English written text, and translating documents from Chinese written text into English were vital steps in data processing. As the quality of transcription and translation certainly determines the reliability of the data, and even the findings of the study, I shall make this process explicit.

In this study, the process of translation focused on transferring accurately the meanings of the language, instead of the form, since Chinese and English have entirely different linguistic structures and letter-systems. As Liu (1995) points out, language in communication always has multi-dimensional layers of meanings, such as conceptual, formal, connotative, figurative, stylistic, cultural and collaborative meanings. In his view, any mechanical adherence to formal equivalence not only kills the spirit of the utterance, but also may render it utterly incomprehensible as well. To transfer these various meanings carried by the data from Chinese to English, four stages of translation were involved, as shown below:

### 1. Study of data

I listened to each unit of the data three or four times in order to capture and identify the meanings embedded within the unit that I intended to translate.

### 2. Adjustment of language

I moved on to divide the unit into either phrases or sentences. Each unit was translated phrase by phrase, or sentence by sentence, instead of word by word, after I studied it for three or four times again, in order to capture the meanings which it carried. In this process, as Liu (1995) proposes, some adjustments were necessarily made at two levels of word and above word. At the word level, the adjustments included addition, subtraction, transliteration, rephrasing, conversion, blending, and combination. Adjustments above the word level of features, such as idiom, slang, and cultural signs, included the processes of cutting, reversion, splitting and recasting.

### 3. Cross-check of transcript

After the translation of the unit was accomplished, I cross-checked the transcript which I had produced with the raw data to see whether I could transfer the meaning precisely. If any discrepancies were identified, I would return to the first stage, and repeat the various processes.

#### 4. Repeating the process

After I had identified which units of the data were relatively rich and illustrative, I processed all these units once again, passing through all the previous stages, in order to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the translation.

Throughout the period of translation and transcription, I discussed with two Hong Kong students, respectively studying for a Master degree and a Ph.D. degree at the Institute of Education, University of London, about transferring the meanings of the data from Chinese to English, especially the transfer of cultural signs, slang, and idioms.

#### **4.3.5 Evaluation of the study**

In what follows, I shall evaluate this study in relation to theoretical, methodological and analytical aspects. In the theoretical aspect, two points are notable. Firstly, the ontology of interactionism certainly provides the researcher with an insightful perspective for analysing the teacher-student interaction, and how the respondents define the situation. Secondly, regarding the design of the three settings, I set the examination of the guidance and discipline settings at the level of the guidance and discipline teams. However, the data collected revealed that the meanings of guidance and discipline cannot be divorced from other schooling elements like the whole school ethos, the principal's leadership, whole-school discipline and guidance policies, and the micro-political relations between other school teams. All these elements went beyond the guidance and discipline teams, and existed at the wide level of schooling. Understanding these schooling elements would certainly help to clarify how guidance and discipline were constructed in these schools. Hence, it is proposed that guidance and discipline should be examined within the whole school context, not just that of the guidance and discipline teams.

Regarding the methodological aspect, due to the shortage of time and resources, only ten teachers and ten students from five secondary schools were involved in the preliminary study. The sample might not be large enough to guarantee the external

validity and reliability of the findings. Despite this, within the Stebbins' framework, I was able to explore the respondents' views of guidance and discipline, and identify different orientations across the five schools.

With regard to the semi-structured interview method employed in the study, two points are notable. Firstly, it was an appropriate research strategy for exploring how the teachers and students talked about their workplace and made sense of school realities. However, it might not allow the researcher to understand how they actually interacted with each other, how the guidance and discipline practices were carried out, and whether there was any discrepancy between the way they talked and the way they acted in a natural setting.

Secondly, when conducting the interviews, I learnt that interviewers should not constrain themselves with the pre-set interview questions, because any interview is in fact a dynamic interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. In this process, meanings are constructed, interpreted, and exchanged. This is dynamic and two-way communication, in which both the interviewer and the interviewee confront and clarify each other's meaning as they develop a coherent dialogue. For example, in the course of the interview, I needed to constantly use follow-up questions to clarify the meaning of words and jargon used by the respondents. Further, I had to invite the interviewees to exemplify and contextualise their sayings so that I would not misunderstand, or misinterpret, the meanings which they intended to transfer to me.

In the analytical aspect, I, as a researcher, tried to establish an appropriate framework for analysing the interview data, and translating the data from Chinese to English. The analytic framework developed helped me process the data. By categorisation, classification and comparison, the meanings embedded within each category were unfolded. Later, the developed framework of translation and transcription certainly helped me to transfer the meaning of the data from Chinese to English in systematic ways.

## 4.4 Findings and Discussion

In the interactionist perspective, I shall examine and display the findings of the interview study in two sections: 1. the orientations of guidance and discipline in three settings; 2. the relationship between the guidance and discipline teams. The focus of the first section is on examining how the teachers and students from the five schools define the situation differently in the three settings of classroom, guidance and discipline; and how these differences were linked to the two orientations: integrated and fragmented, in the schools. I am also particularly interested in exploring how far teachers and students shared an orthodox view of guidance and discipline when they participated in the three settings. In the second section, I will move to investigate how the teachers and students talked about the relationship between the guidance and discipline teams.

### 4.4.1 Orientations of guidance and discipline in three settings

#### 4.4.1.1 In classroom setting

##### *The orthodox view*

Most respondents shared the orthodox view, that in the classroom teachers should play their roles as instructors whereas students should be learners (see Appendix 4, p.262 and Appendix 5, p.264). For example, when the teachers AD, DG, and BD, talked about their roles, most defined themselves as instructors who had to *'teach well and transmit knowledge to them (students)'*; and *'prepare them for examinations'*. In relation to this, they expected students to *'keep quiet'*, *'no chatting'*, *'complete all tasks'* and *'pay high attention to what teachers teach'*. Simultaneously, most of the students shared this orthodox view, and reciprocally defined themselves as learners who had to *'study well'*, *'be quiet'*, *'join in the group discussion'*, and *'not interrupt the class'*. Meanwhile, they expected teachers to act as instructors who *'teach well'*, and *'help us (students) understand the knowledge in textbooks'*.

With regard to guidance and discipline, most of the teachers tended to prioritise the discipline and instructor roles ahead of the guidance role in the classroom. Despite

this, the teachers perceived that they were more able to play the guidance role in a class with high academic ability students, or a well-behaved class, than in a class with low academic ability students, or a misbehaving class.

***Teachers' definition of the situation***

Although an orthodox view of the classroom was shared by the respondents, as mentioned above, this by no means indicates that they would perform their roles in similar ways. Instead, it is notable that in some schools, the teachers seemed more aware of playing the discipline role than in others. They perceived that getting and maintaining control in the classroom was considered as the only way to create a more favourable environment for teaching and learning. Reciprocally, students were not only expected to act as learners, but also as conformists, who should conform to the teacher's instructions and school rules.

Among the five schools, the teachers in Schools A and B tended to define their roles in more negative ways (refer to Appendix 4, p.262 and Appendix 3, p.259). They put more emphasis on their role as disciplinarians. From their point of view, discipline, teaching and learning could hardly be separated in the classroom. Comparing schools A and B, the teachers and students in School B talked about the classroom in more fragmented ways. For example, in teacher BG's account of the actual role that she currently played in the classroom, it was revealed that she experienced a discrepancy between the ideal role that she wanted to play and the actual role that she currently played. It seemed often that she needed to constantly defend her instructor role by playing a disciplinarian role. Correspondingly, she defined students as ignorant of schooling and passive learners (see Appendix 3, p.259). As she put it,

*...In the classroom, I'm now acting like a mother looking after her kids. For example, when someone is out of his seat, I have to order him to go back.... I really find that my role is really passive in the classroom. What I can do is deal with something happening in the class rather than create something. So I have spent most of my time disciplining my students who are very lazy and have a very low motivation for learning.... Usually I want my lesson to be very active and interesting. But at the same time, I am so worried I can't control the classroom discipline if the students get excited... .*

Playing the roles of a role defender and disciplinarian, BG experienced considerable difficulty in playing the guidance role as she intended. This was particularly seen when she placed the emphasis of teaching on getting control in the classroom and managing students' non-compliant behaviour. As she said,

*... There is a great discrepancy between the role I am playing now and the ideal role I want to play in the classroom. As you know, there are a large number of students in a class. They all have different expectations from me. How can I fulfil all of them? Sometimes, teaching in the classroom, my attention has been diverted to some misbehaving students. This certainly makes me fail to show concern and care for the normal student who behaves well in the classroom....*

Unlike Schools A and B, in the other three Schools C, D and E, the teachers tended to define their roles in more integrated ways (refer to Appendix 4, p.262 and Appendix 3, p.259). They perceived their roles as pastoral carers and the promoters of positive relationship, even though they addressed the importance of discipline in the classroom. An example of this is teacher EG. When he talked about his role, he showed the ability to view students as individual human beings, instead of a collective group. He felt responsible not only for being an instructor, but also for caring for students' whole person growth.

*Basically, I can fulfil my ideal role. I can enlighten them and promote their ability of critical thinking. Transmit knowledge to them. Help them face all the difficulties in their life. Also, most importantly, through the process of teaching and learning, I can establish a positive relationship with my students.*

Nevertheless, most of the teachers in these three schools admitted that they experienced considerable difficulties in playing the guidance role. There were always external constraints, like the teaching schedule, the content of the curriculum, the size of the class and the length of the lesson. These helped to pull them back from playing the guidance role as they intended, and pushed them to put more emphasis on the

instructor role instead. An example can be seen in teacher CG's account of the discrepancy between her real and expected roles in the classroom setting.

*Students expect a teacher who can help them learn a subject better. Also, they would like to have a teacher who is friendly and kind to them.... In reality, I don't think it is easy to do like this because of the constraints of the tight teaching schedule, shortage of teaching time, and pressure of the syllabus....*

In short, in the classroom with a fragmented orientation, like those in Schools A and B, the teachers tended to define the classroom more negatively. The importance of discipline was strongly emphasised. Teachers tended to feel a greater discrepancy between the ideal role which they had expected to play and the actual role that they currently played. In the classroom with an integrative orientation, like those in Schools C, D, and E, there was considerable room for guidance in the classroom, while discipline was also emphasised. The teachers tended to define the classroom more positively, and were more able to view students as individual human beings, instead of as a collective group.

#### *Students' definition of the situation*

In the students' perspective, it was necessary for teachers to play the disciplinarian role when they taught in the classroom (refer to Appendix 5, p.264 and Appendix 3, p.259). Paradoxically, they also expected teachers to perform their roles in more integrated ways as the promoters of positive teacher-student relationship (Students D2, C1, C2, and E1); as pastoral carers who were concerned for students' personal needs (Student D1); and as facilitators who were able to create a cheerful classroom atmosphere (Student E2). However, in their view, all this rarely happened in reality. Teachers were more likely to act only as disciplinarians. Because of this, when the students described their classroom experience, 'discipline' words, such as 'scold', 'punish', 'rules', 'look sternly', 'order', 'very strict', were more frequently used than the 'guidance' words, such as 'concern', 'care', and 'support'.

This discrepancy existed across the five schools, among which the students in Schools B and D tended to define teachers' and students' roles in more fragmented ways than the students in the other schools (see Appendix 5, p.264). In particular, when the two students B1 and B2 in School B talked about their role in the classroom, they spent more time depicting how they conformed their behaviour to teachers' instructions. Apparently, they were less aware that the students' role required them to act as learners. As they said, *'being students'*, they had to *'pay attention to what the teacher is saying'* and *'obey all teachers' instructions'*. Corresponding to their role, these two students defined teachers as those who *'are used to threatening us with sending us to the detention class'*. As B1 admitted, *'teachers can teach well. But they usually put the emphasis on punishment'*. These accounts showed that the classroom setting was defined by discipline, rather than guidance.

By contrast, in the other three Schools A, C and E, the students appeared more able to view the classroom in integrated ways. Most perceived teachers as pastoral carers (see Appendix 5, p.264). Among the three schools, comparatively, students E1 and E2 from School E tended to define their teachers' roles in the most integrated. For example, they mentioned that teachers would give them support and show concern for them. Although the teachers would discipline the class, they could interpret teachers' discipline practices in positive ways. For example, in E1's description of teachers' disciplinary activities, he admitted, *'basically, teachers just want to help us study well... I think that's the way teachers show me their concern and support'*.

So far, I have discussed the respondents' definitions of the classroom setting with respect to its orientations in the five schools. The findings are summarised and displayed in Table 4.4. As this table shows, among the five schools, comparatively, the classroom setting of Schools C and E appeared to be the more integrated whereas School B was the more fragmented. In the integrated schools, there was more ample room for guidance in the classroom. And the respondents were able to define teachers' and students' roles more positively. By contrast, in the fragmented schools,

guidance and discipline were split in the classroom. The teachers put more emphasis on discipline rather than guidance. Also, the respondents defined teachers' and students' roles negatively. It can be inferred that the room for guidance in the fragmented classroom was more limited than in the integrated classroom.

**Table 4.4 The orientations of guidance and discipline in the classroom setting of the five schools**

<b>Different orientations in the classroom setting</b>	<b>From the evidence of teachers' definition of the situation</b>	<b>From the evidence of students' definition of the situation</b>
<b>Schools with the tendency of a fragmented orientation</b>	Schools A and B	Schools B and D
<b>Schools with the tendency of an integrated orientation</b>	Schools C, D and E	School A, C and E

#### **4.4.1.2 In guidance and discipline settings**

##### ***The orthodox view***

Most of the respondents shared the orthodox view that the guidance team was specialised in the territory of guidance, whereas the discipline team concentrated on the territory of discipline (refer to Appendix 6, p.266 and Appendix 7, p.268). When they participated in both teams, most teachers defined their roles as administrators. This might partly reflect their sense of the process of guidance and discipline as an administrative procedure, in which they felt responsible for fulfilling the duties assigned by the school authority.

For example, when the respondents in Schools A, B, and D talked about guidance, they would mention administrative procedures like the implementation of the guidance programmes, and handling students referred by the discipline team. In their accounts, the process of handling misbehaving students was straightforwardly portrayed as a routine of referral. This was reflected in BG's description of her role in

the guidance team, she showed that she needed to ensure that referral was administrated effectively and efficiently. As she put it,

*In the Personal Counselling Section, I hope I can speed up the referral work and help students as quickly as I can. I want to make sure of the quality control of the counselling work given by the counselling teacher....*

Similarly, another teacher, AG's description of her role in the guidance team showed that when participating the team, most of her time and energy were spent on all the administrative work. This made her find it hard to help students as she intended. As she explained,

*From the students' point of view, they tend to think teachers should be very close to them. But they ask me quite often, "Miss Wong, why you are always so busy?" Now, the availability of time is the main factor constraining me from seeing my students. Apart from planning all the work in the guidance team, I have to prepare my teaching.... So I find it hard to see and chat with as many students as I really want to.*

Like the counselling teachers, most of the discipline teachers portrayed themselves as administrators (see Appendix 6, p.266 and Appendix 3, p.259), who were mainly responsible for executing the tasks approved by the team and fulfilling the official duties assigned to them. Correspondingly, the discipline process was depicted as a routine of administrative protocols, such as the inspection of school uniform, the enforcement of school rules, and the investigation of misbehaving cases, in which the target group of students whom they worked with was the non-compliant students.

For example, in teacher BD's account of her role in the discipline team, she depicted herself as an investigator. When playing this role, she had to apply 'the notions of fairness and justice' when investigating misbehaving cases. Reciprocally, she defined the students involved as the 'investigated' and handled them case by case. In the course of interrogation, she felt responsible for investigating cases, more than for reasoning with the students involved or helping them review an offence which they committed. As she put it,

*I hope that I can investigate all cases with justice and treat all students fairly. It is important for me to find out the whole story of a case too.... If there is enough time, I think it is better to teach students a bit how to act and what they did wrong in the case they are involved in. But this is too ideal.*

Another orthodox view was that discipline was considered as a method of socialisation. The majority of the teachers perceived that school was a miniature society. Schooling was a way through which students could be socialised to members of society, who were able to function well in a social group and behave in a socially acceptable way. Most believed that getting students to show conformity to the school rules was one of the ways to achieve this goal. The schools put a strong emphasis on the importance of school rules so that teachers could enforce school rules appropriately and students could behave appropriately in schooling. They made an attempt to make school rules as explicit as possible, and maintain their enforcement at a certain level of consistency. Correspondingly, most of the teachers defined themselves as rules enforcers, whilst students asserted the need for conforming their behaviour to school rules as conformists (refer to Appendix 3, p.259).

The insistence on school rules is exemplified in teacher AD's account of his role in maintaining the consistent application of school rules. As he said, '*Basically I will never change my standards and intention to implement school rules whenever and wherever I am...*'. For AD, to play the discipline role was to enforce school rules. He felt responsible for making clear to the students the values and rationale underlying school rules. As he put it further,

*Basically, I can play the roles I've just mentioned. But it depends very much on the students. Some are used to arguing with you about standards of school rules. If they have different understandings of school rules than we (teachers) do, it would be very hard to change their behaviour and accordingly keep it up to an acceptable level.*

In short, most respondents shared the orthodox view that guidance and discipline were usually implemented through administrative procedures. Most respondents

made sense of school guidance and discipline with respect to the arrangement of the guidance and discipline teams, and perceived that the guidance team specialised in guidance, whilst the discipline team specialised in discipline and socialising students to becoming members of society. Guidance and discipline tended to be separated in the administrative procedure, in which teachers from each team needed to play distinct roles according to their team. Concisely, the counselling teachers were responsible for providing students' with care and counselling, whereas the discipline teachers were responsible for managing students non-compliant behaviour, and maintaining a favourable environment for socialisation.

### ***Teachers' definition of the situation***

In Schools B, C and D, the teachers tended to talk about discipline in more fragmented ways (refer to Appendix 6, p.266 and Appendix 3, p.259). For example, whenever teacher CD played the discipline role, as shown in his discourse, he had to be very strict and take '*a role of giving punishment to students*'. Likewise, when teacher BD talked about the discipline role she actually played, she highlighted the point that the investigating work was an excessive burden and this drew her to base her work on efficiency, instead of individual students' needs. As she said,

*Due to time limits, what I can do is to find out the facts of a case. Normally I have no time to counsel them or review the case with them. If I find that any student does not want to co-operate with my investigating work, I will certainly give them "no face" and scold them at once. Also I will point out what they did was simply wrong.*

In contrast, comparatively, the teachers in Schools A and E had a more expanded view of discipline than in the other schools (refer to Appendix 6, p.266 and Appendix 3, p.259). For example, in teacher ED's description of the discipline team, he defined his role and students' role positively, and interpreted discipline on the base of guidance. He insisted that guidance and discipline should not be split in schooling, but should be viewed as a united helping process. At the practical level, when handling students' non-compliant behaviours, he was used to '*giving them (students)*

*some counselling and encouraging them to accept their own responsibility*'. His further reflections on his expanded view of his role were exposed as follows:

*I think that students might think I act like their father who always checks and gets involved in their daily life. Normally I will change my role to show them my concern and understanding if I find that they begin to rebel against me. In this case, they may think I act like their mother.*

To summarise, the teachers in the more fragmented schools, Schools B, C and D, tended to define their roles more negatively. School discipline aimed to pursue 'coherence', 'justices', 'efficiency' and 'control'. On the contrary, the teachers in the more integrated schools, Schools A and E, were able to perceive their roles more positively. They had a more expanded view of school discipline and perceived it as a helping process, through which students' holistic growth could be enhanced.

#### ***Students' definitions of the situation***

Regarding the orientation in the guidance and discipline settings, there was no obvious difference in the results from the five schools. In general, most of the students defined the discipline setting as having a fragmented orientation whereas the guidance setting was seen as in the integrated orientation (see Appendix 7, p.268 and Appendix 3, p.259). Nevertheless, if we examine the data in depth, it can be seen that students B1 and B2 from School B seemed to talk about discipline in more fragmented ways, whereas students E1 and E2 from School E seemed to talk about it in more positive ways than the students from other schools. Firstly, among the five schools, students B1 and B2 were the only ones who declared that they failed to identify any guidance activities in the school. Secondly, both shared the same view that the intention of discipline was to '*ensure that the school can preserve a good school image in the area*'. Therefore, its focus was seen as based on collective interests, instead of their personal welfare. Thirdly, both insisted that the school rules were enforced strictly. In the course of this enforcement, students' feelings would rarely be considered. This view is reflected in student B2's account of the discipline

teachers' role, showing how he interacted with the teachers when school uniform inspection was carried out. When he describing this, he said,

*They should show us more mercy! For example, once my hair was just a little bit longer than the acceptable standard. I think they should not punish me at once and force me to have a the hair-cut.*

Likewise, student B1 shared a similar experience by saying,

*They inspect us strictly. I was inspected by a teacher yesterday. The teacher accused me of not having done up the top button of my shirt. Just because of this, I was asked to write down my name and I was sent to the detention class. I think it was really wrong for the teacher to punish me for this reason.*

However, the students from School E were able to find some positive meanings in teachers' disciplinary acts (see Appendix 7, p.268 and Appendix 3, p.259). For example, although students E1 and E2 stated their discontent with the uniform rules, considering that the rules were not flexible enough to meet their needs, and that teachers tended to enforce them strictly, the students still insisted that the intentions of discipline teachers were kind to them, and that the discipline teachers sought for their best interests. When they talked about discipline in a group interview, they said,

*E1: As for discipline, I think most discipline teachers are horribly strict to us. But I understand they just want us to behave well and establish a good school image. So I like them to do it in this way.*

*E2: In spite of the fact that school rules are very strict and the teachers are horrible, after I have been scolded by them they usually spend a long time chatting with me in a calm mood and reviewing what I have done wrong.*

*E1: In the depth of their hearts, they are very kind to us. That's what I know.*

Like the students in School E, those in Schools A, C and D appeared to identify some positive elements in discipline. But this was not the case in the students from School B. For example, in students C1's and C2's description of the intention of school discipline, they interpreted it as a way to socialise them 'to act as civilised people'. In School A, student A2 interpreted school discipline positively. It was regarded as the

cornerstone upon which a favourable teaching and learning atmosphere could be built. As she remarked,

*They (School A) are very strict... I think it suits our school because a school is a place where we learn. It shouldn't be loose... It is good for our school to be very strict.*

In School D, talking about discipline, student D2 made a favourable comment on the work done by the discipline teachers, and regarded it as a main factor in a positive change in the school atmosphere. As he put it,

*They (the discipline teachers) have done a lot of work. I am very impressed to see teachers working so hard to maintain the schools' discipline even though students keep breaking school rules.... I know that the school has been continuously and noticeably changing in very positive ways for some years. In general, students are better behaved than a few years ago.*

So far, I have discussed how the respondents defined the situation in the guidance and discipline settings, and identified its relation with their own orientations. The findings are summarised and displayed in Table 4.5. The table shows that in School B, the guidance and discipline settings seemed more fragmented than in the other schools, whereas in School E, they tended to be more integrated.

I have examined how the respondents defined the situations in the three settings with respect to the two orientations of guidance and discipline: fragmented and integrated. No matter what the orientation of the school, the respondents shared the orthodox view that guidance and discipline was arranged as a routine based on administrative protocols, in which helping processes, such as the management of misbehaving students and provision of counselling, were perceived as essentially as a routines of referral.

The summary of teachers' and students' definition of the situation in the guidance and discipline settings, displayed in Tables 4.4 (p.81) and 4.5, showed that comparatively, School B tended to be fragmented, and School E integrated. In the schools with a

more fragmented orientation, the teachers and students tended to define discipline as a way of controlling students' behaviours, and enforcing their conformity to school rules. The participants mostly defined their roles within the discipline setting. Likewise, the students tended to interpret the discipline were distorted to the pursuit of collective or institutional interests, instead of their individual interests, although they were able to define the guidance setting. In contrast, in the schools with a more integrated orientation, the teachers and students were more able to define their roles positively. More importantly, they were able to identify some guidance elements in the process of discipline, and view both guidance and discipline as a united helping process.

**Table 4.5 The orientations of guidance and discipline  
in the guidance and discipline settings of the five schools**

<b>Different orientations in the guidance and discipline settings</b>	<b>From the evidence of teachers' definition of the situation</b>	<b>From the evidence of students' definition of the situation</b>
<b>Schools with the tendency of a fragmented orientation</b>	Schools B, C and D	There was no prominent difference between the five schools. But apparently School B is more fragmented whereas School E is more integrated.
<b>Schools with the tendency of an integrated orientation</b>	Schools A and E	

#### **4.4.2 Relationship between the guidance and discipline teams**

In the previous section, I have described that there were different orientations of guidance and discipline in the three settings across the five schools. On the base of this analysis, I shall move on to examine in depth how the teachers in the five schools talked about the working relationship between the guidance and discipline teams in their schools.

### **In School A**

In School A, the counselling and discipline teachers talked about the working relationship between their teams in contrasting ways. Apparently, the counselling teacher AG was not satisfied with the current working relationship. As she claimed, *'I don't think we have a very strong and clear working relationship. I think we are doing different jobs in the process of schooling'*. However, the discipline teacher AD gave an opposite view, by saying, *'I think both teams can support each other and we have a very close working relationship'*.

This discrepancy might be related to the different positions which the teams held in the referral procedure. With the use of the 'discipline goes ahead of guidance' approach, the discipline team was usually the first one involved in managing misbehaving students, and administering the punishment in accordance with the offence they committed. Afterwards, the students involved were referred to the guidance team. In this process, the discipline team appeared to take a more active position than the guidance team. This was reflected in how AD talked about handling misbehaving students. As he said,

*...the discipline and counselling teachers will discuss how to deal with the case. Then, the discipline teacher will punish the students involved in accordance with the procedure, whereas the counselling teacher will give them (the students) some counselling....*

Consistently with this, AG emphasised that the guidance team was initiated by the discipline team before they got involved in handling misbehaving students. As AG asserted,

*If some students do something very wrong and break the school rules, discipline teachers may invite us to discuss the case together. It is the way that we co-operate with each other. I think it's great!*

Despite the fact that the teams played different roles in the routine of referral, both AD and AG acknowledged that the guidance and discipline teams shared a positive working ethos. AG claimed firmly that *'there is no contradiction between the work of*

*guidance and discipline*'; also the ultimate target of discipline was to promote *'the holistic growth of students'*. Similarly, AD asserted that there was room for care in the discipline process. As he put it,

*We (both teams) want to transmit a message to our students that no matter what they have done wrong, teachers will always be ready to listen to what they want to say and give them some support.*

### **In School B**

Compared to school A, the working relationship between the guidance and discipline teams appeared to be one of isolation. BG's and BD's responses indicated that, as with School A, the *'discipline go ahead of counselling'* approach was adopted to manage misbehaving cases. The working relationship of the two teams was established within the procedure for *'making a referrals'*, in which as the teachers perceive, both the guidance and discipline teams worked under contrasting ethos. They simultaneously transmitted conflicting values to students as well. Concisely, the discipline team was in pursuit of justice, consistency, punishment and control, whereas the guidance team aimed to promote students' holistic growth. The counselling teacher, BG, perceived that the existing conflict in the working ethos between the two teams was a factor making the implementation of the guidance ethos impossible, and the separation of working relationship between two teams. As she put it,

*The roles of guidance and discipline in the school are in conflict with each other and they are totally isolated from each other. The two teams do not have any commonly shared target in their work at all. Now the situation is that when the students are referred by the discipline team, they have been punished and their self-esteem has suffered. No matter what the counselling teachers do later, we cannot heal their suffering because the students have been labelled as misbehaving students. However, due to limited resources, students are not likely to be helped before they break the school rules.*

Consistently, the discipline teacher BD endorsed the view that the two teams were isolated from each other. As she said,

*They are absolutely separated. Both the teams have their own work. I will never know what the counselling teachers are doing...*

This separate working relationship was shown in how BD described the weak managerial linkage between the two teams. As she revealed, contact between the heads of the two teams was rare because of the poor interpersonal relationship between them. Thus, it was unlikely that any formalised or institutionalised collaboration between the two teams could be established. As she maintained,

*... I will never know what the counselling teachers are doing, perhaps, I am too involved in my work and therefore have no time to find out what they are doing. Also I think it is related to the heads of these two teams who just can't work together somehow. Their interpersonal relationship is so bad. Thus I will never expect that the teams can co-operate well. For example, even with something very simple like referring students to some counselling teachers, I really don't know which teachers I can contact.*

### **In School C**

The teachers C1 and C2's accounts give no evidence that the guidance and discipline teams in School C shared any common working ethos, as the teachers in School A did. However, as with Schools A and B, the working relationship between the two teams was largely a matter of the referral procedure. As the counselling teacher CG disclosed, when they dealt with something that was a 'big deal' incident,

*Before punishing the students involved, the counselling teachers usually give them some counselling.... After the students meet the discipline teachers, the counselling teacher just follows up and counsels the students so as to take care of their psychological and emotional needs....*

The discipline teacher CD remarked that 'our co-operation is quite good'. However, teacher CG felt some discontent with this, because the working relationship was merely grounded upon an informal social relation. Hence, she was looking for a change, and wished to institutionalise this pattern of collaboration. As she stated,

*This year, I am trying to institutionalise the working relationship. This was because in the past this working relationship was totally based on the*

*personal relationship between one or two discipline and counselling teachers. They had a very close working relationship in helping students, just because they had a very good friendship. But I am quite discontented with this ....*

### **In School D**

As with the schools mentioned above, the working rapport between the guidance and discipline teams in School D was constructed within the referral procedure. But what made School D different from the other schools was that, as the discipline teacher DD explained, the working rapport was institutionalised. As she put it,

*When we handle complicated cases, teachers from both teams sit together..., and help the students involved. Also the teachers in the discipline and guidance teams have monthly meetings to discuss our work and the features of cases....*

The teachers DD's and DG's comments offer no conclusive evidence that the teams had any common working ethos as in School A, or any conflicting working ethos as in School B. However, DG's description showed that there was a clear delineation between the two teams. The discipline team was for 'punishment' whereas the guidance team for 'counselling'. As she explained,

*In the school, the discipline team needs a very clear image, to demonstrate that all students should obey the school rules. Thus teachers tend to put the emphasis on punishment. Meanwhile, the counselling teachers basically follow up the cases and give some counselling to students involved in the cases.*

### **In School E**

The teachers ED's and EG's discourses suggest that the guidance and discipline teams have a close relationship, than that which can be seen in the other schools. The teachers shared the common ethos that the process of discipline and guidance was a helping process, through which both students' holistic growth and teacher-student relationship could be promoted.

The close relationship between the two teams was reflected in ED's claim, '*I think there is no segregation of guidance and discipline*'. Consistently, this view was echoed by teacher EG, who moved further to explain that the close relationship was largely caused by the good interpersonal relationship between the heads of the two teams. As EG remarked,

*It's really good. The guidance and discipline teams have a very close working relationship. We co-operate very well. Maybe, I have been working with the present discipline master for a very long time, that's why.... In most cases, because of our good communication, the counselling and discipline teachers can understand each other and work out an agreement to help the students.*

Despite this, it is necessary to note that the close relationship was not formalised, and was established among a small number of teachers, certainly not the whole team. As ED maintained,

*... It is very common for the teachers in the two teams to work together or investigate students' cases... But it is shameful to admit that only a few teachers have similar thoughts to mine, with regard to making sure the guidance and discipline teams work together.*

So far, I have briefly portrayed the working relationship between the guidance and discipline teams in the five schools. It can be seen that in all five schools, referral was the key meeting point where the two teams could work together. Their working rapport was mainly developed through reactions to referrals. In most cases, the discipline teachers initially got involved in managing misbehaving students. Then the students were referred to the guidance team, and the counselling teachers would counsel the students afterwards. In a respondent word, this was a sort of 'discipline goes ahead of counselling' approach to managing students' non-compliant behaviour.

Nevertheless, it can be seen that the relationship between the guidance and discipline teams in the five schools was built up differently. Compared to the other schools, in School B the working relationship was more isolated because the counselling and

discipline teachers experienced a considerable conflict in practical collaboration with each other, and their working ethos was contrasting to each other.

In contrast to the other schools, in School E the relationship between the two teams was closer. The teams were able to collaborate with each other, and work within a positive ethos of concern to enhance students' welfare. What makes School E different from the others in another way is that the counselling and discipline teachers in this school were less likely to split their roles into guidance and discipline. Instead, they perceived their work not as a routine of following administrative protocols, but as a helping process, in the course of which they felt responsible for enhancing students' holistic growth and self-esteem.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

In the preliminary study, ten teachers and ten students from five secondary schools were involved. Adopting Stebbin's framework of the definition of the situation, and a research strategy based on interview, I have examined how the respondents defined the situation in which they participated in the three settings of the classroom, guidance and discipline, with respect to the different orientations for the relation between guidance and discipline in the five schools, that is, fragmented and integrated. Additionally, the working relationship between the guidance and discipline teams was illuminated.

This study showed that guidance and discipline were mostly split at the team level across the five schools. School guidance was delineated as the territory of the guidance team, and aimed to promote students' personal self and welfare. Most of the respondents tended to talk about this in an integrated way. School discipline, by contrast, was delineated as the territory of the discipline team, and was aimed at socializing individual students to take up their roles as members of the school organization and to conform to the organizational values. Additionally, this was described as a way of promoting the growth of students' social self and that of safeguarding collective interests of all school members.

Further, school discipline tended to be more strongly emphasised than guidance in the three settings. For example, in the classroom setting of the five schools, the teachers were more conscious of playing the discipline than the guidance role, whereas the students tended to mention teachers' discipline roles more frequently than their guidance roles in the interviews. Similarly, in the guidance and discipline settings, the '*discipline goes ahead of guidance*' approach was commonly adopted for managing students' misbehaviour.

Although the respondents usually discussed guidance and discipline in similar ways, it was noticeable that the orientations for the relation between guidance and discipline were different across the five schools. Some schools, like School E, tended to be more integrated whereas some, like School B, were more fragmented than the others. In the school with the more integrative orientation, the respondents tended less to delineate guidance and discipline as two isolated domains. Rather, they were able to define their roles positively (refer to 'the integrated orientation', in Appendix 3, p.259), to acknowledge some guidance and integrated elements in discipline, and to view the process of guidance and discipline as a united helping process. Hence, the most integrated school had comparatively larger room for guidance, even though these teachers simultaneously asserted that school discipline was important.

By contrast, in the school with the more fragmented orientation, the respondents tended to define their roles negatively (refer to 'the fragmented orientation', in Appendix 3, p.259), and to consider school discipline as a way of controlling students' behaviour and enforcing their conformity. Its focus was largely on actualizing collective, rather than on meeting individual interests. The procedure for guidance and discipline were largely described as the routine of administrative protocol, which divided guidance and discipline into two fragmented elements.

The preliminary study also indicated that there was a link between the different orientations and how the teachers described the working relationship between the

guidance and discipline teams. In the most integrated schools, like School E, teachers described this relationship as close; the two teams were more able to collaborate with each other than in the other schools. Further, the teachers in these schools perceived the provision of guidance and discipline as a helping process, through which students' welfare could be enhanced. In contrast, in the most fragmented schools, like School B, the relation between two teams were described as isolated; the teachers in these schools found that each had a contrasting rationale in helping students resolve their difficult, and even transmitted conflicting values to students.

While it is commonly ascertained that the relationship between school guidance and discipline in the schools with high band tend to be closer than in the schools with low band, the preliminary study shows rather persuasively that in the schools with low band, like Schools D and E, the relationship is apparently closer than in the schools with high band, like School A; more than that, even the schools, like Schools B and E, hold low position in the banding system and have the same religious background, they have a prominent distinction between their arrangement of school guidance and discipline. In relation to this, it is worthwhile to further narrow down the investigation into Schools B and E, with respect to my research interests in the distinction between the fragmented and integrated orientations for the relation between guidance and discipline, and to examine what factors make such a distinction exist between these two schools so as to find out a way for integrating school guidance and discipline into schooling.

## Chapter Five

### **The Ontological Paradigm of the Main Study**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Based on the preliminary study, the main study moves on to investigate in depth what elements make the relationship between guidance and discipline different in Schools B and E. The paradigm of the main study is grounded upon the ontology of interactionism (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1962, 1966, 1969a, 1969b; Goffman, 1971; Becker, 1971) and the social construction of reality (Berger and Lunckmann, 1973), and upon the epistemology of naturalistic inquiry (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a paradigm refers to a set of basic beliefs which helps individuals to make sense of the nature of the world, the relationship between individuals and the world, and the individuals' place in it. As they propose, a paradigm is constituted of ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. The ontological assumption is related to the questions: What is the form and nature of the world and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it? The epistemological assumption is dealt with the question: What is the nature of the known and the knower and, what can be known? The methodological assumption concerns the questions: How can the knower acquire knowledge about whatever he or she believes can be known? These three assumptions serve as the major focus around which in this chapter and the next, I will demonstrate the paradigm of the main study.

In what follows, I will first explain why the ontological paradigm of interactionism and the social construction of reality is adopted for the main study. I will then turn to

describe how its theoretical framework is developed from the ontological paradigm adopted.

## **5.2 Ontological Paradigm: From Interactionism to the Social Construction of Reality**

As with the preliminary study, the theoretical framework of the main study is based on the ontology of interactionism, because, as many writers have claimed, this ontology offers a perspective to understand the microscopic aspects of the social world. As the interactionists have stated, individuals live not only in a natural, but also in a social world, in which they are involved in a continual and dynamic process of human interaction. Through this process, individuals make sense of the self, others and society (Blumer, 1962, 1966, 1969a, 1969b; Mead, 1934; Cooley, 1964).

However, many sociologists have contended that interactionists are unable to give plausible and definite answers to the questions raised by social theorists, for example, whether there is a principle underlying the functioning of society, whether knowledge of the social world can be objectified as having the thing-like status, whether the social world can be displayed as having either a causal or a logical relation as those in the world of the natural sciences, and how individuals and institutions are related to each other. These criticisms imply that the interactionism is weak in explaining the relation between large-scale and small-scale social phenomena, such as subjective and objective worlds, agency and institutions, and individuals and society.

### **Towards the social construction of reality**

To explain this relation, another perspective, the social construction of reality, proposed by Berger and Luckmann (1973) and Holzner (1968), is adopted for the main study as its ontological paradigm. Berger and Luckmann (1973) argued that society is created by individuals as a human product. Reciprocally, individuals are shaped by society, but not fully determined by it, because they have the ability to

construct their own subjective meaning of reality. I will further explain this point by next summarising the ontology of the social construction of reality.

### **Conscious ability and human language**

When seeking to explore the relationship between individuals and the social world, it is necessary to answer the question why individuals are able to make sense of the social world and realise the existence of the self and society. Many sociologists have suggested that people can do so because they have an authentic conscious ability which enable them to identify the existence of themselves and others, and make sense of the relations between themselves and the external world (Cicourel, 1970; Sharp *et al.*, 1975).

In answering the same question, Berger and Luckmann (1973) suggest that individuals link themselves and others, and themselves and society, with the use of human language, with which individuals can signify meanings to the world, decode the meanings imputed by others, and finally construct the subjective and objective realities of the social world. Since the language that individuals use largely determines how they make sense of the social world, and how they typify, connect and integrate various parts of everyday life as a meaningful whole, Berger and Luckmann (1973) suggested that language is not simply a way of expressing oneself and transmitting messages, but also a way of determining how individuals categorise their knowledge of the social world, and how the social world gets constructed. As these authors (1973) stated, '*An understanding of language is thus essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life*' (p.52).

Although everyone is born with an authentic conscious ability and is able to use language for making sense of others' behaviour and the social world, Berger and Luckmann (1973) argued that each person's construct of reality is by no means the same as that of others. Rather, it is considered to be distinctive, peculiar and unique. They called this knowledge of the social world '*subjective reality*'. Nevertheless, individuals simultaneously possess some knowledge of the social world, which is

commonly shared by others, though they may impute their subjective meaning to social activities and make sense of the social world on the basis of their personal experience. Berger and Luckmann (1973) regarded this knowledge of the social world as '*objective reality*'.

### **Subjective and objective realities**

Up to this point, we have recalled that individuals are able to construct the subjective and objective realities of the social world, and hence make sense of themselves and their relation with others and the social world. In relation to this, I would raise a question: how can individuals' subjective reality become the objective reality which is commonly shared by all individuals? According to Berger and Luckmann (1973), an answer to this question necessarily involves a dialectical perspective on how society and individuals are related to each other. They claim that the knowledge of the social world has a dual facade of objective and subjective realities, which is largely constituted by people's common-sense knowledge of everyday life. What individuals know, feel and experience in everyday construct the fabric of their knowledge of the social world, which is then commonly shared by all people. Consequently, such knowledge serves as a foundation upon which individuals can make sense of others' behaviour and the situations in which they participate. Hence, they argue that part of the knowledge of the social world is constructed as subjective reality, whilst part of it is constructed as objective reality which is as real to others as it is to oneself.

In explaining how this objective reality arises, Berger and Luckmann (1973) postulate that human beings are the foundation of society, in which social order, described as a human product, is essential for maintaining the stability of human interaction, since the human biological constitution is mostly undirected. In their view, this social order is related to the process of habitualization, in which the members of society tend to make daily practices become a routine by repeating their actions to save time and effort, and also to reduce tension. When two or more members reciprocally typify these habitual actions, such typification is likely to be formalised, and become an

institution. This experience and practice is then passed on from generation to generation. Finally the objectivity of the social world is consolidated, and then commonly shared by the members of society as objective reality.

At this stage, whenever externalising the self into the social world, the members of a society are able to internalise specific behavioural guidelines learnt from others in particular social settings as the objective reality, and to generalise these guidelines as social norms in wider social contexts. In this scenario, individuals are linked to the social world, and their construction of reality is considered by them to be part of the objective reality which is commonly recognised by all the members of society.

### **Multiple realities**

Berger and Luckmann (1973) also suggested that both the subjective and objective realities are constructed within multiple layers, because the knowledge of the social world is constructed differently in terms of times, places, actors, and the means of communication and interaction. Holzer (1968) endorsed the same view, that individuals' experience and perception of the social world are embedded in various contexts. Two of these are their mappings of time and space. As he argued, individuals' construction of the present reality can never be separated from how they make sense of their past or future. Likewise, the symbolic signs which individuals use in a specific setting may mean different things to different persons in another setting. Therefore, knowledge of the social world can only be understood within the specific context, where individuals have constructed their knowledge of the reality.

In sum, in the perspective of the social construction of reality, agency and institutions, and subjective and objective worlds are relationally and dialectally inter-linked with each other. Specifically, Berger and Luckmann (1973) suggested that at one level, the reality of the social world is constructed by individuals, so it is characterised by subjectivity. At another level, the subjective reality can be transformed into objective reality through the processes of habituation, externalisation, objectivation, socialisation, and internalisation. Holzer (1968), similar to Berger and Luckmann,

drew our attention to the social phenomenon that the construct of reality varies with the contexts, where knowledge of the social world is constructed and constituted as multiple layers.

### **5.3 Two Versions of Reality**

So far, I have summarised the social construction of reality suggested by Berger and Luckmann (1973) and Holzner (1968). In this section, I will describe two other of social reality: conversational and textual.

#### **Conversational reality**

Shotter (1993) and Pearce and Cronen (1980) suggest that knowledge of the social world is constructed through 'talk', or daily conversation. Shotter (1993) suggests a rhetorical-responsive version of social constructionism. In his view, individuals construct their identities and the reality of the social world through daily conversation, for example about agreement, criticism, sympathy and challenge. Further, he argues, conversing with others is not only the way by which individuals exchange their perceptions and feelings of themselves, but also by which they construct a commonly shared reality.

Pearce (1989) is interested in how the meaning of reality is constructed in human conversation. He suggests that social reality is constituted by the complex organisation of meanings, which is constructed in the process of human communication, and also that there are various layers of meaning embedded in a unit of human conversation. Specifically, meanings are constructed at two hierarchical levels of beliefs: the highest and the lowest, and at five levels of meanings: speech act, episodes, relationship, life-scripting, and family myth (Pearce and Cronen 1980; Cronen, Johnson, and Lannamann 1982). Each level represents a context within which one can construct the meanings of reality. The meanings constructed at various levels are simultaneously the context for one level and within the context of another. Different levels and contexts are interrelated and interconnected as a whole.

According to Pearce and Cronen (1980), the complexity of reality can only be revealed by disclosing these multiple levels of meanings embedded within a unit of human communication.

In relation to the conversational reality proposed by Shotter (1993) and Pearce (1989), the questions I would raise are whether the rhetorical-responsive nature of language is the only aspect of language; whether there are any other aspects of human interaction, through which social reality is constructed, for example non-verbal communication, and the arrangements of a social setting, and whether everyone has equal rhetorical force in their speech? Also, if reality construction means a flow of communicative acts between two or more participants, how can it be captured in a research context?

### **Textual reality**

Apart from conversational reality, Atkinson (1990) suggests that there is a reality constructed between researchers, or writers, and readers. He considers how researchers textually construct an 'authentic and factual' account for their readers, so as to convince them that the knowledge presented is part of reality. He argues that academic texts do not represent 'the reality', but construct it by using certain rhetorical or persuasive devices. These devices include claiming authority, such as researchers' observation and witness; setting a scene, for example, a detailed description of a setting; using voices in their report as pieces of evidence, for instance, dialogues between researchers and subjects; using certain textual arrangements and features, for example, title, choices of tense, and metaphors (Atkinson, 1990). With the use of all these devices, Atkinson (1990) argues, researchers seem to hold a privileged position, textually constructing knowledge of the social world from their own standpoint in an academic circle. At this stage, Atkinson does not intend to discard academic writings, but to endorse an epistemological concern that researchers need to be reflexive when an empirical investigation is conducted, because the knowledge which they claim to establish is normally treated as 'the facts' or 'truth'. As he puts it,

*The notion of reflexivity recognises that texts do not simply and transparently report an independent order of reality. Rather, the texts themselves are implicated in the work of reality construction. This principle applies not only to the spoken and written texts that are produced and interpreted by the social actors, but to the texts of social analysis as well (Atkinson, 1990, p.7).*

Hitherto, I have summarised the social construction of reality, suggested by Berger and Luckmann (1973) and Holzner (1968). Then I have briefly described two further versions of social realities: conversational and textual. Here, I have no intention of making any distinctions between the reality of the social world, the reality of daily life, and the reality of the academic world. Rather, I intend to make the point that the reality varies with contexts where the reality is constructed. Therefore, before an empirical investigation is carried out, it is important for researchers to specify whose reality is being put into question, and in which specific contexts and social settings the reality of the social world is to be examined.

## **5.4 Ontological Implications For the Theoretical Framework of the Main Study**

In this section, I will clarify three empirical implications of interactionism and the social construction of reality for the theoretical framework of the main study. These are the identification of subjective and objective realities, the conceptualisation of three spheres of schooling, and the conceptualisation of five levels of schooling. I will then illustrate how this theoretical framework can be used for examining school participants' construction of school realities, with respect to the questions initiating this research.

### **Subjective and objective realities of schooling**

The first implication is the conceptualisation of two forms of school realities: subjective and objective. As discussed earlier, the social world has come about as an objective phenomenon which appears to have an independent being of its own. At the same time, individuals can experience it subjectively. Therefore, a particular concern of the main study is to find out how school participants construct the objective and

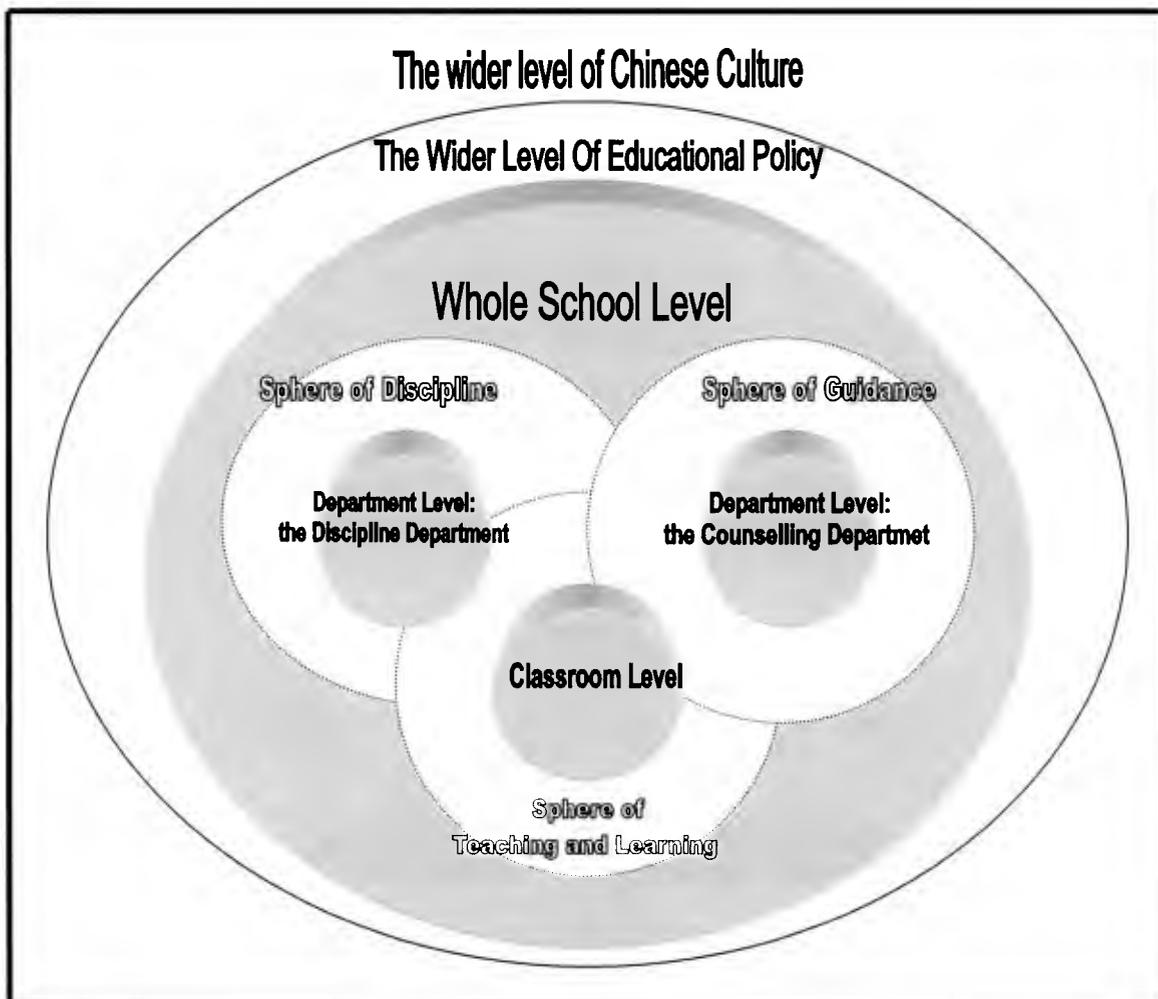
subjective realities within a school organisation. To investigate the objective reality, I will concentrate on some institutional components which are externally and objectively structured in a school, such as school structure, history, pattern of communication, and the structural arrangement of school teams. To identify the subjective reality, as with the preliminary study, I will adopt Stebbins' framework of the definition of the situation (1967, 1969, 1975) in order to examine how teachers and students define the situation in which they participate, and their perceptions of school ethos, climate, and values.

### **Three spheres of schooling**

The second implication is the conceptualisation of three spheres of schooling. In the light of the acknowledgement that individuals can never be separated from the social world in which they participate, and vice versa, I conceptualise various spheres of schooling, each of which consists of a number of settings, where school participants interact with each other and construct the multiple reality of schooling. In each sphere, a specific kind of school activity is performed. It is important to note that all the spheres are not separate or independent from each other. Rather, they dialectically overlap and dynamically interrelates to each other as shown in Figure 5.1 (p.106). Additionally, some spheres might be conceptually closer to each other whereas some might be rather distant from others. Consequently, the complex of spheres and their interrelationships constitutes a particular whole-school environment. In this study, I have particularly identified three spheres of 'teaching and learning', 'guidance' and 'discipline', with respect to the relationship between guidance and discipline.

The sphere of 'teaching and learning' refers to contexts in which the activities of teaching and learning are carried out, such as classroom, assembly, field works, school seminars, or the daily teacher-student conversations. Among these contexts, the classroom is supposed to be the most important setting where teaching and learning are carried out.

**Figure 5.1 Conceptualisation of the five levels of schooling**



The sphere of ‘guidance’ refers to contexts in which guidance activities are practised. The preliminary study has shown that most pastoral, or guidance, services are provided by the guidance team, and carried out through guidance programmes and personal counselling. These activities are carried out in many contexts, such as classrooms, assembly halls, and counselling rooms.

The sphere of ‘discipline’ refers to the contexts in which disciplinary activities are carried out. As the preliminary study showed, these activities include the inspection

of school uniform, handling of the late comers, school detentions, case investigations, and the enforcement of school rules.

### **Five levels of schooling**

The third implication is the conceptualisation of five levels of schooling. In examining school realities, I, as a researcher, intend to specify whose reality, and which context I intend to examine. To do this, I conceptualise five levels of schooling: classroom, department, whole school, policy, and culture, at each of which school realities are constructed, as shown in Figure 5.1 (p.106). It is important to note that the connection of the five levels is not simply hierarchical, as the word 'level' might suggest. Rather, each level should be conceptualised to have non-hierarchical relations and as consisting of various spheres of schooling and a number of settings where school participants construct the multiple realities of schooling. This conceptualisation is made in view of the fact that individuals' construct of the reality of the classroom does not necessary relate simultaneously to their construction of the reality of the department; and their participation in the classroom does not imply that they participate in the department. Based on this theoretical framework, the main study aims to find out how school participants interact with each other and construct school realities at these five levels, especially those of the classroom, the department and the whole school. The levels will be elaborated below.

#### *At the classroom level*

The classroom is the core of school activities, and potentially a context for all the spheres of schooling. Hence, there is a need for examining the classroom, and specifically, how the three spheres of teaching and learning, guidance and discipline overlap therein, and how school practitioners construct both their objective and subjective realities in the classroom.

Specifically, I investigate: 1) how teachers and students describe their experiences of school guidance and discipline and, in relation to this, how they define the situations in which they participate; 2) how guidance and discipline are practised in the process

of teaching and learning, and how the organisational framework of the school impacts on teachers' and students' behaviour, and 3) what values underlay these practices; and to what extent these values are shared by teachers and students.

*At the department level*

This level refers to the various school teams, departments, or committees which are structurally arranged within the school system (Blau & Scott, 1963; Argyle, 1969; Silverman, 1970). Any changes in one of them may stimulate some feedback from others. The main study largely focuses on the level of the guidance and discipline departments.

According to the preliminary study and other Hong Kong studies summarised in Chapter Three, the guidance department in most Hong Kong secondary schools is responsible for providing counselling services for students, and organising and implementing guidance programmes for them. The discipline department is responsible for enforcing school rules, administering punishments to students who break any school rules, and investigating case of students' misbehaviour. With this understanding, my particular interest is to look at the relationship between the guidance and discipline departments, and the organisational features of their culture, structure, pattern of communication, and management.

Specifically, I intend to find out how school participants interact with each other and define the situations in which they participate. Concisely, the focus of the main study is on: 1) how guidance and discipline are practised and organised; 2) how they function within the school system; 3) how the two teams collaborate with each other, and in which ways this form of working relationship is maintained in the school system; and 4) how teachers and students describe the relationship between the guidance and discipline teams, and the relationship of these two departments with other school departments.

*At the whole school level*

This level focuses on examining a school itself as an organisation, and on school practitioners' construction of the objective and subjective realities of schooling. The construction of the objective reality can be understood by examining the features of school organisation, such as structure, communicative networks, and history. The construction of the subjective reality can be understood by finding out how school practitioners perceive school ethos, culture and values.

To examine a school as an organisation, I adopted for the main study the theoretical frameworks used in two studies, by Bryk *et al.* (1993), and Pascale and Athos (1985), for the main study. In Bryk *et al.*'s study (1993) of Roman Catholic schools, a school organisation is examined within four dimensions: definition of boundaries, shared organisational beliefs, the set of shared activities, and the formal organisation of the community. Similarly, Pascale and Athos (1985) examined an organisation with respect to seven dimensions: strategy, structure, systems, skill, shared values, staff, and style. Bryk *et al.*'s study (1993) largely focuses on organisational features, such as structure, systems, strategy, and shared values, whereas the study of Pascale and Athos (1985) concentrates mainly on the pattern of collaboration and the inter-relationship between organisational elements. In the light of these two studies, the main study aims to examine school organisation with respect to the three dimensions of school history, ethos, and structure. They will be illustrated below.

The dimension of school history considers a school's background, size, policies, and physical setting. The dimension of school ethos aim to explore the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by school practitioners, such as beliefs about the capabilities of students, and about the behaviour of students and teachers. The dimension of school structure focuses on the formal organisation and the structural arrangement of school departments or sections. By adopting these three dimensions, I intend to examine how the school as an organisation impacts on the behaviour of school participants, and how it offers a wider context for guidance and discipline.

*The wider level of educational policy*

This level refers to the educational policies formulated by the authorities in Hong Kong education. There are three statutory bodies in Hong Kong, namely the Education Department, the Education and Manpower Bureau, and the Education Commission, as I have noted in Chapter One. They are the most powerful and influential departments affecting schools' internal policies and operation. Recently many new educational policies, for example the School Management Initiative Scheme (SMI), the Whole School Approach, and Quality Education, have been introduced into Hong Kong secondary schools. These educational policies may bring some new elements into the school, and affect the existing patterns of interaction between school participants and the relationship between guidance and discipline.

Although this level is not one of the foci of this study, interesting areas which might be worth investigation are: 1) what rationales and values underpin the policies on guidance and discipline; 2) under which circumstance these policies have been formulated and how they evolve afterwards; 3) how school participants interpret and make sense of these policies; 4) how and to what extent the school implements the educational policies on guidance and discipline in schooling; and 5) what factors explain to any discrepancy.

*The wider level of Chinese culture*

This level refers to the cultural beliefs of Confucianism, the details of which have been referred in Chapter Two. In sociologists' perspective, culture is a vital element linking individuals and society through the process of socialisation and internalisation. As a result of this process, the members of a society can identify its coherent and unified features (Rizter, 1992). In the social psychologists' perspective, Chinese culture is one of the vital variables determining individuals' social behaviours in Hong Kong society, as I have discussed in Chapter Two. In these two perspectives, it can be seen that individuals' behaviour can hardly be understood in isolation from the culture which they belong to. In the light of this, I will try to find

out how far the Chinese culture is associated with teachers' and the school's practices of guidance and discipline.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have built up a theoretical framework for the main study on the basis of the two ontologies of the interactionism and the social construction of reality, which have been related to the questions initiating this research. Adopting this ontological perspective, I accept that the knowledge of school realities is not something 'out there', but is constantly constructed, reproduced and maintained in everyday school life; and also I view the school as a whole, in which the subjective and objective realities of schooling are dialectally linked to each other. I have also conceptualised the school as an organisation where school participants interact with each other within various spheres of schooling. Applying the identification of three spheres of 'teaching and learning', 'guidance' and 'discipline', and the five levels of classroom, department, whole school, educational policy and Chinese culture, I intend to examine the school as an organisation, and how school participants in Schools B and E construct school realities in the context of school guidance and discipline.

## **Chapter Six**

### **The Methodological Paradigm of the Main Study**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The main study is qualitative, naturalistic, ethnographic and descriptive in nature, and grounded upon the epistemology of ethnography. In this chapter, I will explain why the naturalistic or qualitative paradigm was adopted for the main study by comparing and contrasting the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. I will then describe the multiple research strategies employed, including case study, participant observation, interview, focus group interview and analysis of school documents. Finally, I will report the process of data collection in the two case-study schools, and display the analytic procedure of data analysis adopted for the main study.

#### **6.2 Epistemological Paradigm**

Epistemology aims to deal with fundamental questions about knowledge: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower and what is known? What can be known? What are the criteria for judging something to be knowledge? To answer these questions, it is inevitable to refer to the discussion about qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Due to the strong tradition of quantification in science, a widespread conviction is that quantitative data are ultimately valid, or of high quality (Sechrest, 1992). However, many social scientists have doubted the assumption underlying the quantitative paradigm, and have reconsidered the utility of qualitative data. They argue that in contrast to such data, qualitative data in fact provide us with rich insight into human behaviour and the social world by making sense of the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities. In what follows, I

will explain the distinction between the qualitative and quantitative approaches to answering the question of knowledge, and why the qualitative paradigm is adopted for the main study.

A very common approach to answering the question of knowledge uses the quantitative (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Silverman, 1985), scientific (Filstead, 1970), normative (Cohen and Manion, 1980), or '*positivist*' paradigm (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). According to the positivist, knowledge concerns 'empirical truth' or 'facts'. This is something 'out there' for discovery in an objective reality. Human behaviour is considered to be rule-governed, and can only be investigated by the methods used in natural science. In the process of finding out the truth or facts, researchers are merely responsible for ensuring the neutrality and certainty of knowledge. What is known has nothing to do with them, and the subject-object dualism stands as indisputable (LeCompte *et al.*, 1993; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Another approach is the qualitative (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Filstead, 1970), or '*naturalistic*' paradigm (Cohen and Manion, 1980; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Kamil, Langer and Shanahan, 1985). Researchers working within this paradigm, such as ethnographers, have questioned the superiority and absoluteness of 'scientific' knowledge in the social sciences. In the naturalists' view, the knowledge of facts is not something 'out there', but the ongoing social accomplishment of participants' practices, and also a joint venture between the researcher, or the knower, and the researched, or the known (LeCompte *et al.*, 1993; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Unlike positivists, the knowledge that naturalists, for example ethnographers, intend to develop is not a causal analysis of social problems, but mostly dialectical and relational. Their concern is with how these problems come to be known in our everyday lives; in other words, how people create and maintain their knowledge of social reality via their common-sense knowledge, everyday conversation, and

interaction (Garfinkel, 1967; Berger and Luckmann; 1973, Bourdieu, 1990). Hence, the naturalists claim that the reality of the social world can only be realized through studying the everyday lives of the researched (Wirth, 1949), and by gaining insights through empathy and concern for them (Bruyn, 1966; Cohen and Manion, 1980).

A further difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches is that the aim of the quantitative paradigm is to produce results which can be generalized, but this is not the case in the qualitative paradigm. To achieve the claim of generalization, the positivists need to decide at the beginning of the research hypotheses and variables for investigation, grounded upon which data are collected. Regarding the claim of generalisation, many naturalists have argued that this claim should not become a rule for all educational research, otherwise researchers may be driven away from understanding the features, subjectivity, ubiquity and complexities of the human world (Schofield, 1990; Stake, 1978, 1998; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Instead of seeking any generalization, the naturalists intend to provide readers with a dense description of the contexts in which their studies are conducted, so as to present similarities and differences between these contexts, and to ease readers' task of generalizing the findings of their research. Finally, readers have to decide how far the findings from one study can be transferred to other situations, and to compare these findings to those of other studies (Schofield, 1990; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Stake, 1978; LeCompte *et al.*, 1993).

Having considered the differences between the qualitative and quantitative approaches to answering the question of knowledge, I, as a researcher, decided to select a qualitative, or naturalistic, paradigm as the methodology of the main study. Specifically, an ethnographic paradigm (Mehan and Wood, 1975; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Cazden, 1988) is adopted, because, as many ethnographic studies have suggested (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1974; Ball, 1981), this approach can help me, as an ethnographer and naturalist, to immerse myself in natural settings studied as part of the social world, rather than in any experimental circumstances prescribed by

a set of assumptions and hypotheses (Geertz, 1973; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Woods, 1986, 1990a, 1990b), so that I am able to have a deep understanding of the cultures of these settings, and of the dialectical relationships between social phenomena within them, and to obtain inside knowledge of social life within defined contexts and among the participants. The details of the ethnography will be discussed later.

## **6.3 Research Methods**

The main study consists of case studies of Schools B and E, which were chosen from the five sample schools involved in the preliminary study. Using an ethnographic and a naturalistic perspective, I employed multiple methodological strategies, which included case study, participant observation, interviews, focus group interviews, and the analysis of school documents, to collect qualitative data. In the process of data analysis, the same phenomena were constantly triangulated with each other to reduce the possibility that I, as a researcher, might misinterpret the reality that I preconceived, and to verify the reliability of the data collected. In what follows, I will illustrate the features of these strategies and some researchers' concerns with their application at the empirical level.

### **6.3.1 Case study**

Case study is a broad term embracing a variety of research methods for the investigation of a specific social instance. This strategy concentrates on the exploration of social processes and human interaction within an institution, and also gives close attention to individuals' definitions of the situations in which they participate. As Robson (1993) suggests, case study is suitable for the empirical investigation of a particular case within its real life context, with the use of multiple sources of evidence.

Regarding the strengths of case study, Warren (1967) highlighted that using case study, researchers are enabled to view a social situation as a whole, to link the actions

of people within the institutions under study and to interpret the meanings of those actions. To achieve this, researchers may use a number of research strategies, such as participant observation and interviews, for investigating a case. Similarly, many writers claim that the strength of the case study method is in exploring the meanings underlying a specific unit of social action (Becker, 1953; Lacey, 1974; Ball, 1981; Burgess, 1983), and in increasing our understanding of social reality (Cohen and Manion, 1980).

Many writers are concerned with how research findings are affected by the selection of cases, and have claimed that how a case is selected determines how far researchers can understand the critical phenomena that they intend to look at (Patton, 1990; Yin, 1989; Stake, 1998). Hence, it is important for researchers to assess carefully under what criteria a case is selected, since the choice will determine what phenomena researchers may observe and what results they may eventually propose (Woods, 1986; Hammersley, 1992).

In relation to the concern with the selection of cases, it is necessary for me to explain why Schools B and E were chosen as the cases for the main study. These two schools were selected on the basis of the preliminary study, reported in Chapter Four, because they were, to a great extent, representative of the issue which I was looking at, that is, the relationship between school guidance and discipline, and how these can be integrated into schooling for the promotion of students' welfare. According to the preliminary study, when compared to other sample schools School B was the most fragmented, and School E the most integrated. It is believed that examining the elements which make such a distinction between these two schools will provide us with an insight into the integration of school guidance and discipline into schooling.

In addition to this, the cases of Schools B and E are on the whole representative of the other sample schools involved in the preliminary study. This was reflected in the orthodox views of guidance and discipline that the respondents of the five sample schools commonly held, for example the prioritization of discipline over guidance,

the insistence on discipline in classroom teaching, the specialization of school guidance and discipline, and the function of discipline described as a way of socialization. This finding, in fact, consistently agrees with other Hong Kong studies on school guidance (Hui, 1998a, 1998b; Lee, 1995), discipline (Leung, 1991; Kwok, 1997; Chan, 1990), and the relationship between school guidance and discipline (Tsang, 1986; Wong, 1997; Chung, 1998). To a large extent, the arrangement and practices of school guidance and discipline in Schools B and E are not only representative of the sample schools, but also of most Hong Kong secondary schools.

Although the selection of these two cases might not validly represent the whole population of Hong Kong secondary schools and achieve the positivists' claim of generalization, the findings of case studies are also, as many writers have suggested, valuable in refining theory, in suggesting complexities for further research, and in helping researchers to delineate the limits of generalizability (Stake, 1998; Patton, 1990; Yin, 1989).

### **6.3.2 Participant observation**

Participant observation is commonly used in ethnographic and naturalistic studies. The strength of this strategy has been highlighted by many writers. Denzin (1978) and Bryman (1988), for example, claimed that participating in a natural setting as a complete observer, or a complete participant, researchers are enabled to immerse themselves in participants' symbolic world and to find out how participants involved make sense of situations in which they participate.

To avoid the possibility that researchers, as participant observers, fail to observe and record some potentially important incidents, many writers have suggested that researchers should think about the natural setting studied in systemic ways so that they can understand the group of people with whom they interact and the setting which they are studying. In relation to this suggestion, Bryman (1988) recommended researchers to carry out participant observation in the following ways:

1. *to see through the eyes of the people being studied;*
2. *to describe what is going on in a particular context and provide clues to show the various layers of reality;*
3. *to contextualize all messages and events in the wider social and historical context;*
4. *to view social life as a process of interlocking series of events;*
5. *to keep a flexible, open and unstructured research design; and*
6. *to avoid early use of theories and concepts ( pp.61-66).*

Other writers are concerned with the difficulties of carrying out participant observation. For example, Gold (1958) highlighted the possible conflict between participating in a natural setting and keeping it undisturbed. In his view, it is unavoidable that researchers will disturb the setting to a certain extent when participating therein. To keep the disturbance to a minimum, Gold claimed, the researchers should justify their roles and act as neutral observers, rather than as complete participants, so as to ensure that social events can happen with the minimum of disturbance by their presence.

Similarly, Woods (1986) pinpointed another difficulty: researchers, as observant participants, might over-participate in the field and get over-familiar with it. In this circumstance, they might become over-emotionally attached to participants' values, and romanticize their activities and beliefs. To avoid these, Woods suggested, researchers should play their role as a '*fly on the wall*', observing as much as possible by positioning themselves on the margin of social events and keeping their involvement in the setting of the events to a minimum. To do so, it is desirable for researchers to keep the setting as natural as possible, and avoid disturbing it and making people act abnormally.

### **6.3.3 Unstructured interview**

The unstructured or open-ended interview was chosen, instead of the structured interview, because firstly, as Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggests, without any pre-set questions for interviews, the interviewer has a greater flexibility to adjust his interview style in order to fit every occasion and different interviewees; secondly,

there is ample space where the interviewer can encourage interviewees to answer questions, raise important issues, and get involved in interacting with the interviewer (Denzin, 1998); and thirdly, as Spradley (1979) and Silverman (1985) claim, this strategy gives the interviewer an insight into the interviewees' experiences.

Some writers have drawn researchers' attention to the fact that in an interactionist's perspective, an interview is a dynamic process of interviewer-interviewee interaction; the behaviour of an interviewer may change the interviewees' responses in the course of an interview. Reciprocally, the behaviour of interviewees may determine how the interviewer acts towards them. Regarding the dynamic process of interview, two concerns have been raised. First, Denzin (1978) raised the issue of power imbalance. In their view, interviewers seem to assume the right to control the process and to exercise power over interviewees. Therefore, the interviewees might feel uneasy about opening themselves up in an interview. To reduce the impact of this power imbalance, they propose that unstructured interview should be conducted like an everyday conversation so that interviewees may feel easier about disclosing themselves.

Another concern is about the interpretation of meanings throughout the ongoing process of an interview. Block (1995), for example, identifies factors which may hinder an interviewer from getting the authentic meanings of the language used by an interviewee. These factors include whether interviewers are enabled to interpret correctly the responses of interviewees, and the extent to which interviewees are able to deliver their thoughts to interviewers as they wish. In relation to Block's concern, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) stated that interviewers should assist interviewees in defining what the language which they use really means to them in terms of both the linguistic and cultural dimensions, so as to confirm the validity and reliability of their interpretative work. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) holds the same view that in the ongoing interpretative process of an interview, the interviewer should try to enter the world of interviewees, and to understand how interviewees define the role of interviewers and how they perceive the situation in which they are participating. In

doing so, interviewers can capture the authentic meanings that interviewees want to send to them. Also, they can ensure that interviewees can understand the meaning intended by the interviewer.

#### **6.3.4 Focus group interview**

The focus group interview is another strategy which was used for collecting students' views of guidance and discipline. According to Krueger (1994), the principle of this strategy lies in the dynamic interaction among group members, which cannot occur in a face-to-face interview. Through the interaction between group members, researchers can examine the extent to which group members share their perceptions and how they influence each other by responding to ideas and comments (Asbury 1995; Krueger 1994). Further, researchers are enabled to look at how group members shift their opinions and the possible factors causing such shifts (Krueger 1994; Albrecht 1993), and to get some perspectives that might not be obtained through face-to-face interviews.

In relation to the question about how the quality of the data collected by focus group interview can be ensured, Krueger (1994) suggests that firstly, researchers have to ensure that group members' identities are similar so that they feel free to express their views. Secondly, researchers should keep their interruptions to a minimum when participating in the group, and bringing all participants into a discussion.

#### **6.3.5 Analysis of school documents**

Examining school documents is a strategy through which researchers can understand school ethos, culture, value, and structural arrangements (Lacey, 1974; Burgess, 1983; Davies, 1984; Woods, 1986). Before observing two case study schools, I intended to collect school documents, such as teachers' and students' handbooks and the minutes of meetings. Examining the use of words, the style of presentation, and the format and the formulation of these texts can provide us with a rich source of qualitative data for increasing our understanding of the social setting studied. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) put it,

*The presence and significance of documentary products provides the ethnographer with a rich vein of analytic topics, as well as a valuable source of information. Such topics include: How are documents written? How are they read? Who writes them? Who reads them? For what purpose? On what occasions? With what outcomes? What is recorded? What is omitted? What is taken for granted? What does the writer seem to take for granted about the reader(s)? What do readers need to know in order to make sense of them? (pp.142-143)*

Regarding the analysis of textual data, Dowling (1999) suggests that researchers should make sense of them by referring to relevant main themes which can be identified in each set of data. Also a particular attempt should be made to keep the coherence between the interpretation of the text, the description of its referent activity, and the analysis and presentation of the text. I summarize the methodological principles for textual analysis proposed by Dowling (1999) as follows:

1. *To bound the text as an object rather than as a field for data collection;*
2. *to declare the referent activity;*
3. *to examine how it operates as an instance of its referent. In particular, how does it construct its writer's and reader's voices?*
4. *To examine their differences, similarities and associations;*
5. *to produce an exhaustive reading of the text; and*
6. *to ensure the coherence between the description of the object text and the theorizing of the referent activity (p.4).*

So far, I have briefly explained the epistemology of ethnography and naturalism, which was adopted for the main study, and then described the methodological strategies of case studies, participant observation, interviews, focus group interviews, and the analysis of school documents. In particular, I have stated general concerns about the use of these strategies at the empirical level. In what follows, I will explain how they were used for data collection at the empirical level in the two schools.

## **6.4 The Process of the fieldwork**

In this section, I will describe how the field work was carried out in Schools B and E, under the following four subheadings: 1) getting the permission to work in the two

schools, 2) the process of data collection, 3) definition of my roles, and 4) ethical considerations. Finally, the description will shift to the analytic procedure of data analysis adopted for the main study.

### **Getting permission to work in the two schools**

In the main study, Schools B and E were chosen as case studies. Before getting the schools' permission to work in these schools, I first assessed carefully what the most suitable period for the data collection was, and finally decided to begin it in the first academic term, between 27<sup>th</sup> August 1999 and 12<sup>th</sup> December 1999. This decision was made because during this period, especially from the week before the beginning of the academic term, which started on 1<sup>st</sup> of September, to the end of October, many functions would be held in schools, for example seminars, school committee meetings, staff meetings and workshops. Their main aim of these was to clarify the details of the annual working schedules to teachers. I supposed that participating in these school functions could help me to immerse myself in the two schools, and to acquire a better understanding of school policies, practices and culture.

Then in April 1999 I applied for permission to collect the data in the two schools. To begin with, I contacted the principal of School B through E-mail, in which three points were made. These were my research focuses, the period when I would work in school, and the research activities which I intended to carry out in the school. Finally I got her permission a week after I made the request.

Regarding School E, when conducting the preliminary study in this school, in December 1998, I asked the principal informally whether I could work in the school again if necessary. At the time, he gave me initial and oral consent. Therefore, when in April 1999 I tried to get the permission to collect data in the school, I first phoned my friend, Mr York, requesting him to ask for the principal's initial permission on my behalf. An encouraging reply was received by telephone at the beginning of May, 1999.

After getting permission from the principals of the two schools, I sent formal letters to them both in the middle of May, 1999. I expressed my gratitude for their involvement in my research, and further clarified my research focus to them. Meeting them at the end of August, 1999, I prepared briefing notes for them (attached in Appendix 8, p.270), which stated my research focus and the research activities I was going to carry out in the schools.

### **Process of data collection**

Before entering the two schools, I wrote down my impressions of them as field notes in terms of school climate, the principal's visions of schooling, teacher-teacher relationships, the structural arrangement of discipline and guidance and my classroom experience in School B, where I had taught for four years. These field notes helped me to capture my pre-conception of the schools, and to extract any possible misconceptions that I might have during the period of data collection.

### *Participating in the two schools*

My research in these schools lasted for one academic term, in total 34 days in School B and 30 in School E. During these days, by being there, I made myself aware of the different settings and events within the two schools in order to familiarize myself with the shared school culture (Becker et al, 1968; Ball, 1981). My presence in the two schools involved attendance at a wide range of school activities, for example guidance and discipline seminars, a sports day, orientation programs, a graduation ceremony, a gospel service, fire drill and a singing contest. I also participated in many school meetings, with the parent-teacher associations, the teaching staff, the prefects team, and the guidance and discipline teams. I observed with whom school participants interacted, such as student-student, student-prefect, and student-teacher; and when an interaction was performed, such as before morning bell, morning break, lunch break and after school. I was also particularly interested in where the interaction took place, such as at the school's main gate, or in the staff rooms, snack bar, playground, and corridors. In addition to observation and attendance at school activities, I collected school documents in accordance with not only my research

focus on guidance and discipline, but also the potentiality of the materials in reflecting school culture.

The daily routine of my research activities in the two schools is summarized below:

1. Arrived at school at 8:00am;
2. Checked any new school notices displayed on the notice board in the staff room;
3. Observed school participants' interaction at snack bar, and in the playground and classrooms before the morning bell;
4. Observed how prefects inspected students' uniform and handled lateness, at the main gate in the morning;
5. Participated in the morning assembly;
6. Interviewed or talked with teachers;
7. Observed participants' interaction in the corridors and playground, at the snack bar, and outside the staff room during the breaks;
8. Lunched with teachers or students at 1:00pm;
9. Observed participants' interaction during the lunch break;
10. Conducted focus group interviews when the school finished, at 3:30pm, or participated in school meetings, if any; and
11. Interviewed or talked with teachers.

### *Keeping field notes*

Since I entered the two schools, I, as a participant observer, kept field notes about participants' interaction and the features of school organization, with the intention of producing '*richly detailed*' descriptions of the phenomena I observed, or the situation in which I participated (Denzin, 1998, p.335). An example of the field notes is attached in Appendix 9 (p.271). The field notes were all jotted down as a chronological log of what I observed each day in the two schools. Then, I would file all the data with my desktop computer on the same day when I made the field notes, in order to reduce the possibility that I would forget details of the events that I had

observed. The field notes amounted to 293 typed pages (approximately 600 words per page). Precisely, the focus of the field notes aimed to record:

1. where an interaction was performed;
2. how participants perceived my role;
3. how participants interacted with each other;
4. what they said;
5. what they communicated with body language;
6. how participants defined each other's roles;
7. how they perceived the scenes in which they participate;
8. the contexts and background of events;
9. the questions emerging in my head; and
10. the next step I might take.

#### *Conversing with participants*

The field notes recorded a great amount of data about how I explored through conversing with them participants' perception of the situation in which they participated. Some of these conversations were carried out purposefully in relation to incidents which happened unexpectedly. For example, a form tutor, Miss Yeung, in School E, felt shocked to receive a telephone call before the morning bell from a student in her class, and asked her for a day off in a rude way. I then conversed with Miss Yeung about this and explored how she perceived the student's behaviour.

Whenever I took part in these unexpected incidents and conversed with the teachers and students involved, I tried to investigate how they defined the situations in which they had participated. In addition, I made an attempt to collect as many different voices as I could in order to see whether there were any similarities and differences between the participants' construction of these unexpected incidents in which they were involved. Conversing with them, I liked to start with the same questions, for example, '*Could you tell me what you think about it?*', '*Could you tell me how you perceive it?*' The length of these conversations varied. It depended on when the

participants wanted to stop. I did not tape-record these conversations but included the key points of what they said in my field notes.

### *Conducting unstructured interviews*

Having established myself in the field, I began to invite the principal, teachers and students for interviews. Throughout the interviews, I intended to provide the interviewees with substantial freedom to talk about the issues concerned. Whenever they had something to say about guidance and discipline, I would allow them to express their concerns, regarding to their school experience, in order to explore the issues, dilemmas or tension with them. Up to a point, the unstructured interview method adopted for this study can be considered to require an active interview of the type, proposed by Holstein and Gubrium (1995), in which both the interviewer and interviewee play significant roles in constructing a conversation, and are simultaneously involved in explaining any ambiguities, in correcting any misperceptions, and in probing for clarification.

In the interviews, I tried to establish a positive rapport with the interviewees on the basis of respect and trust. This was done by showing my interest in what they said and by making no judgmental comments on their responses. More specifically, I first introduced myself to the interviewees, and continued by briefing them about the aims of my research and how the data collected would be used. Having assured them of confidentiality and asking their permission to tape the interview, I began with some general questions, and moved on to ask them core questions. Before ending the interview, I once again showed my gratitude for interviewees' participation, and highlighted the valued contribution of their responses to the study.

The interviews were all tape-recorded and transcribed for further analysis. In total, 34 teachers in School B were interviewed and 910 minutes of interviews were recorded whereas in School E, 26 teachers were involved and 660 minutes of interviews was recorded. The composition of the teachers involved is displayed in Table 6.1 (p.127). In total, 48 transcripts were produced, including eight sessions of focus group

**Table 6.1 Numbers of teachers from Schools B and E participating in the interviews**

	<b>School B</b>	<b>School E</b>
<b>No. of discipline teachers</b>	13, out of 17	7, out of 10
<b>No. of guidance teachers</b>	10, out of 14	5, out of 5
<b>No. of department heads/ team gatherers</b>	5, out of 6	8, out of 14
<b>No. of classroom teachers</b>	6, from 3D class	6, from 3E class
<b>Total number of teachers</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>26</b>

interviews, 37 interviews with teachers, and three team meetings. Audio data were transcribed from the Cantonese spoken language into English texts.

#### *Participating in the classroom*

To play my role as a part-time teacher and to examine teacher-student interaction in the classroom, I asked the principals when I initially worked in the schools to allow me to teach Geography in any one of the secondary-three classes. I did not specify a class in which I expected to participate. Rather, I preferred to let the schools make the arrangements for me that suited their situation most. Finally I got the principals' permission. In School B, it was arranged for me to teach 3D for nine lessons in October 1999. In School E, after discussion with the subject head, it was arranged for me to teach 3B for nine lessons between November and December, 1999. Teaching

plans for each lesson were made. Significant events emerging in the classroom were recorded in my field notes. To investigate how other teachers perceived the situations in these two classes, I interviewed some teachers who taught each of them. In total, six teachers from School B and five from School E were involved, as shown in Table 6.1 (p.127).

#### *Facilitating the focus group interviews*

To explore students' experiences of guidance and discipline in depth, focus group interviews were conducted in Schools B and E. I invited five students from each of the classes which I taught, 3D in School B, and 3B in School E, to join in four focus group interview sessions. Each lasted about 30 minutes. These interviews aimed to explore students' perceptions and experiences in four areas: their own role in the classroom, teachers' role in the classroom, the discipline and counselling teams, and school rules. As with other interview data, the focus group interviews were all tape-recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Regarding sampling the students, five were selected from each of these two classes because I had already established some relationships with them when teaching Geography in their classes. They were selected in terms of both behavioural and academic performances. The former refers to students' involvement in classroom activities, whilst the latter refers to their academic ability in completing tasks in lessons. I recruited a variety students, for example the active and the inactive, the more able and the less able. By doing this, I could see how different students made sense of each other's sayings, and how they constructed parts of school realities.

#### **Definition of my roles**

In the two schools, I, as a researcher, tried to see the social world of each school by taking the role of a part-time teacher in these two schools. Being a participant observer, I became very aware of how my participation would distort the previous setting and modify the participants' interaction. I tried my best to minimize these effects by marginalizing myself through the social stance which I adopted.

Nevertheless, I fully realized that a certain distortion was unavoidable. For example, when I took part in the uniform inspection with school prefects at the school's main gate in the morning, students seemed particularly willing to show their conformity to the prefects' instructions. Likewise, school prefects seemed to be motivated to play their role as well as they could.

In School B, I felt well-acquainted with the school, because I taught in this school for five years, between 1992 and 1995, and between 1996 and 1998. The principal and most teachers knew me, and wanted to give me their extraordinarily warm welcome and to provide me with all necessary data and information. In the school, I was able to play my role as a teacher. This was reflected in the phenomenon that the principal and most teachers kept addressing me with the initials, 'H.M.', that is, 'Hue, Ming', which was used when I taught in the school previously. Additionally, some teachers expected me to play the role of a mediator who was able to voice their needs and difficulties to the principal on their behalf.

In this school, I had a privileged position in accessing school documents and various school settings, which might be inaccessible for other researchers. Also, my previous experience of teaching in the school gave me some information about it, such as its tradition, organizational structure, administrative procedures and patterns of teacher relationships. This previous experience and information helped me, as a researcher, to immerse myself in the school, and to understand its operation.

In fact, I became very aware of the possibility that I might be too well acquainted with the school; and subsequently my preconceptions and previous constructs of school realities might surface as biases, diverting me from understanding the social setting as precisely and objectively as it would present itself to an outsider. To avoid any biases towards the school, as I have mentioned earlier, I wrote particularly careful notes about my impressions of School B with respect to school climate, relations between school teams, and my teaching experience. I could constantly cross-check and compare these notes with the main themes emerging from the data collected. In

addition, when conversing with school participants, I would tell them how I interpreted what they said, and ask for their feedback on my interpretation so that I could examine any discrepancy between my constructs of school realities, and those of school practitioners.

In School E, I felt an immense sense of strangeness. This feeling led me to make extra efforts to present myself, not only as a researcher, but also as a part-time teacher, throughout the period when I stayed in the school. In spite of this, few teachers managed to view me as a teacher. Most tended to perceive me as a visitor who was carrying out research in the school. Mostly they were concerned with the progress of my data collection, and asked me such things as, '*Have you collected all the data you want?*', and '*What trends are developing?*'

This feeling of strangeness certainly helped me to experience the school as 'a stranger', who found every small piece of school life very new and interesting to him. But, it unavoidably took me longer to make sense of the school's structure, administrative procedures, and the working relations between teachers. To compensate for my lesser knowledge of the school, I invited Mr York to be my informant, whom I could consult about all school matters. To avoid any possibility that Mr York's understanding of school realities would be imposed on mine, I tried to understand his explanation as offering only one perspective on school realities.

In sum, throughout the process of data collection in Schools B and E, I was very aware of school participants' perceptions of my role and of how their perceptions impacted on my research activities, and on the quality of the data collected. To minimize these impacts, I tried to portray myself as a part-time teacher. Hopefully, school participants could interact with me as they interacted with other participants; and I was able to immerse myself in the world of the two schools.

### **Ethical considerations**

Participating in Schools B and E, I carried out data collection with regard for certain ethical notions. To put it briefly, I treated school participants as human beings, rather than the subjects of my research. I felt obliged to show them respect and to care for their feelings. To put this ethical notion into practice, I invited the school participants to participate as much as they wished in my research. Also, whenever I identified any students with problems, I would make referrals or contact their form tutors. This could be ensure that the students' problems were followed up, and that the necessary care and support were offered to them afterwards.

Another ethical notion was that I highlighted the issues of anonymity, confidentiality and privacy within the three months' period of my fieldwork. For example, I guaranteed that the data I collected was going to be used for my research purposes. As for the tape-recording data, I would be the only one to listen to the tapes and others were not allowed to access the interview data.

Although I, as a researcher, tried to apply these ethical notions in the process of data collection, I was confronted with methodological and ethical dilemmas on occasion. The first dilemma was about how I handled the relation between my rights and responsibilities towards school participants in the two schools. I constantly asked myself, *'How should I conduct myself in the field?'*, and *'What were the rights and responsibilities of both the researcher and the researched?'*

Confronting this ethical and methodological dilemma, I felt obliged to clarify to school participants that I did not intend to conduct my research to be secret or covert, and to conceal from them that their behaviour was the subject of scrutiny. However, I found it difficult to meet this obligation all the time. There were three reasons for this. Firstly, I could disclose how I was carrying out the data collection to some participants, but certainly not all. In particular, for the parents and students, I found it hard to tell them about my research purpose. It was common that parents and students took part in my research as part of the researched without being informed. In this

case, I felt particularly responsible for what they felt and for the difficulties they might encounter at the time. If I found that any of these parents and students needed further help, or that I was not the appropriate one to offer them some help, I would refer them to other teachers.

Secondly, there was a difficulty related to my intention of entailing certain hidden elements in the aims of my research activities. My intention was aimed at minimizing the likelihood that some teachers would refuse to participate in my research if I made my research focus fully explicit. More importantly, I assumed that teachers without any preconceptions of the goal underlying an interview or a conversation, might feel more comfortable about disclosing to me their views on certain incidents or issues which were relevant to my research focus than teachers with such preconceptions.

Thirdly, another difficulty was associated with the nature of ethnographic research. Participating in a scene, I, like other ethnographers, avoided making any hypothesis, and previously defining the anticipated human behaviours and discourses. Hence, at the beginning stage of my fieldwork, I did not identify clearly which areas I intended to explore in depth. Therefore, I could only give a very limited account of my research purposes and activities to the practitioners in the two schools.

Apart from ethical dilemmas related to methodology, I confronted an ethical dilemma between my responsibility for reporting any inappropriate practice to the schools and my commitment to confidentiality. In the two schools, the data were collected from various sources over a period of four months. The data collected might occasionally reveal to me that some discipline practices frequently used by teachers might harm the emotional self of students. In this case, I needed to decide whether I should report these teachers to the principal or team heads so as to make some positive changes, or whether I should keep all data collected completely confidential, as I had promised. There were examples of ethical dilemmas which I dealt with in the schools: Should I inform the principal when a student told me that a teacher who was requested to resign in the previous year was collaborating with some students in organizing a

strike against the school? What should I do after a parent complained to me in anger about a teacher's discipline practices, which the parent described as inappropriate, unnecessary and offensive? Should I talk to a discipline teacher when I saw her ordering a student to sit in the sun to dry his sweaty body and soaked uniform?

Whenever I encountered this ethical dilemma, I asked myself whether it was ethically correct to keep neutral and not to report these incidents to the authority in the schools so as to make a change in the school's practice. In relation to this, I made explicit the criteria for resolving this dilemma: these were, how far any act of reporting would violate my commitment to confidentiality, and how far it might cause harm to participants in terms of their social, emotional, and material welfare.

Two dilemmas mentioned above can be taken as examples to illustrate how the criteria were applied in practice. In the case of the teacher who had resigned and was going to a strike by some students, I did not reveal the planned strike to the principal, as I had promised the students to keep it confidential. At the same time, I was strongly encouraged the students involved to tell another teacher so that the teacher could deal with the planned strike. Later on the students agreed with this arrangement. When a parent complained about a discipline teacher's practices, I did report to the principal about the practices used, but concealed the name of the teacher involved.

In short, it can be seen that the process of data collection involved both methodological and ethnical dilemmas. Methodologically, I tried to keep a balance between my rights and my responsibility to school participants. At the same time, ethically, I needed to weigh carefully fulfilling my assurance of confidentiality against being responsible for the students' welfare.

## 6.5 Processing and Analysis of Data

In the two case study schools, qualitative data were collected mainly in three forms: field notes, transcripts of interviews and school documents. I tried to ensure that the analytical procedure was grounded in the data collected from the field; and also, that the foundation for interpretation and analysis rested on the trustworthiness of empirical materials. To achieve this, in the analytical procedure, I endeavored to make interpretations in the light of a deep ethnographic understanding of the social relations, the school structure, and school and individual practices (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). The data collected from different sources and in different forms were constantly triangulated with each other. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), triangulation is a method of entraining reliability, in which a variety of methods, such as observation and interviews, are used for data collection, and through which the researcher is able to compare and contrast the data collected, and to justify the reliability of these data.

In the main study, a constant comparative method as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was adopted for data analysis. To begin with, the data collected from Schools B and E were processed separately as two independent corpora. By producing '*richly detailed*' descriptions and accounts of the data collected in each school (Denzin, 1998, p.335), I intended to illuminate both my own and the participants' construct of school reality, and to bring out the multiple meanings carried in the data, rather than to impose any numerical coding, or to break the data into fragmented units. Categories and concepts were generated from the data collected. Having processed the two corpora of data separately, I stayed close to the analysis of the data. By making new meanings from these data, the knowledge of the two schools' social reality was generated, compared and contrasted. Finally the realities of Schools B and E are presented to readers, and hopefully, enable them to experience schools' culture and the life of school practitioners as I did in the two schools.

In what follows, I will explain the six stages of the analytic procedure, and the process of transcription and translation. While the stages are serially listed, it is imperative to note that they need not be, and probably cannot be, carried out serially. Instead, there was a continuing movement back and forth as the data analysis proceeded.

### **6.5.1 Six stages of analytic procedure**

#### *1. Initial study of the data*

During the period of data collection, at one level, I kept studying the issues with which school participants were concerned; at another level, I constantly compared and contrasted incidents and main themes emerging from the data. In the course of this initial study of the data, I had no intention of immediately breaking the data into parts and analyzing them as isolated incidents. Rather, I intended to gain a prior knowledge of the two schools, to read for meaning and to retain the words and phrases used by interviewees, to make sense of the data as school practitioners did, and then to discover concepts embedded in the data. Throughout this process, I kept the initial units of analysis changeable, open and flexible so as to avoid any likelihood that I imposed a preconceived understanding of the two schools.

#### *2. Classification of data into three levels of schooling*

I began to classify all the data collected into three levels of individuals (focusing on the classroom), department, and whole school. At each level, I further classified the data into two groups, related to guidance and discipline. At this point, I kept the classification of the data open, flexible and changeable, because some data might have potential to reveal the phenomena of both guidance and discipline, and to be classified into more than one level. To a great extent, the classification of the data at this stage aimed to make the data organized and manageable according to the theoretical framework, stated in Chapter Five, which I had established before beginning data collection (see 'five levels of schooling', pp.107-110).

### *3. Categorization of Incidents*

I moved in and out of the data classified at each of the three levels, and examined these data in depth by reading for the meaning carried within them. I then grouped incidents into categories, and accordingly identified main themes emerging from these categories. In the course of categorization, I constantly compared and contrasted the incidents grouped into the same category; I also kept my mind open to the possibility that I would need to justify the categories that I had set up previously. The whole process of categorisation was repeated three or four times, so as to ensure the consistency and coherency of the incidents grouped into same categories, and also the correctness of the initial units of analysis. Grouping incidents into a category would cease when a category was saturated. This meant that extra incidents would not add any additional meaning to this category (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

### *4. Comparison of the data within one school*

At this stage, the data collected from the two schools were still processed separately. Comparing and contrasting each category with the others, I needed to think analytically about the links between categories on the basis of my knowledge of the schools. In any case where I found inconsistency within the data put into a category, I would return to the previous stage, and reprocess these data again. All issues and concepts emerging in the process of categorization were summarized as units of analysis.

### *5. Comparison of the two corpora of data*

Before comparing and contrasting the two corpora of data, I once again studied in depth and as a whole all the data which had been processed. After getting an initial picture of the similarities and differences between Schools B and E, I moved from the general to the particular, and then compared and contrasted relevant categories and concepts generated from these two schools. In the course of this process, I intended to describe how the schools were different at the three levels.

### *6. Revelation of the pictures of the two schools*

This stage aimed to investigate the meaning of dissimilarities between the two schools, instead of the frequency of specific incidents happening in the schools, or the prevalence of specific discourses used by school participants. In doing so, I needed to further repeat the following three processes: conceptualizing the concepts emerging from the data, categorizing the data into units of analysis, and condensing all the notes that I had made to record the data. Having processed the data by these three processes and linked all these concepts and categories, I selected examples from each category to reveal the pictures of the two schools.

In short, the analytic procedure mentioned above was like a cycle of constant comparisons, in which I needed to move in and out of the data, to read for meaning and to advance the analytical procedure by going over and over the various stages mentioned above. At each stage, it was important for me to think analytically and dialectically about the meaning of the data, to keep my mind open so as to allow any justification through my knowledge of the two schools, and to avoid the likelihood of missing any potential data. By and large, comparison were made by moving from the general to the particular, from one to other relevant categories, from one to other levels of schooling, and from within one school to comparing two schools. Thus, the processes of comparing, contrasting, and refining against categories and concepts emerging from the data led me to understand why school participants in Schools B and E constructed their school realities differently, and what elements made social processes different from these two schools.

#### **6.5.2 Process of transcription and translation**

The data generated in the main study are in two kinds of languages, Chinese (Cantonese) and English. In the main study, the process of translation focused on transferring the meanings carried by the oral and textual data from Chinese to English. This process involved four stages of translation, as I have explained in Chapter Four. These are study of data, adjustment of language, cross check of

transcripts, and repeating the process (see pp.72-73). Throughout the period of translation and transcription, I discussed with two Hong Kong students, respectively taking a Master's degree and a Ph.D. degree at the Institute of Education, University of London, about transferring the meanings of the data from Chinese to English.

It remains for me to explain two technical aspects of my translation in the main study: assurance of integrity, and transferring the meaning of pronouns and tenses. First, I tried to combine faithfulness to the Chinese textual data with intelligibility and clarity in English as a way of assuring the integrity of translation. Whenever a version of the translation might have misled readers, I preferred a freer rendition as a way of assuring such integrity. Particularly in translating the interview data, I found it necessary to forego part of the meaning of cultural signs, slang, and idioms in order to achieve a clear English version. For example, in Hong Kong, male teachers are addressed with the title 'Sir', instead of 'Mr', so Mr Hue as 'Hue Sir'. To avoid confusion to English readers, I translated Cantonese discourse of 'Hue Sir' as 'Mr Hue'. It is also true that most of the slang and idioms used by school participants carry rich meanings. In most cases, I could only translate one dimension of their meaning into English slang or idiom, in which great precision would be needed to capture the meaning used by school participants in Schools B and E. For instance, I translated a slang expression, 駛插手 (B990819-Field notes), which the principal of School B used for describing how she dealt with thorny problems, into *'to resolve problems behind their backs'*. In addition, a counselling teacher used an idiom, 山頭主義 (B991104-Interview data), to depict a feature of the school structure. I translated this idiom as *'group think'*. Another example is the Chinese term translated as *'face'*. As I explained in Chapter two, the term, *'face'*, carries a rich meaning which can only be explicit in the context in which the term is used. However, in the translation, I mainly interpreted its meaning as *'saving face'*.

Another technical aspect is the translation of the pronouns and tenses from Cantonese into English. In the daily dialogue of Cantonese speakers, people make sense of the gender of personal pronouns, the subjective and objective form of pronouns, the

singular and plural of nouns, and the past, present and future time in the context of their conversation. In most cases, all this information are not precisely indicated in daily conversation, except in the circumstance that one intends to refer to certain gender and time sequences, and states it with specific words. Regarding this concern, when translating the data from Cantonese into English, I needed to interpret carefully what gender of pronouns, and form of personal pronouns and tenses speakers might have intended within the context of their conversation.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have explained the epistemology of the main study. Epistemologically, an ethnographic approach was adopted for exploring the realities of two Hong Kong secondary schools. In the stance of the qualitative paradigm adopted, I believe that human behaviour can only be explored and understood with reference to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities; and that the most appropriate strategy for achieving this is to participate in the natural settings, to get near the people, to take their roles as far as possible, and then perceive the world from their standpoint. When using this strategy, it is more likely that, as a participant observer and researcher, I can realize the complexity of meaning constructed by individuals, get insight into human behaviour, and finally unfold the school realities, than by using any other method.

Methodologically, a case study approach was adopted for the main study. The qualitative data were collected by multiple strategies of participation observation, interviews, focus group interviews, and analysis of school documents. Then the data were analyzed by the six stages of analytical procedure that I designed specifically for the main study. Throughout these processes, data collection and data analysis, I stayed close to the meaning of the data collected, and tried to make new meanings from the data.

It is important to note that the main study does not aim to represent all Hong Kong secondary schools, but to represent the cases of two particular schools concerning the issue which I was looking at, that is, the relationship between guidance and discipline; and that the emphasis of the main study was placed on confirming internal validity by producing a coherent and dense description of the situations that I studied, rather than on seeking external validity by generalizing the cases to a larger population. It is hoped that the broad finding from the experience of the two case schools will illuminate some other Hong Kong secondary schools, if not all of them, and help them to promote the integration of guidance and discipline into schooling.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Schools B and E: At the Whole School Level**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

Having explained the ontology and methodology of the main study, in the following three chapters I will contrast the relationship between guidance and discipline in Schools B and E at the three levels of the whole school, the department and the classroom, on the basis of the theoretical framework explicated in Chapter Five (see ‘5.4 Ontological implication’, p.104-111). This chapter focuses on the whole school level, and aims to examine the features of Schools B and E with respect to the three dimensions of school organisation: history, ethos, and structure, which are examined in the section on ‘at the whole school level’ in Chapter Five (see p.109). My particular interest is to examine how the school itself as an organisation affects the arrangements for guidance and discipline, and their connectedness.

#### **7.2 School B**

##### **7.2.1 School history**

###### *School background*

School B is a government-aided school, established by a Christian organisation in 1977 with a generous donation made by a group of students who had graduated from a well-known university in Mainland China, as a tribute to the university. Since then, the present principal has been at the school. The university itself was established by a group of European missionaries in the late 19th century, when China was severely oppressed by the west. This political background led the university to develop a very strong patriotic mission to serve the society and save the country. With this tradition,

School B retains the university's name, song and motto as their own, and as the principal stresses, has a mission to maintain the university's reputation by spreading Christianity, and by serving the community and country.

The school had 36 classes, 68 teachers and approximate 1400 students in the academic year 1999-2000. Students are streamed according to their academic performance. Many teachers stated that the policy of streaming aimed to promote teaching and learning, and ultimately improve students' academic performance. In addition to this, the policy of Chinese as Medium of Instruction (CMI) was recently adopted for teaching and learning. (The background of this policy can be found in the section on 'medium of instruction', in Chapter One, pp.11-13). The school was in fact pressurised to give up EMI and started the move to adopt CMI over three years. This change was made in view of the facts that students' academic performance in public examinations, especially in the HKCEE (equivalent to the GCSE in England), was continually declining, and also that most teachers admitted, the majority of students did not acquire both the academic and language abilities to learn school subjects in English. This change has not yet ended the school's anxiety about its continued academic decline. Until now, the school has been looking for an appropriate strategy to resolve students' learning difficulties and to improve their academic performance.

To sum up, the school inherited the tradition of a well-known university in Mainland China, and was committed to maintaining and spreading the reputation of not only the school itself, but also the university. Further, the school staff was looking for appropriate strategies to improve students' academic performance and enhance their sense of belonging to it, especially because students' academic performance in public examinations was continuously declining.

### 7.2.2 School ethos

#### *Textual construct of whole-person education*

The ethos of whole-person education advocated in School B is closely linked to the missions of the university in Mainland China, and the sponsor organisation of the

school. The close link can be seen from the fact that the motto of the university, *'Through truth, for freedom, to serve'*, was used as the school's motto, whilst the mission of the sponsor organisation, *'Through schooling, to spread Christianity and to serve'*, stated on the first page of Teachers' Handbook, was defined as the school's mission. The school intended to provide a Christian education which would promote the growth of the whole person. Hopefully students would contribute their potential, talents and abilities to serve the community and the country in the future. The ethos of whole-person education was stated in the Teachers' Handbook as follows:

*Our educational philosophy is whole-person education. We believe that the real meaning of education is to realise a richness of life and actualise one's will as a human being. We need to promote the moral and intellectual self of the adolescent. It is hoped that they will have healthy attitudes and correct values towards life, and a strong sense of social consciousness; and also that they will take Jesus Christ as a model throughout their life to pursue justice, and truth and eventually acquire a life of richness (The Teachers' Handbook, 1999-2000, p.1).*

As in the Teachers' Handbook, the ethos of whole-person education was stated at the back of the school prospectus, and was illustrated with four headings: *'the cultivation of good personalities'*, *'the enhancement of leadership skills'*, *'the promotion of academic performance'*, and *'the establishment of good hobbies'*. The explanation under the heading, *'the promotion of academic performance'*, was more elaborated than those for other three. The detailed expansion of this heading implies that the ethos of whole-person education was more explicitly concentrated on the promotion of students' academic self, than another dimensions of students' growth.

#### *Teachers' construct of whole-person education*

This implication is supported by the fact that teachers felt puzzled about the aims of schooling that the school was working on, except for one, the promotion of students' academic performance. In fact, concern for this aim was associated with the continued decline of students' academic performance in public examinations, as noted earlier. For example, in a staff meeting, the principal revealed that because of the continued decline, the school had been lowered from band three to band four (The

details of the school band system can be found in the section on 'system of secondary education', in Chapter One, pp.9-10). Teachers felt perturbed at the news. Later on, the school's lower band and the continued decline in students' academic performance subsequently emerged as burning issues in interviews with teachers and in the daily conversation of the staff room. The principal's comments on students' academic performance became significant parts of the school realities which were shared by teachers.

During the four months of data collection, the ethos of the promotion of students' academic performance was continually transmitted to students, parents and teachers in school functions, such as the Parents Day, the Annual Meeting of the Parent-Teachers Association, and the Sports Day. For example, this ethos was transmitted to students in the orientation for secondary-six newcomers, where the principal made a speech focused on students' academic performance. The principal aimed to pass on to these secondary-six students the message that they, as A-level students, should study hard for entering university. Similarly, this ethos was transmitted to parents in the parents' day for the secondary-four students, held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1999, where four department heads made speeches. They intended to invite parents to co-operate with the school in helping their children cope with the HKCEE. As with students and parents, school managers constantly passed on teachers the message that the main target of the school's plan for the future was *'the improvement of students' academic performance'*.

#### *The emphasis of students' academic achievement*

The ethos of whole-person education was defined as the notion of the promotion of students' academic performance. This definition apparently related to the disconnected view of whole-person education held by teachers and the principal. They shared the view that the promotion of the students' academic self should be prioritised over other aims of schooling; also the growth of any one dimension of the students' self was not seen as dialectically promoting the growth of other dimensions. This was reflected in an interview with the principal, where she stressed that the aim

of the Sports Day was to provide those students with low academic ability with an arena where they could experience a sense of achievement. However, she added disappointedly that this sense of achievement, which the students had got on a sporting field, might not help them to improve their academic performance. The disconnected view of the development of the students' self held by the principal is indicated by her answer quoted below:

*Interviewer: ... To what extent do you think the aims [of the Sports Day] you mentioned can be put through in practice?*

*Principal: ... I think... you can see that those students who get prizes [in the Sports Day] are the group who will never get any academic prizes. But, at least, the Sports Day can help them build up a sense of achievement and tells them that they are not terrible at everything. At least, in doing sports, they can discover their strength... Amm... this [the sense of achievement] may not help them anyhow. Is it possible that getting a prize on a sporting field will activate them to study harder? Regarding this, ... I'm afraid that not every student will do so... (B991118).*

#### *The emphasis of school discipline*

While the ethos of the promotion of students' academic performance was emphasised in schooling, school participants admitted that the most appropriate strategy for achieving such an ethos was through school discipline, since this could be used for creating a favourable context for teaching and learning, and for socialising students to behave properly as members of society. The insistence on discipline led school participants to perceive that school discipline dominated the school climate. As they put it, *'the school is really strict'*; and *'there are too many school rules'*. This was also reflected in the description of school climate, by Miss Kwong, the Head of the Academic Department, which show that school discipline dominated academic matters.

*The emphasis of schooling is far more on school discipline and less on academic activities.... The teachers are used to being highly concerned with students' discipline. Whenever they talk about students, the focus is on demerits and school rules, and less on their academic performance. So there is a need to redress the balance between them (B991005).*

In this circumstance, many teachers had voiced a need to modify the development of guidance and discipline. Correspondingly, some measures were taken. For example, the school reviewed the relationship between school guidance and discipline at a meeting of the School Administrative Committee, and a proposal was then written for promoting their collaboration. Moreover, a seminar on the integration of school guidance and discipline was arranged for teachers by the principal at the beginning of the new academic term. Then a follow-up workshop was launched on a later day.

Similarly, when the principal talked with me about the school development plan, she stated that one of the main targets was to integrate school guidance and discipline. However, as she foresaw, this target would hardly be achieved, because firstly, the discipline practices that most teachers were currently using were excessively punishment-oriented. Secondly, the Counselling and the Discipline Departments were segregated. As she explained, when asked about her target,

*In the five year plan, I really want to improve student academic performance. .... Is it possible for teachers to be rational and not to say, 'I'll punish you'? It is too easy to say, 'I'll punish you.' Is it possible not to say, 'Punish! Punish! Punish!'? ... However, I know it's really difficult not to do so.... Teachers are beginning to be aware of the need that counselling should follow after punishment. That's why the Counselling Department should be restructured, so that everyone [in the Counselling Department] should get involved in personal counselling.... Ultimately I really want to achieve the notion of the integration of school guidance and discipline. In fact, each teacher should play both roles. It is really wrong to think that the discipline role belongs to some people; and the counselling role to others, and not to play these two roles together. Personally, this is what I intend to achieve in future... (B991118).*

In brief, the school ethos of whole-person education was asserted in the mission statement of the university in Mainland China, and of the sponsor organisation of the school. In practice, the ethos was defined as the notion of the promotion of students' academic performance, which was more strongly emphasised than any other dimension of students' growth. This emphasis was particularly evident when school participants affirmed the reality that students' academic performance in public

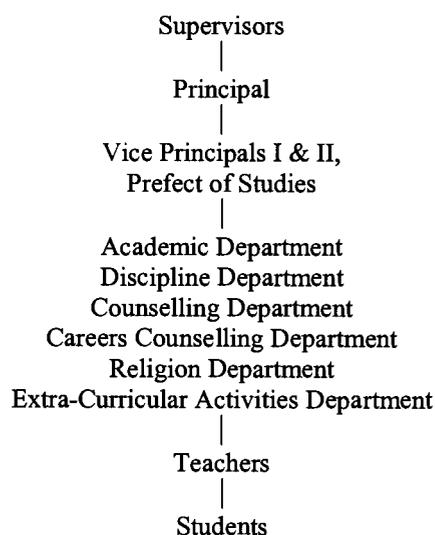
examinations was continually declining. To resolve this, school discipline was emphasised in schooling, since this was regarded as the most appropriate strategy for creating a favourable context for teaching and learning, and for socialising students to act properly as members of society. Recently, school participants had become aware of the continued rise of a disciplining climate, and the imbalance between the development of guidance and discipline, which seemed to make it to move the school forwards.

### 7.2.3 School structure

#### *Organisational feature of departmentalisation*

In School B, school teams were named by the Chinese term, 部, which is translated into 'department'. In Chinese, this term refers to a section which is formally organised or systemised within an organisation. School B consisted of six departments, including Academic, Discipline, Counselling, Careers Counselling, Religion, and Extra-Curricular Activities, as shown in Figure 7.1. Each was specialised in a specific area of schoolwork. The details of each department, that is,

Figure 7.1 'School Structure' of School B



(The Teachers' Handbook, 1999, p.28.  
The original chart is attached in Appendix 10, p.277)

their organisational structure, administrative procedure, names of teachers involved, and descriptions of duties, were all stated in the Teachers' Handbook. In general, teachers were allocated a position in one of the departments, and they rarely held more than such position. In addition, each department had its own committee, in which relevant policies and educational programmes were formulated and revised. Departmental documents, such as agendas, minutes, and student files, were systematically kept. All in all, School B was strongly departmentalised; that is, the school was structurally arranged as several departmental units, each of which was clearly delineated as a distinctive territory, and specialised in a particular area of school work.

*Participants' construct of departmentalisation*

In fact, participants' comments consistently reflected this organisational feature of departmentalisation. For example, when talking about the Sports Day, the principal made sense of the arrangements for it according to the structural arrangement of departments. As the principal put it,

*I think I have handed over all the organising work [of the Sports Day] to the PE Department.... I am the symbolic Head. In reality, it is Mr Wong [Head of PE] and the PE Department, who are fully in charge of everything on that day (B991118).*

While the school was described as departmentalised, teachers found that departments rarely consider each other in their work. This was reflected in the account of the relations between school departments, given by Miss Kwong, the head of the Academic Department. As she put it, '*we [the departments] work very hard, but only in our own way*'; and '*we rarely consider each other in our work*' (B991005).

Another teacher, Miss Chiu, held a similar view, that the departments kept extending their sphere of influence, and fought for power and extra resources. As a result, the relations between the departments were competitive and tense. As she stated, when asked about the principal's view of the aims of schooling,

*Although the fact she advocates the notion of a whole school approach, from my point of view it is more pertinent to say that it [the whole school approach] is a sort of 'group think'. Each group of people tries to fight for as many resources as they can.*

*Interviewer: What does the 'group' refer to?*

*Chiu: This might refer to a person, an organisation, a group of people, or a working team and so on.... Perhaps it is the school tradition that workloads are unevenly distributed.... Everyone knows this phenomenon very well and is very concerned about it... (B991104).*

Like Miss Chiu, the principal endorsed the view that the six departments worked independently. It seemed to her that there were many 'walls' built up between departments. In most cases, the teachers in different departments did not know what other departments were doing. In relation to this, the principal made the point that the lack of communication among departments, and their segregation, might cause the work carried out by the departments to overlap. She perceived this overlapping as a sign of ineffectiveness, or in her words, 'a waste of manpower and resources'. Her account implied that she intended to break the 'walls' between the departments, and to prevent the departments from overlapping in order to pursue a higher level of effectiveness. As the principal put it,

*For these changes, ... from my point of view, ... our school, School B, is always like this: 'I do this because I am told to do so.' The six school departments are highly independent from each other.... Now I intend to destroy the walls built between departments. In the School Affairs Committee, the six department heads can get together and know what each other has been doing. Very often, we know we are all doing something for students. However, they also think that we participate in [this department, such as] the Discipline Department, so we adopt this stance for seeing something. In fact, their work always overlaps to some extent. I think it is no good to be like this...*

*Interviewer: .... So, at the department level, you expect to reduce their differentiation and promote their overlapping.*

*Principal: No! Very Wrong! I just don't want to see their work overlap with each other. Certainly they need to communicate with each other better so that collaboration between them becomes more possible; and it won't waste manpower and resources... (B990831).*

### *Impacts of departmentalisation*

Consistent with the school participants' account, the organisational feature of departmentalisation was endorsed in the draft of the school's five-year plan. The draft particularly highlighted two of its impacts: firstly, *'the segregation of school departments'* made both effective communication and interdepartmental collaboration impossible; secondly, conflict between the departments was growing over the allocation of resources and schoolwork. As the draft stated,

*The fact that teachers participating in Department A can never work in Department B can be regarded as the root of the 'labelling effect' and 'segregation'. As a result of this, the gap between the various territories of departments is becoming deeper and deeper; and indeed, this may not allow any possible transitional areas, or contact points, where the various departments can communicate and resolve their conflicts; and*

*Each department and subject department tend to carry out its departmental work according to the orientation defined by its own members. This certainly makes each of them become more and more self-sufficient and isolated from each other. Also there is almost no consensus developed through sharing with each other. This may explain why the divide between teaching and non-teaching work and activities is becoming more and more distinct (In the Final Draft of Five Years Plan, by School Administrative Committee of School B, June 1999, p.6).*

Likewise, the impacts of departmentalisation and specialisation were pointed out by other school participants. For instance, Miss Lee, Head of Extra-Curricular Activities, found that conflict between the departments was increasing. As she understood it, the aim of the Discipline Department was to pursue for the collective interests, but her department aimed to promote individual students' interests. In relation to this, the Discipline Department was *'prioritised at a high rank'*, but her department was in *'the lowest rank'* in the school organisation. As my field notes recorded,

*Whenever programs are designed, she is first of all concerned with students' interests and what they may like. This is very different from the Discipline Department. They mainly concentrate on collective interests.... Also different departments have their own rationale. Mostly they compete in taking over from others instead of co-operating and then working for the same target (B991004).*

Further, she added that her department held an unfavourable position and was commonly perceived as '*a pitiful department*', ranked as the lowest among the departments, because, in the principal's and teachers' view, the Extra-Curricular Activities Department merely provided students with '*games*' and entertainment; such provisions were seen as running counter to the school ethos, that is, the promotion of students' academic performance.

Apart from the conflicting ethos existing among the departments, another impact of departmentalisation on schooling was that teachers were concerned with the workload that their posts brought them in terms of working hours, ranges of tasks and numbers of cases. This concern was described as growing, particularly when they found that the school failed to allocate work as evenly as they had expected. As Miss Kwong, the head of the Academic Department, said,

*Some [teachers] feel that the work assigned has not been evenly allocated. Some need to work very hard, but some do not. They just question all the times why others do not have as much work as they do... (B991005).*

In a staff meeting, the principal tried to lessen some teachers' discontent with the uneven allocation of schoolwork; she urged teachers to perceive their participation in departments as a way of contributing their potential for serving others, rather than fulfilling the duties imposed by the school. In relation to this, the principal said, '*the teachers with a heavy workload are the more able. They should feel happy because they are more gifted and able than others*'. After the meeting, some teachers admitted, with a sense of discontent, that they failed to make sense of the principal's utterance, and asked critically, '*Why should the more able do more and the less able do less?*' (B991208-Field notes).

In an interview with the principal, I explored her views upon this issue, teachers' discontent with the uneven allocation of work. She stressed that she intended to reduce teachers' workload by getting them to continually evaluate how '*effectively*' and '*efficiently*' their allocated schoolwork had been done. As the principal said,

*However, at the practical level, ... in these two years, I have noticed that there is more and more work to be done. Therefore, since last year, I've been urging teachers to think about how they can complete the work in a more efficient and effective way.... They have to look for ways, in which they can shorten their working procedure to save some time.... We [school managers] are beginning to give teachers some guidelines for everything so that everyone can follow and enforce them accordingly. If everyone reads the guidelines and follows them after they have been issued, it saves their time looking for a way to carry out their work... (B990831).*

To conclude, School B tended to be departmentalised; and each department specialised in a particular area of school work. Within this departmentalisation and specialisation, each department was delineated from the others, and had its own ethos and administrative procedures. Generally, the departments were isolated and their relations were competitive; their collaboration was rare. Some departments even worked with an ethos which conflicted with that of others. While teachers were deeply concerned with the workload allocated to them by the school, the school seemed to put increasing emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness, and to become more department-centred, rather than student-centred.

## **7.3 School E**

### **7.3.1 School history**

#### *School background*

School E is 'a direct subsidised school', established by a Christian organisation in 1964. The school has a strong link to Christianity. This is reflected in the fact that there is a church and its office attached to the school; and both the school motto, '*Spiritu et Veritate*', and the lyrics of the school song have been derived from the Gospel of St John, Chapter 4 verse 23.

The school had 28 classes, 1159 students and 56 teachers in the academic year 1999-2000. It is located in a new town in New Territory. The school covers a spacious area, about 17,000 square metres (the Prospectus of School E), with an eye-catching garden, a snack bar, five school buildings and five ball-games fields, including two

for basketball, one for valley-ball, and one non-standardised football field. Although the five staff rooms were described by teachers as small, crowded and isolated from each other, teachers and students felt very proud of such a physical setting, and claimed that this was the most powerful *'selling-point'* of the school in the community.

### *School change*

The school has been undergoing changes since the present Principal arrived in 1990. For example, the garden and the hall were newly refurbished. Extra school facilities were installed as well. Further, the policy of CMI was changed into EMI for teaching and learning. (The background of this policy can be found in the section on 'medium of instruction', in Chapter One, pp.11-13). The policy on the grouping of students was also changed from streaming to destreaming. Among all those changes, the most important was probably the transformation of the school's status from a private to a directly subsidised school, in September 1998. As the principal revealed, after this transformation the school had a high level of autonomy in using resources. The transformation was highlighted in the speech that the principal made at a graduation ceremony held in late November 1999. As he proclaimed,

*Since our school became 'a direct subsidised school' on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1998, we have been marching on a new journey. Becoming 'a direct subsidised school' means that a private school is enabled to acquire full subsidies from the government, but the school still enjoys its high level of autonomy and freedom, and can use resources in more efficient and flexible ways. Hence our involvement in the Direct Subsidies Scheme certainly offers us a good opportunity for developing our school ('The Principal's opening speech', in the program of the 32th graduation ceremony, 1999-2000).*

In the teachers' view, changes in the school were further evident in four areas: the improvement of students' behaviour, the rise of students' sense of belonging to the school, the upgrading of the school band, and the rise in students' academic performance. For example, many teachers and students shared the acknowledgement that the school had been upgraded from band five to band three, and was now moving upward towards band two. Because of these positive changes, they described the

school as 'moving' and 'growing'. For example, when Miss Sue, Gatherer of Religion, talked about the school culture, she perceived that School E was in 'progress'; and school participants felt a strong sense of belonging to the school. This was shown in a segment of transcript quoted below:

*Interviewer: Broadly considered, how would you describe the school culture and atmosphere?*

*Sue: Umm... I think the school is progressing, in terms of both teachers' and students' performance. The whole school is progressing.*

*Interviewer: In which aspect do you mean?*

*Sue: There is the students' sense of belonging to the school. This is getting strong. Also students' sense of self-value and expectation of their own achievement have been improving. Their self-image is being raised progressively as well. In the past, the school was used to having a notorious image, and reciprocally, students did not have a positive image of themselves... (E991022).*

According to Miss Sue, as the school was progressing, teachers and students were able to share a sense of belonging, and to identify the purposefulness, or 'orientation', of schooling. Also a caring atmosphere was established. As she described it, the school was 'getting more and more healthy', like an organism. This is also shown in a segment of transcript quoted below:

*Interviewer: Could you give the reasons for this change?*

*Sue: I think.... In the past, everything was disintegrated and there was no system at all. But now some system has been established, which dealt with students' academic levels and their conduct.... Everything seems to have an orientation. Also there is a policy which we can follow. Gradually, teachers have realised the school's operation. At the same time, students assert that teachers are enabled to care for them. The school's public examination results and quality of the intake of students have been upgraded year by year. Therefore, they tend to think it's not so bad to study at this school.... Perhaps I can say the school is getting more and more healthy (E991022).*

In sum, the school's history reflected the impact of Christianity. Since the arrival of the present principal, the school had experienced some positive changes. Currently, school participants held the view that the school was moving, changing, and 'getting more and more healthy' like an organism. This was reflected not only in the

refurbishment of the school's physical setting, but also in the growth of school participants' sense of belonging to the school, and in the transformation of the school's status.

### 7.3.2 School ethos

#### *Textual construct of whole-person education*

As in School B, the ethos of whole-person education was formally adopted in School E. As the Teachers' Handbook stated, the school had a mission: to '*offer whole-person education, serve the community and spread the Christian faith*'. Likewise, the ethos of 'whole-person education' was stated in the Yearly Plan (1999-2000) as quoted below:

*The school is aimed at providing high quality of whole-person education for achieving students' potential. It is hoped that students will be educated as good quality civilians, who have knowledge, abilities, proper social and national concepts, creativity, communication skills, and independent thinking, to face the challenge of the time, to serve our community and to contribute to society (Yearly plan of school affairs, 1999-2000, p.1).*

As with School B, the ethos of whole-person education was stated in the school's prospectus. However, there were at least three ways in which the presentation of School E's prospectus differed from that of School B (see Appendix 12, p.279 and Appendix 13, p.280). First, the ethos of whole-person education stated in School E's prospectus was described in more expanded ways than that of School B. Specifically, in School B, the ethos was elaborated in four of eight items, written in a few short sentences. The School E's prospectus, by contrast, contained eight items out of 12, which were well elaborated. Secondly, the front page of School E's prospectus contained 27 photographs, which showed a wide variety of school activities, such as teaching and learning, sport, painting, and playing musical instruments. These photographs created a powerful and straightforward image that students were the centre of the school. The front page of School B's prospectus, by contrast, contained only one photograph of the school's entrance, in which no person was featured. This photograph gave outsiders the image that the school building itself represented all the

individual participants. Thirdly, School E's prospectus was more informative than that of School B. For example, School E's prospectus included the whole school approach to school guidance and discipline, details of extra-curricular activities, and the school's statements on the promotion of family-school co-operation. These three differences show that at the textual level in School E the ethos of whole-person education was defined in more expanded ways than in School B.

*Widespread ethos of whole-person education*

In addition to the textual level, it was noticeable that through all possible contexts, School E tried to make the ethos of whole-person education explicit to students, teachers, and parents. These contexts included staff meetings, morning assemblies, year assemblies, parents' meeting, the graduation ceremony and the sports day. Further, the school intended to transmit this ethos through various levels of schooling. For example, at the department level, a team for the promotion of whole-person education was established lately, and aimed to co-ordinate all school teams for the implementation of the school ethos. At the curriculum level, according to the principal's speech at the meeting of secondary-one students' parents, the school was moving beyond a narrow view of learning, focused on passing examinations, and intended to introduce a curriculum for Economic and Public Affair and Integrated Science so as to get students to learn how to learn, and to promote their creativity. The key point of the principal's speech was summarised in my field notes as follows:

*He then moves on to explain how the EPA and Integrated Science curricula were introduced so as to provide students with a place where they can learn how to learn through data collection, data processing and presentation of findings. The innovations aim to enhance their creativity, individual-initiative in learning and self-confidence in making a presentation. Also the innovation in the curricula aim to increase students' awareness of social issues and their sense of belonging to the community (E991210).*

The spread of the ethos of whole-person education was closely associated with the word 'quality', which was frequently used by teachers and the principal in daily conversation, for example 'the promotion of the quality of students' everyday life',

*'the enhancement of students' quality', and 'the establishment of a quality school'.* The word *'quality'* carried positive meanings, and was used for portraying an ideal picture that the school wished to create. For instance, the principal used the word *'quality'* to describe the school's mission in the speech that he made at the graduation ceremony. As he put it, *'Our school is a school with a full sense of mission, and aims to provide students with a high quality and whole-person education'* (E991125-Field notes). Likewise, the Head of Discipline usually urged students to continuously upgrade *'their quality'* in the speeches that he made in the morning and year assemblies. Similar emphasis was evident when teachers discussed the arrangements for the Sports Day in a staff meeting, where a P.E. teacher remarked,

*In the past, the aims of the Sports Day were merely to control students' behaviour and ensure they did not act disruptively during the process of the sports events. However, this is not our aim any more. Instead, the prime target is to promote quality of our students ... (E991103- Field notes).*

The rationale of whole-person education was thus made more explicit in School E than in School B. This was associated with the phenomenon that teachers in School E held an expanded and developmental view, that students would grow, and that the school would change in the long run, even though the effects of whole-person education could not be seen in the short run. For example, in the principal's description of the aims of the Sports Day, he viewed the school as a reservoir, where students were like *'natural resources'*, and proclaimed that the school was like a reservoir containing *'an abundant natural resources'*. All students had their own potentials and values, and should learn from each other. The principal perceived that the Sports Day was one of the arenas where students from different years could be united, and where a peer-learning atmosphere could be created. (E991209-Interview data).

#### *Tension between aims of whole-person education*

Although teachers held a developmental and expanded view of whole-person education, they found that the tension between the promotion of the growth of the

whole person and students' academic performance was growing, especially after they learned that the principal had lately made an 'ambiguous' estimation of the percentage of students who would pass the public examinations for the HKCEE and HKAL.

For instance, Miss Chong, Gatherer of Extra-Curricular Activities, revealed that teachers were used to arranging supplementary lessons after school outside the official timetable, all of which students were obliged to attend; consequently, many students found it difficult to take part in the extra-curricular activities, which were mainly held after school. In fact, during the period of data collection, I found that supplementary lessons were arranged not only after school, but also before the morning bell.

While teachers' concern with students' academic performance was growing, Miss Chong, like other teachers, found that there was an increasing tension between academic and extra-curricular activities. In her view, many teachers perceived that academic activities should have position over extra-curricular activities, which were assumed to be a significant component of whole-person education. This perception led teachers to postulate that students' right to participation in the extra-curricular activities should be removed if they failed to study well. Like Miss Chong, another teacher, Mr Young found that some teachers held the view that the promotion of students' academic performance was more important than other aims of schooling. As he stated,

*In most teachers' casual chat, you can see that they have been experiencing some conflict in carrying out whole-person education. This is because they are supposed not to merely focus on students' academic performance when they do so. But, now, it is sad to admit that we [teachers] are unable to simultaneously promote students' personal growth, moral development and their 'proper behaviour' when we [teachers] need to care for their academic performance. Teachers certainly need to work very hard if they really want to make this [the whole-person education] happen in the school (E990928).*

In an interview with the principal, I intended to explore how he perceived the increasing tension between academic and extra-curricular activities. He admitted that this tension existed, but he insisted that it would be eliminated in the short run. As my field notes recorded, *'in his opinion, there is no conflict between these two targets in theory. He firmly believed that students' ability to deal with the pressure exerted from learning and examinations would simultaneously increase when their self-esteem and confidence were enhanced through extra-curricular activities'*. To resolve the tension, the principal tried to encourage the teachers to believe that *'holistic growth should be prioritised ahead of promotion of students' academic achievement, though both are equally important in schooling'*.

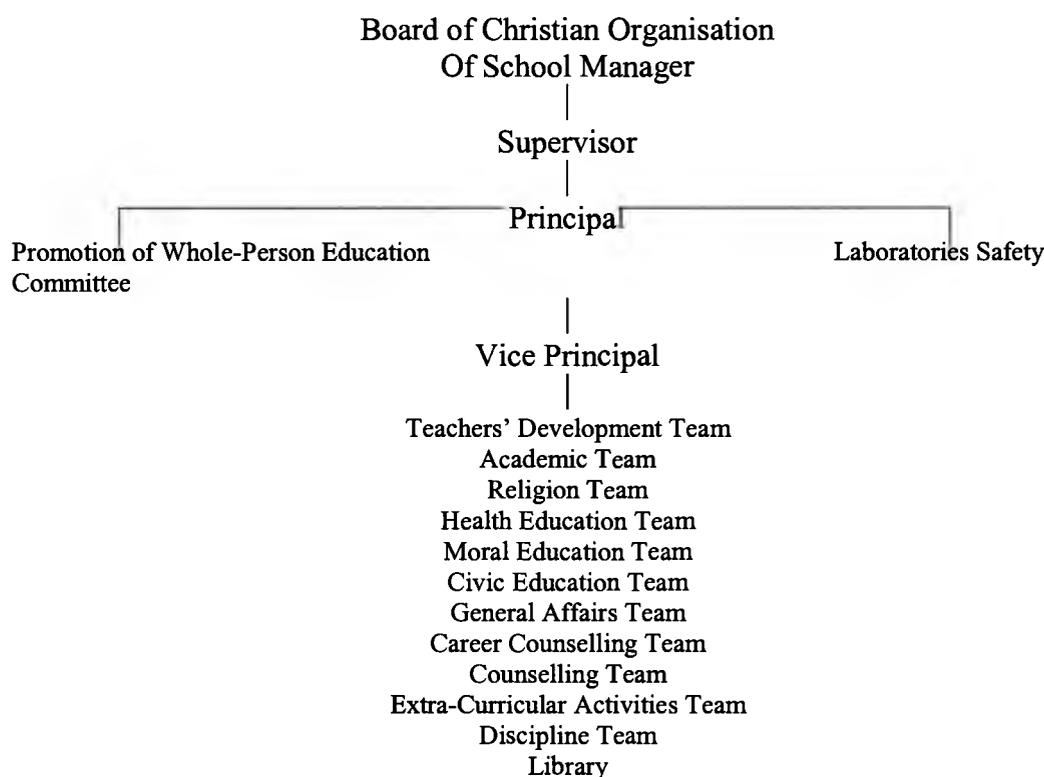
In brief, in School E, the ethos of whole-person education was defined in more expanded ways than it was in School B. Also, School E was more concentrated to transmit this school ethos in various spheres of schooling than was School B. Teachers in School E shared the same school ethos and held a developmental and expanded view of the growth of the whole person, even though the tension between this ethos and the pressure for academic success was seen as rising in the school.

### 7.3.3 School structure

#### *Organisational features of ambiguity and informality*

In School E, school teams were named by the Chinese term, 組, instead of 'department', which is translated into 'team'. In Chinese, this term refers to a section which is less formally organised within an organisation; also its organisation and structure is not as hierarchical as the term 'department', 部, suggests. In this school, the administrative structure consisted of 13 teams and one committee, the Laboratory Safety Committee, as shown in Figure 7.2 (p.160). These were teams for Discipline, Counselling, Extra-Curricular Activity, Academic, Civic Education, General Affairs, Religion, Health Education, Moral Education, Career Counselling, Library, Teacher Development, and the Promotion of Whole-Personal Education. Besides, there was another team, for the Promotion of Information Technology Education, which was mentioned in the Teachers' Handbook but was not indicated in the diagram.

**Figure 7.2 'Administrative Structure' of School E**



(‘Information of School Affairs and Memorandum’,  
in The Teachers’ Handbook, revised in August 1999, p.5.  
The original chart is attached in Appendix 11, p.278)

In each team, there was a team head, known as the Gatherer, 召集人, with a deputy as the Deputy Gatherer, 副召集人. When talking about the role of team gatherer, Mr Yeats, Gatherer of Civic Education, insisted strongly that he was not the Head, but the Gatherer, whose responsibility was merely for getting all the team members together to organise and carry out the programmes for civic education. The use of the title ‘*team gatherer*’ suggests that in School E, the relations between team gatherers and team members tended to be informal. Here, it is necessary to note that this was not the case in the Discipline Team, where the team head was called the ‘*Head of Discipline*’ and the deputy the ‘*Vice Head of Discipline*’. Regarding this school administrative structure, three points are notable. First, many teachers held more than one post across two or three teams, and were used to collaborating with each other in

informal ways. An example is Mr Pool, who participated in the Discipline Team as its team head, and was simultaneously a member of three other teams, namely, Extra-curricular Activities, Teacher Development, and Promotion of Whole-Person Education.

Secondly, there was a wide variety of teams, which were set up to meet particular needs. For example, some teams were responsible for providing students with particular services, such as discipline, counselling and career counselling. Some focused on administration, such as general affairs and laboratory safety. Some aimed to co-ordinate all the school's teams for carrying out particular educational purposes, such as moral education, health education, and promotion of whole-person education.

Thirdly, the delineation of teams was ambiguous. The ambiguity related to the overlapping of the teams. For example, the Team for the Promotion of Whole-Person Education constituted of members from nine other teams. The Civic Education Team consisted of members from eight other teams. The overlapping of the teams related to the fact that in School E the teachers' responsibilities in each team were not as well defined in school documents as in School B.

#### *Teachers' construct of team collaboration*

In view of this, the administrative structure of School E was characterised by its ambiguity. In fact, this organisational feature can be traced back to the period before the arrival of the present principal, when both school administrative structure and teachers' roles were rather less institutionalised. Teachers perceived that the school had '*no system*' at that time, which was regarded as the period of no school teams or team meetings. They described the ex-principal as '*a general in an army*' or '*an authoritarian*' who possessed the most of the authority and power in the school, and who formulated school policies and accordingly co-ordinated teachers to put these policies through in schooling. As a result of this, teachers mostly coalesced with each other flexibly, corresponding to both internal and external changes.

In the post-arrival era, the school was undergoing a change. In teachers' words, the school was moving from 'no meetings' to 'having meetings', from 'no system' to 'having a system', and from 'no teams' to 'having teams'. This feature was highlighted in the account of school changes by Mr Yeats, Gatherer of the Promotion of Whole-Person Education,

*In the past, 'one person' would manage 'all the other persons'. This was done in an authoritative way. Now we do it by forming small teams, so we now have many teams. For example, since the present principal arrived, we have had many small teams, such as Moral, Civil Education, Academic, Extra-Curriculum, and Health Education. The ex-principal was just like a general. He managed the school and the teachers like an army... (E990921).*

Teachers admitted that as a result of these changes, in the post-arrival era, they were more able to collaborate with each other for actualising the aims of schooling than in the pre-arrival era. As Miss Chong, Gatherer of Extra-Curricular Activities, stated,

*In the past, the school system was not like what we have now. Originally, the school was a private school. Everything was in chaos in the school. There was no system. It had nothing at all. Everything was done according to someone's sudden desire. As Mr York always says, 'the past' was a time of no system.... So everyone worked individually according to one's own policy. Since the principal arrived, he has tried to change all this. He intends to establish an administrative structure, in which that all teams are able to work in a similar orientation... (E991210).*

While School E was moving and changing, teachers tried to avoid rigid departmentalisation, and preferred to collaborate flexibly with each other whenever necessary. For example, Mr Young participated in both the Counselling and the Extra-Curricular Activities Teams, and depicted these school teams as 'small groups'. Teachers mostly participated in more than one team, and collaborated with others informally. As Mr Young ascertained, when asked why teachers like to involved in more than one team,

*In fact, there are so many 'small groups'. This is a feature of Chinese society. When you help another teacher in a team, this decision is largely made through considering your interpersonal relationships with him. In school*

*administration, every teacher is only requested to participate in one team. If they want to participate in more [than one], they are permitted to do so... it's rare for them to change from one team to another, but often they would like to take up one more position in another team... (E991103).*

Another example is Mr Luke, the gatherer of the Academic Team, who took part in three other teams: Information Technology, Laboratory Safety and Teacher Development. He perceived that team gatherers were used to collaborating informally with each other. This was reflected in how he described his participation in the four teams. As my field notes recorded,

*Despite this, he is mainly responsible for the Academic Team. The other teams that he participate in do not bring him too much workload. He declared that it is sensible for him to do this because the work of the other three teams closely links with the Academic Team. He insisted that it is the same group of teachers working together, though various separate teams have been set up. They all have a very close working relationship. In fact it is not an exclusive situation in the teams where he works in. More appropriately, it is the school culture for group of gatherers, roughly 10 teachers, to participate a lot in administration, in management and in the formulation of new school policies.... Later on he asked me what I thought of the school's administration. I said that there are not many formal meetings held in the school. Thus it is quite hard for me to attend any one of them and tell how the teams work. He responded quickly and explained to me that in most cases, teachers are used to having informal lunch meetings because most Gatherers have a very good working relationship. Also no agenda are drafted and no minutes are kept. The working relationships between teachers are built on the basis of interpersonal relationships rather than 'law' (E991006).*

The pattern of teachers' working rapport in various teams tended to be changeable and flexible so as to correspond with the internal or external changes in the school environment. As a result of this, in School E the relations between teachers were more informal, and less structured than in School B. As Mr Lock, Gatherer of Counselling, stated,

*In fact, among the teachers whom we work with, we collaborate not only within our own team but also with other teams. Therefore, we naturally know what each other is feeling without communicating in words when we work together. Also most teachers have been working in School E for a really long*

*period of time. As for our pattern, and ways of doing things, we have known about them very well so we can adjust to each other easily.... In our school, it is rare for anyone to emphasise who is the head and who is the subordinate. When doing something, we can collaborate with each other. This can be seen in various teams. We will never have a scene where the head is there and orders others to do something (E991210).*

Evidently, School E had been changing and moving from an old to a new era since the present principal arrived. Its organisational structure is characterised by ambiguity and informality. This was reflected in: the subtle delineation between teams, the informality of collaboration between teams, and teachers' participation in more than one team. Compared to School B, it was obvious that School E was less departmentalised, and that teachers' roles were less institutionalised; and teachers from different teams were used to coalescing as a team in flexible and informal ways so as to meet the needs caused by internal and external changes.

## **7.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have contrasted Schools B and E with respect to the three dimensions of school organisation: history, ethos and structure. In School B, the ethos of whole-person education was defined as the promotion of students' academic performance. This definition related to the disconnected view of whole-person education held by the principal and teachers, that is, that the growth of any one dimension of the students' self would not dialectically promote the growth of other dimensions. By holding this view, these school practitioners strongly emphasised the importance of students' academic growth, particularly when they shared the school realities that both the school band and students' academic performance in public examinations were declining. To achieve this target, the principal and teachers regarded improving school discipline as the appropriate strategy, through which a favourable climate for teaching and learning could be created, and students could be socialised to behave as learners in the school and as members of society. Nonetheless, School B still found it hard to make the changes which were intended. In

Rosenholtz's words (1989), this school apparently got '*stuck*' and experienced some difficulties in moving forward.

As regards the school structure, School B was departmentalised as it was partly reflected in the formal and hierarchical term 'department', 部, used to name school teams. Concisely, each department functioned in routinized and efficient ways, and was isolated from the others. Generally, the relations between departments were competitive. The ethos of some departments, such as that of the Discipline and the Counselling Departments, were even described as opposing each other. Participating in such a school organisation, teachers strongly emphasised administration, management, effectiveness and efficiency; they associated themselves with others for institutional and contractual reasons; they had become very concerned with the distribution of workload, and were used to quantifying the work that the school had allocated to them. According to Rowan (1990), these organisational features suggested that the organisation design of School B was like a '*machine*'; this was also '*control-based*'. This means that in this school teachers were inclined to portray their school as an organisation which functioned in routinized, efficient and predictable ways, and wherein management and administrative procedures were systematised and standardised so as to assure that teachers exposed students to a standardised quality of instruction.

In contrast to School B, school participants in School E held a developmental and expanded view of whole-person education, and tended to portray their school as an '*organism*' (Morgan, 1997; Rowan, 1990), which was growing, and changing, and as '*a moving school*' (Rosenholtz, 1989), where school participants experienced school as progressively '*getting more and more healthy*', and moving forwards in terms of the replacement of school facilities, the upgrading of the school band, and the improvement of students' academic and behavioural performances.

The structure of School E was less formal and less departmentalised than that of School B. This is reflected in the informal and non-hierarchical term 'team', 組

, used to name school teams, and also in the phenomenon that the delineation of school teams were ambiguous; teachers were used to holding positions across more than one team, and tended to keep their working rapport and inter-team relations informal, flexible and changeable so that they could react quickly to new needs and the environmental changes. As a result of this, teachers' participation in schoolwork was largely activated by their free will, instead of any institutional imposition. According to Rowan (1990), these organisational features suggested that the organisational design of School E was '*commitment-based*'. This means that in this school teachers generally had a higher level of '*collegiality*', and the commitment shared among school participants was mainly established by personal identification with the school's mission, history, and community rather than loyalty to superiors.

Regarding the relationship between guidance and discipline, the organisational features of Schools B and E, as discussed above, help us to make sense of the finding of the preliminary study, that is, that School B was the most fragmented, and School E was the most integrated with respect to the orientation for the relationship between guidance and discipline. At this stage, as an initial proposition I would suggest that the fragmented orientation identified in School B may be related to the machine-like organisational features of the school, and to the insistence on students' academic achievement, whereas the integrated orientation identified in School E may be associated with its organism-like features, and with the widespread ethos of whole-person education. Having contrasted the organisations of Schools B and E, the next chapter will consider how the relationship between guidance and discipline makes a difference at the department level in the two schools.

## Chapter Eight

### Schools B and E: At the Department Level

#### 8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has considered the relationship between guidance and discipline at the whole school level. This chapter focuses on the department level. I will firstly describe the school policies on guidance and discipline adopted by Schools B and E, and then contrast the structural arrangement and organisational culture of the Counselling and the Discipline Departments/Teams in the two schools. My particular interest is to examine how the structural arrangement and organisational culture of these two departments/teams are associated with the relationship between guidance and discipline in Schools B and E.

#### 8.2 In School B

##### 8.2.1 Structural arrangements for guidance and discipline

School B had no school policy on guidance and discipline, except 'a Guide for the Promotion of Effective Discipline', printed in the Teachers' Handbook. According to this guide, the aim of promoting effective discipline was to keep both the school and the classroom *'free from confusion, disorder, and anti-social behaviour'* (the Teachers' Handbook, 1999-2000, p.212). Three points are notable about the effective discipline endorsed in this guide. Firstly, effective discipline aimed to promote students' intrinsic ability for self-discipline, and to help them to take responsibility for their behaviour. In practice, the guide recommended teachers not to discipline students through using *'extrinsic force'*, such as physical control or punishment. Apart from this, the guide did not suggest any other way through which teachers

could achieve the target of effective discipline. Secondly, all teachers should involve in school discipline. As the guide stated,

*Effective discipline cannot be developed without the full understanding and co-operation of every staff in our school.... All teachers should help to develop the proper disciplinary atmosphere in school ('Discipline', in the Teachers' Handbook, 1999-2000, p.212. Text in English in original).*

Thirdly, teachers were expected to interpret discipline policies and apply school rules in a uniform way. As the guide suggested,

*All teachers should know the school rules well. It is of vital importance that the students know that all teachers are working towards the same goal – to maintain good discipline in school. If any teacher holds different views on the school policy on discipline, he/she should still adhere to the school policy. A teacher should not speak against the school policy in front of the students ('Discipline', in the Teachers' Handbook, 1999-2000, p.213. Text in English in original).*

In short, at the level of school policy, the school put more emphasis on discipline than on guidance. Whenever the effective discipline was being enforced in the school, teachers were expected to carry out school discipline procedure and enhance students' intrinsic ability for self-discipline. Having described the school policy on effective discipline, I will describe the structural arrangement of both the Counselling and Discipline Departments and their relationship within the school system.

### **The Discipline Department**

There were 17 teachers involved in the Discipline Department, which was constituted of the Executive and the General Administration Committees. These two committees were responsible for the formulation, co-ordination, implementation and review of discipline policies. For each committee meeting, an agenda was drafted; the minutes were well kept. Whenever any revision of discipline policies was made, the department would announce and clarify these revised policies to all teachers in staff meetings.

**Figure 8.1 'Duties List' of the Discipline Department in School B**

<b>Head of Discipline (1)</b>
<b>Vice Heads of Discipline(2)</b>
<b>Executive Committee (6)-</b>
<b>Secretary I (1)</b>
<b>Secretary II (1)</b>
<b>Judicial Convenors</b>
S.1-2 (1)
S.3-4 (1)
S.5-7 (1)
Year Teachers (6)
<b>General Administration</b>
Prefects (2)
Hall Discipline (2)
Uniform (2)
Late (2)
Floating Classes (1)
Detention (2)
Classroom Management (1)

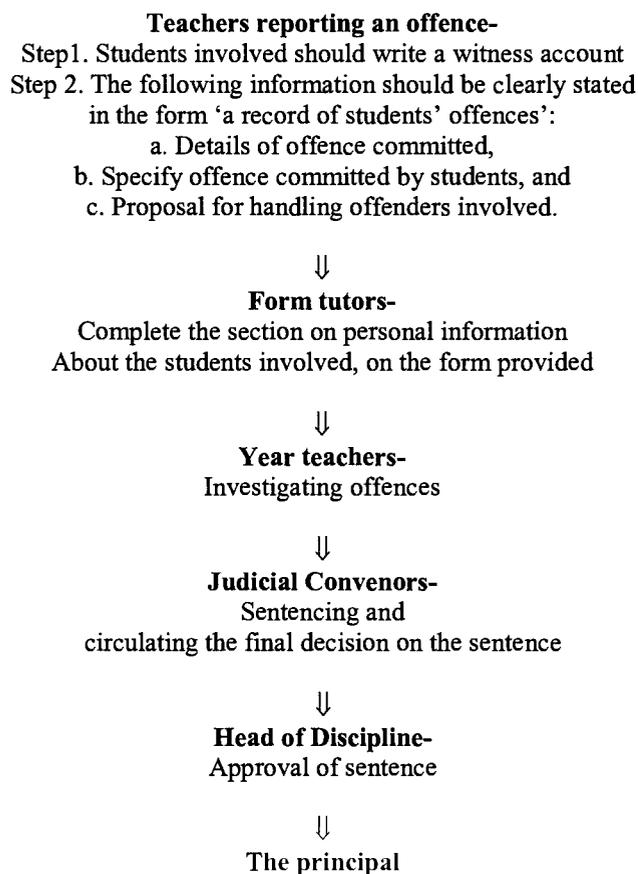
(‘Who is Who’, in the Teachers’ Handbook, 1999-2000, p. 24)

*\*The number indicates the numbers of teachers involved.*

This department comprised staff members in two sections: *‘the general administration’* and *‘the Judicial Convenors’*, as shown in Figure 8.1. The first included seven teams, these are, School Prefects, Hall Discipline, Uniform, Late, Floating Classes, Detention, and Classroom Discipline. Each formulated its own rules and policies, all of which were officially approved in the Executive Committee; and each had developed a well-established protocol of procedures, which was all made explicit to teachers.

The second section, *‘the Judicial Convenors’*, was composed of the Team for Case Investigation. Apart from the nine teachers officially assigned to work in this team, all discipline teachers and classroom teachers who reported cases had an official responsibility for investigating cases. This team mostly managed students’ misbehaviour through a routine of referral, as shown in Figure 8.2 (p.170), which included various processes, such as writing witness accounts, interviewing, interrogating, judging, sentencing and the enforcement of punishment. Through these

**Figure 8.2 'Process of handling misbehaving cases' in School B**



('Discipline', in the Teachers' Handbook, 1999-2000, p.215)

processes, the official judgements, verdicts and sentences for each case were made, according to previous cases handled by this department. Teachers and students felt very satisfied with the investigating system, since, as they admitted, this system helped to achieve the targets of fairness and justice.

### **The Counselling Department**

There were 14 teachers involved in the Counselling Department, consisting of four main teams: Personal Counselling, Peer Counselling Scheme, Sex Education and Civic Education. Each established its own administrative procedures and formulated

**Figure 8.3 'Duties List' of the Counselling Department in School B**

<b>Head of Counselling (1)</b>
<b>Vice Heads of Counselling (3)</b>
<b>Executive Committee (4)</b>
<b>General Administration (1)</b>
<b>Resources and Promotion (1)</b>
<b>Personal Counselling Scheme (14)</b>
<b>Peer Counselling Scheme (4)</b>
<b>Sex Education (2)</b>
<b>Class Assembly Resources (1)</b>
<b>Civic Education (3)</b>
<b>Form Teacher Support (1)</b>
<b>Volunteer Project (1)</b>
<b>Award Scheme (1)</b>
<b>Baptist Moral Education Project (1)</b>
<b>Breakthrough Leadership Training Project (1)</b>

('Who is Who', in the Teachers' Handbook, 1999-2000, p.24)

*\*The number indicates the numbers of teachers involved.*

its own policy and programme. Team meetings were called regularly. Minutes and agendas were well kept. Among all the teams, the Personal Counselling Team was the only one wherein all counselling teachers were obliged to participate, as shown in Figure 8.3.

### **Relationship between school guidance and discipline**

Regarding the relationship between guidance and discipline, teachers held the orthodox view that *'discipline goes ahead of counselling'*. (The definition of the term 'orthodox view' can be found in the section on 'classification of roles', in Chapter Four, in p.71). For example, Mrs Liao, Head of Discipline, affirmed, *'strictness should go ahead of counselling'* (B991025-Interview data). Another department head stressed, *'The school needs discipline, so counselling (guidance) should co-operate well with discipline'* (B991004-Field notes). However, no one would propose the reverse that *'discipline'* needed to collaborate with *'counselling'*. To a great extent, discipline was prioritised over guidance in schooling; and the Discipline Department played a more active role in handling students' misbehaviour than the Counselling Department. This was evident when in most cases, those students who committed

offences were first referred to the Discipline Department before further being referred to the Counselling Department.

A further reflection of this prioritisation was the physical arrangement of the notice board for these two departments. In the staff room, there was a huge and elongated notice board, comprising 13 sections, located at the most prominent and accessible position. Five of these sections, in the central part of the board, belonged to the Discipline Department. A wide range of information was available, such as the contact numbers of police stations, the official statistics of the work carried out by various sub-teams of the Discipline Department in the previous academic year, the statements of discipline policies, the current record of students referred to each sub-team (such as, a list of students referred to the Detention Team) and the official reports of case investigations.

In contrast to the Discipline Department, only half of one section was allocated to the Counselling Department. This section was located at the far end of the board, a less eye-catching position. Mr Leung, Vice Head of Counselling, revealed that the Counselling Department had recently secured this half section; the central purpose of this arrangement was to promote the image of the department across the school. Throughout the four months' period of data collection, I found that the variety of information displayed was limited; there was only one huge table, formed by five horizontal A-4 size papers, showing the details of '*students given minor demerit*' who were '*followed up*' by counselling teachers (B990915-Field notes).

In sum, the Discipline and the Counselling Departments were well structured in terms of their organisational structure and protocol of procedures. School discipline tended to be prioritised over guidance; specifically, the Discipline Department tended to play a more active role in the management of students' misbehaviour than the Counselling Department, and particularly intended to keep the management of students' misbehaviour in line with protocol of procedures. The prioritisation was reflected both in the orthodox view that '*discipline goes ahead of guidance*' and in the fact that

information on school discipline was more available and accessible in the school than that on school guidance.

### 8.2.2 Organisational Culture of Discipline and Guidance

Having described the structural arrangement of guidance and discipline at the department level, I will explore the organisational culture of the Discipline and the Counselling Departments which had been created in School B, and how this culture was maintained, reproduced, and associated with the existing relationship between guidance and discipline at the department level.

#### In the Discipline Department

##### *Culture of systematisation, consistency and universality*

In School B, teachers described the operation of school discipline, especially that of case investigation and punishment as 'a system'. For example, the account of the development of the Discipline Department, given by Mrs Liao, Head of Discipline, revealed that this department intended to set up a discipline system wherein students' misbehaviour could be handled in 'more systematised' and 'less personalised' ways. As she put it,

*In the past there was no system at all; and things were very personalised. People could punish students in any way they liked; this was totally dependent on individuals. The systematisation certainly helps to lessen this sense of personalisation; teachers' judgement can be made with the least reference to any 'human-relationship' factor. With systematization, justice is more likely to be guaranteed; and it helps teachers to see things fairly in department meetings.... (B991025).*

Mrs Liao strongly insisted that this discipline system was effective in earning students' conformity. This system was described as the 'tradition' or culture of school discipline, which was well maintained within the department. As she claimed, when describing students' roles,

*Why do I say that our students are not so bad because we've disciplined them strictly since they took secondary-one. Of course, we can do nothing if they*

*become bad during the summer vacation. Even so, no matter how bad students are, we have our tradition of confining and disciplining them strictly so as to get them to conform to school rules. This ensures that they won't do something exaggerated and outrageous in the school (B991025).*

Within the discipline system, teachers assumed that students' misbehaviours were learnt from their peers; without proper management and precaution, the influence of misbehaviour would spread and make previous well-behaved students misbehave. In the teachers' view, for precautionary reasons, those students who failed to show conformity and compliance to school rules should be isolated and punished. They would be deprived of their right to belong in the short run. This thinking was evident in a morning assembly, launched by the Discipline Department at the beginning of the academic term. The assembly aimed to socialise students to behave as conformists, and in the values of fairness and justice underlying discipline policies and school rules. In the morning assembly, all non-compliant students, such as the 'nine-minor-demerit' students, were branded as anti-school and the trouble-makers. They were negatively imaged as 'cockroaches', who should be deprived of their right to belong as punishment. As my field notes recorded,

*At 8:50am (at the beginning of morning assembly), the Student Head of the Prefects Team, indicated that school prefects intend to help students conform to school rules. Then the assembly is followed by a slide show. The show is based on a situation where a senior prefect reminds a secondary-one boy of some school rules. To begin with, this boy is told that school rules are mainly set up to deal with students' misbehaviour.... The presenter strongly insists, "If students are good, the school is benefited; and everyone will be benefited too".... In the course of the slide show, the presenter depicted the bad students as cockroaches which like darkness and hate brightness; they are disgusting and not approachable; they are the trouble-makers, who bully the weak, scare the strong, and act disruptively and violently. All students should be aware of the friends whom they make and avoid establishing any relationship with these bad students... (B990913).*

Students' conformity and compliance to school rules were strongly emphasised in schooling, and school rules were described by teachers as a universal code of behaviour and as the backbone of the discipline system. For example, Miss Liang, a discipline teacher, emphasised that the Discipline Department was responsible for

enforcing school rules, which he described as *'the front line of discipline'*, so as to maintain the consistent operation of the discipline system. If the Department failed to do this, she claimed, the discipline system would collapse. As Miss Liang stressed, when asked about her view of the role of the Discipline Department,

*It's very obvious. School rules are the very front line of the Discipline Department. This is also the very front line of school discipline. Sometimes, I know some rules are really harsh, but I know if we haven't this front line, all systems may collapse.*

*Interviewer: What "systems" do you mean?*

*Liang: For example, the punishment system... I know some discipline rules are too harsh and students may feel very offended, as I have observed. As a result of this, some students may rebel in some ways; but, it is absolutely impossible to change or loosen these school rules... (B991028).*

In short, the Discipline Department was characterised by a culture of systematisation, consistency and universality. 'Systematisation' refers to discipline system which was systemised and institutionalised, with standardised administrative procedures. To borrow a term from Watkins and Wagner (2000), School B adopted *'the tariff approach'* (p.28) to school discipline, which teachers were used to codifying a set of responses to particular students' misbehaviour, and accordingly to managing the misbehaviour in protocol of procedures. 'Consistency' refers to the departments' intention to ensure that all school practitioners were able to interpret discipline policies and school rules in standardised ways, and that all teachers were able to manage students' misbehaviour with standardised procedures. The term 'universality' is borrowed from Sergiovanni (1994). This term refers to the practice of interpreting human behaviours according to a universal code of behaviour. Discipline problems are categorised and then handled by predetermined procedures according to the universal code of school rules.

#### *Maintenance of the discipline culture*

In the school, the discipline culture was maintained and reproduced in the department through the structural arrangements for school discipline, and through those teachers involved in the discipline system, including both discipline and non-discipline

teachers. This process was reflected in a meeting of the Discipline Department, in which I participated during the period of data collection. Throughout the meeting, Head and Vice Heads of Discipline played a significant role in directing, monitoring and safeguarding legitimate values of discipline; and any value which opposed the legitimate ones, would be screened out and discouraged. Reciprocally, those teachers who held any such opposing value, in most cases, remained submissive to these department heads, and had no intention of reacting openly against this discipline culture.

In the course of this team meeting, the departments heads and Mr Tong, a discipline teacher, debated about two issues: whether students were allowed to air their opinions when discipline policy was formulated; and whether the current policy of a ban on leaving textbooks in classrooms overnight should be relaxed. In the course of their discussion, it was obvious that the department heads and Mr Tong held opposing views upon these two issues. To put it briefly, Mr Tong held an expanded and humanistic view on discipline. He put forward the idea that the emphasis of school discipline should be on '*students*' rather than on '*the school*', and its goals should be '*humanistic*' rather than '*disciplinary*'. He contended that most discipline teachers had '*a blind spot*', which made them unable to acknowledge the fact that existing discipline policies overtly aimed to control non-compliant behaviour, which was only performed by a small number of students; and those students, who broke school rules and were accordingly punished, were in fact '*the victims of the system*'. Meanwhile, the majority of students were the compliant, and seemed to '*suffer*' from being confined by school rules when discipline policies were enforced. Further, students were deprived of their rights to voice their opinions on discipline policies and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Mr Tong's idea was strongly opposed by the department heads, because in their view, if discipline policies were relaxed as Mr Tong had suggested, the Discipline Department could no longer ensure that teachers and students could make sense of these policies in standardised ways, and that these policies were enforced

consistently. Finally Mr Tong had to submit to both the department heads and the discipline culture. This is shown in a segment of the transcript of the team meeting, quoted below:

*Tong: ... when a relevant policy is made, all people [students] should obey and follow. Whenever this policy is reviewed, they [students] in fact like to express their view too. However, very often, it is only teachers who express their view. But students have no right to say how the policy impacts upon them. I think, such a situation might vastly affect the whole school climate and students' sense of belonging to school.*

*Vice Head: Wrong!.... Whenever a policy is enforced, actually, we allow students to speak out their views even though we may not accept it...*

*Tong: In fact [Interrupted]*

*Vice Head: I fully understand... I want my school to be like this as well, very humanistic!.... I think our students at present have no such kind of ability [to respond to being treated in a humanistic way] ... When they still have no such an ability, we need to concentrate more on discipline.*

*Tong: I understand your point. Surely, our intention [the discipline department] is kind. All policies made are for the sake of students...*

*Department Head: I think they [students] are not good enough... We need to enforce the polices effectively. We need to do so for their sake. In fact, whatever we do is mainly for them.*

*Tong: No! Because I think most discipline teachers always think of students in negative ways.... But in fact the majority of students might not be as bad as you think. However, when a policy is made, the focus is on a preventive purpose. It aims to prevent occurrence of students' bad behaviour. This makes most innocent students suffer too.... To a certain extent, the school should allow more space for students so that they can see the humanistic aspect of school polices.... Therefore they... [Interrupted]*

*Department Head: I think we should not discuss this point any more... (B991004-Discipline Meeting).*

Like Mr Tong, Miss Liang, an investigator, holding an expanded view of discipline, remained submissive to the Discipline department, and would not react against the discipline culture, though she experienced some conflict between playing both investigator and guidance roles in the department. This conflict was caused by her practice of using counselling skills when interrogating students with counselling skills. Although this practice helped her to successfully establish the truth of a case, she felt very apologetic to students whom she interrogated, because mostly these students would then be referred for sentencing and punished. Even so, she remained

in the department and insisted on carrying out her role as an investigator with the use of counselling skills. To fulfil her duties, she needed to accommodate the emotional frustration aroused by the conflict that she experienced between playing the guidance and investigator roles. As Miss Liang disclosed, when asked about how she felt when learning that students whom she investigated were punished by the Discipline Department,

*I always feel very upset. I have cried several times for this reason. I once investigated a student and used all the [counselling] skills as I've mentioned earlier. At first this student just refused to confess but eventually he revealed to me all the truth. He even disclosed how he felt when he committed the offence. I could fully empathise with his situation at the time... In fact I really hate the moment when the [Discipline] Department decides on a sentence for students' offences. I always let students know that although I investigate their offences, I merely intend to let them learn a lesson but not to give them any heavy punishment. This is the conflict that I have been experiencing.... But whenever I see these students being punished, I feel very [weeping] ... I've told these students several times that I felt very upset indeed (B991028).*

In short, in School B, the discipline culture of consistency, systematisation and universality was maintained and reproduced not only through the structural arrangement of school discipline and the discipline system, but also through the attitudes and actions of teachers involved in such system. In particular, the Head and Vice Heads of Discipline played a significant role in resisting any ideals and values, which were opposing to the legitimate discipline culture. Correspondingly, those discipline teachers who held an expanded and humanistic view of discipline, mostly showed their submission to the department and the discipline culture.

#### *Domination of the discipline culture*

In School B, teachers perceived that the discipline culture and the Discipline Department dominated the school. This domination was evident in the following three ways. Firstly, the Discipline Department was considered by teachers to have a high social status in the school organisation. As the teachers remarked, teachers in the Discipline Department were 'smart', and had a stronger team spirit and a higher social status than those teachers involved in other departments. Consistently, the

discipline teachers declared that they felt a sense of satisfaction in their work and were proud of being members of the department. By contrast, the Counselling Department was commonly described as *'weak'* and the collaboration among counselling teachers was like *'a host of losing sands'*, which were isolated and fragmented. Some teachers even alleged that some counselling teachers had a notorious reputation for their teaching, and for living with the students whom they taught.

Secondly, this domination was reflected in teachers' everyday conversation about schooling. Teachers usually depicted the existing culture of school discipline as *'powerful'*, *'strong'*, *'aggressive'*, *'firm'*, *'strict'*, and *'tight'*. For example, Miss Fook, Vice Head of Discipline, described this culture as *'powerful'*, and considered that this power was caused by two factors: accountability for discipline work, and teachers' reliance on the Discipline Department. First of all, the department kept updating the official figures of referral cases handled by the department, and then displayed them on the notice board in the staff room for all teachers' reference. These figures created a powerful image of the Discipline Department working very hard to manage students' behaviour. Second of all, teachers were used to relying on the Case Investigation Team to manage students' misbehaviour. These powers are illustrated by the account of the discipline culture given by Miss Fook in the segment of transcript quoted below:

*Among all departments, the Discipline Department is the most powerful. This is certainly not what we [the Discipline Department] want to see. It is mainly because of the students' low quality that we need to be like this; in fact we [the Discipline Department] are forced to be very strict and handle things rigidly. Our work [discipline work] is highly accountable; and it can be counted case by case. Therefore, you can tell easily how much work we have done... The second reason for this [the power of the Discipline Department] relates to the investigating system... Such a system makes some teachers fully rely on the department to deal with students' problems.... I think that some teachers do not know their roles well, so whenever something happens, they straightaway contact the Discipline Department... (B990917)*

Thirdly, the Discipline Department held a privileged position where they could blame others, but not be blamed. Under the domination of this Department, as teachers perceived, the Counselling Department became relatively 'weak' and very often became a subject of blame. The blame was described as having intensified as soon as the number of cases handled by the Discipline Department in the previous academic year proliferated to 400. Teachers and the principal described this figure as 'unprecedented' and interpreted it as an indication that students were getting disruptive; in relation to this, the Discipline Department had fulfilled their responsibility for managing the students' misbehaviour, but not the Counselling Department. Hence, when Mrs Liao, Head of Discipline, talked about the relationship between the two departments, she blamed the 'disability' of the Counselling Department, and grumbled that the Discipline Department needed to take over most of the guidance work, which should have been done by the Counselling Department. As Miss Liao put it,

*Within my superficial observation, they [the Counselling Department] never do anything... Everyone can tell easily that the Counselling Department is absolutely disabled. It is very true from our point of view because we [the Discipline Department] have been taking over their counselling work for long.... For so many years,... we needed to make a referral by completing a form. Then they [the Counselling Department] would do something for us.... Recently, we [the Discipline Department] have forced them [the Counselling Department] to do something, and the principal feels very discontented with this [the disability of the Counselling Department] too... In the last academic year,... the situation was very bad. We had about thirty students with nine demerits, from secondary-two, three and four. This record was unprecedented. Now these students are still in the school. What is the future of this group of students, then? No one cares! Eventually the Discipline Department has to deal with them. In relation to this, it was I who got Mr King [Head of Counselling] and the social worker to work together on it... As you know, I designed a table indicating the procedure for handling these 'nine demerit' students after I had completed a training course on school discipline.... I told the principal that it should be the Counselling Department who designed this sort of table, instead of my department... (B991025).*

All in all, school discipline in School B was characterised by the culture of systematisation, consistency and universality. This discipline culture was maintained

and reproduced by the structural arrangements and by the department heads, and then became dominant in the school. The domination related to the three features of the Discipline Department: its high social status within the school, its great influence on school climate and its privileged position with regard to blame.

### **In the Counselling Department**

#### *Atmosphere of discontent and blame*

In contrast to the Discipline Department, the counselling teachers in the Counselling Department felt discontented with their working situation. They perceived that there was a lack of team spirit in their department, and that counselling teachers were isolated from each other. Further, they criticised the workload assigned by the department was not allocated as not evenly among counselling teachers. Because of this, as the vice department head revealed, the department was pressurised to *'divide the workload in explicit ways'* (B990913). As some teachers said, *'the head of the Counselling Department should give clear orders to the subordinates and allocate the workload precisely'* (Interview data and field notes).

In addition to the uneven allocation of workload, counselling teachers' discontent was linked to their lack of a sense of purposefulness when participating in this department. For example, when a counselling teacher discussed her perception of the department, she said, *'the colleagues [counselling teachers] just work very hard but what they have done will never be recognised. This makes us so upset'*, and continued, *'most colleagues just think we [counselling teachers] have done nothing'* (B990913-Interview data). Another counselling teacher endorsed the same view, saying, *'the department [the Counselling Department] continually marches on the same place and makes no progress at all; sometimes, it even steps backward. Students, teachers and the whole department are suffering'* (B991130-Interview data).

Furthermore, the discontent of counselling teachers could never be divorced from the low social image of the Counselling Department in the school, particularly when their department was blamed for failing to help students to change their misbehaviour, as I

have described earlier. For example, a counselling teacher said, *'Last year, students behaved so badly. Most teachers began to investigate reasons for this. Since then, they have been questioning whether the Personal Counselling Team fails to function as supposed'* (B991005-Interview data). Likewise, another counselling teacher said, *'the Discipline Department might think that the school just wastes "rice" to feed this group of people [the counselling teachers] who are totally unable to help in the school'* (B991130-Interview data). Therefore, counselling teachers found that *'the more they work, the more they were blamed for being unable to work'* (B990913-Interview data).

While the Counselling Department was constantly being blamed by other departments, the atmosphere of blame was simultaneously growing inside the Counselling Department. Counselling teachers turned to blame the department head for being unable to show an orientation for the Counselling Department, and to cement counselling teachers together as a team. They also blamed him for his incapability in leadership. For example, when a counselling teacher, Miss Au, described the atmosphere of the department, she stressed that Head of Counselling was incapable of resolving current problems arising in the department. As Miss Au put it,

*The department has been in chaos for a few years. I feel that the 'upper head' [a Cantonese expression referring to persons holding power within a hierarchy of organisation; here refers to the principal] always requests us to do more work. But our leader [Head of Counselling] seems very puzzled about her request as if he had no idea about where to start and what work should be done. It seems to me that we [counselling teachers] need to do everything and also nothing (B991130).*

#### *Working against the grain of the discipline culture*

While the Counselling Department was constantly overwhelmed by an atmosphere of discontent and blame, tension between the Counselling and Discipline Departments was described as growing by teachers. In particular, counselling teachers perceived that this tension was intensified, whenever the Discipline Department voiced the

urgent need for strengthen their collaboration with the Counselling Department, but not with other departments, for handling the proliferating cases of students' misbehaviour. For example, this need was endorsed in the minutes of the Discipline Department, '*Working Schedule of School Discipline in 1998-99*'. As the minutes stated, it was necessary for the Discipline Department '*to strengthen its collaboration with other departments, especially the Counselling Department*'.

In relation to the external pressure imposed by both the Discipline Department and the Principal, the Personal Counselling Team in the Counselling Department had expanded and accordingly, all counselling teachers had to get involved in the Personal Counselling Team and provide '*nine-demerit students*' with a counselling service. This arrangement became effective in the academic term of my data collection. Such an arrangement aroused counselling teachers' enormous discontent, as they interpreted it as an indication that the Discipline Department intruded its influence into the Counselling Department, and consequently, that they needed to work for the Discipline Department.

Miss Nang, like other counselling teachers, perceived that under the intrusion of the Discipline Department the current goal of the Counselling Department was distorted as '*servicing the "demerit" students*' (B990913-Interview data); and the intrusion made counselling teachers fail to identify the purpose of their participation in the department, especially when teachers disclosed the habit of simplifying the reasons for students' misbehaviour as the malfunction of the Counselling Department, and blaming the department for this. As Miss Nang stated, when requested to clarify her perception of the goal of the Counselling Department,

*I don't think the goal is vague. The goal is to manage the "nine-demerit" students. It seems to me that our goal is to reduce the number of students who get demerits... and provide them with sufficient counselling service. This is the goal [of the Counselling Department], but I think this is only the goal imposed by others.*

*Interviewer: Oh, it is "imposed"!*

*Nang: ... Probably, it is because this goal was imposed by others, they [counselling teachers] might not agree with this so much... In fact, there are*

*many reasons why students have got demerits. It is very unreasonable for anyone to say that they [students] get demerits because they've received no counselling service... I think that some people [teachers] tend to oversimplify what they have seen; and they merely simplify the problem and then propose a simple resolution for this problem. Having said that, I don't mean that students' problems cannot be resolved through counselling, but I'm inclined to say that this is not an effective way to do so (B990913).*

Like Miss Nang, when describing the relationship between the two departments Miss Au found that the Counselling Department was blamed for social and institutional disorder by the Discipline Department; and this disorder caused counselling teachers to experience goal conflict between achieving the goals internally defined by their department and the goals externally imposed by the Discipline Department. As Miss Au admitted, when describing the culture of the Counselling Department,

*Overall the atmosphere in the department is quite bad.... There is a tendency that school discipline is getting more and more strong; people like to argue that the Counselling Department has done nothing; they question why students are still behaving so badly. We [counselling teachers] totally lose our face. It is wrong to think that we don't want to work, but we have no idea what work we should do.... I always feel that it is the 'upper head' [the principal] who initiated 'this change'. Here I mean that the principal requested him [Head of Counselling] to make such a change [that is, the expansion of the Personal Counselling Team]; accordingly he imposed this upon us forcefully. In fact, it is not wrong for him to do this; and indeed I don't mind taking up the extra workload, but I really want to see the meaning of our work.... Now it seems to us that our target is to complete the task imposed upon us by someone else. I've asked him about the aim of our work, but he's failed to answer (B991130).*

Thus the Counselling Department was characterised by an organisational culture of discontent and blame. This culture were described as intensifying when counselling teachers felt that they needed to work against the grain of the discipline culture, and felt puzzled about the purposefulness of their participation in their own department.

In this section, I have described the relationship between school guidance and discipline in School B. At the department level, this relationship tended to be disconnected at the department level. The disconnection was rooted in the school

policy on '*effective discipline*', and in the orthodox view that school discipline should be prioritised over school guidance. Within the school, the Discipline Department functioned as a system, where the discipline culture of systematisation, consistency and universality was maintained and reproduced. This discipline culture had a profound impact on the existing school climate, and particularly dominated the Counselling Department in two ways: through the blame and intrusion. The Discipline Department accused the Counselling Department of being useless for changing students' misbehaviour, but such blame and accusation would never occur in the other way round. Through intrusion, the Counselling Department was pressurised to work for the Discipline Department. In this circumstance, counselling teachers felt puzzled about the purpose of participating in the Counselling Department. To a countable degree, by blame and intrusion the Discipline Department stayed powerful within the school, and dominated the Counselling Department. Correspondingly, the Counselling Department needed to work against the grain of the discipline culture.

### **8.3 In School E**

The discussion now moves from School B to School E. I will firstly illustrate the whole school guidance and discipline approach adopted in this school, and next describe the structural arrangement and organisational culture of the Counselling and Discipline Teams, and how this culture was linked to the relationship between guidance and discipline in School E.

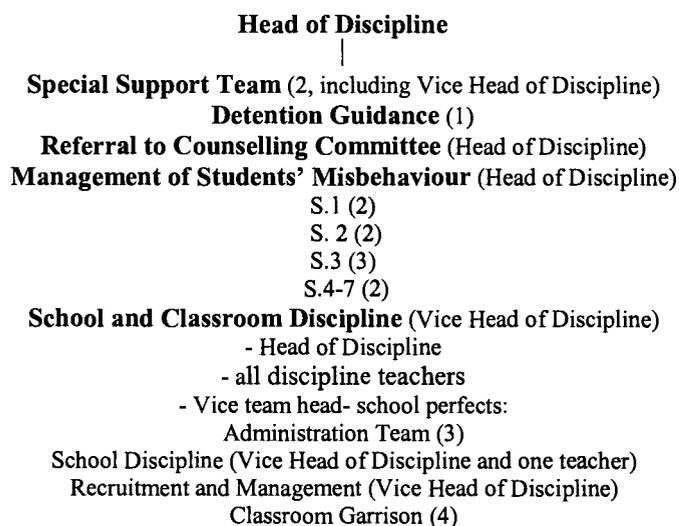
#### **8.3.1 Structural arrangements for guidance and discipline**

School E adopted a Whole School Approach to guidance and discipline. According to the Teachers' Handbook, this approach aimed to create an atmosphere which was '*righteous*', '*supportive*', '*moral*' and '*ideal*' in nature to promote students' holistic growth and make students feel accepted, cared for and encouraged. As the principal claimed, this approach was put into practice through a proactive mechanism for discipline, through which all teachers should be involved in school guidance and discipline. This mechanism will be explained later.

### The Discipline Team

There were ten teachers in the Discipline Team, constituted by five sub-teams as shown in Figure 8.4. The structural organisation of sub-teams was ambiguous in two ways. Firstly, the sub-teams did not actually function as they were formally arranged. For example, in the sub-team for Management of Students' Misbehaviour, year discipline teachers were formally allocated to handle referrals made by classroom teachers, but in practice, classroom teachers rarely referred any students to this sub-team. Some teachers were even uncertain about who the year discipline teachers for the year they taught were. Secondly, teachers had a very vague idea about official procedures for managing students' misbehaviour, for instance those for making referrals, investigating cases, and the issues of demerits. Further, formal and regular meetings were unusual in the team; and no minutes, agenda, and student records were kept.

**Figure 8.4 'Structure of the Discipline Team' in School E**



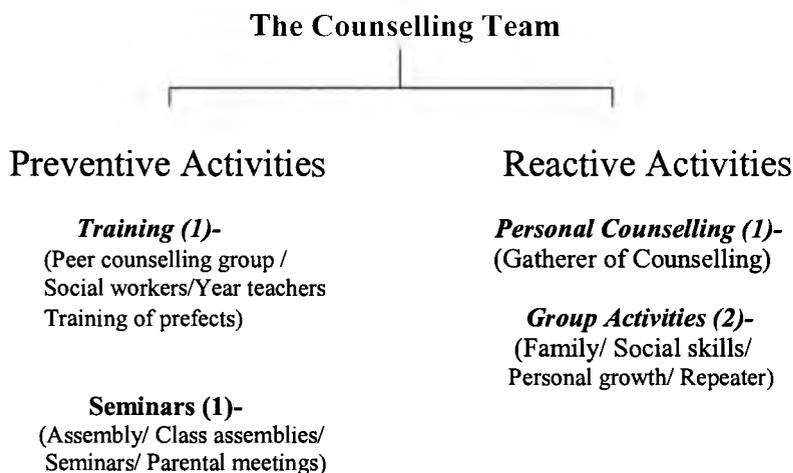
('The Discipline Team', in the Teachers' Handbook, revised in August 1999, p.28)

*\*The number indicates the number of teachers involved.*

### The Counselling Team

Five teachers were involved in the Counselling Team, which consisted of four sub-teams: Training, Seminars, Personal Counselling, and Group Activities, as shown in Figure 8.5. It is necessary to pinpoint that in Figure 8.5, the heading '*Structure of the Counselling Team*', indicated in the Teachers' Handbook, merely showed the nature of the guidance work carried out by the team, instead of the structure of the team as the heading suggested. Also the responsibilities of each sub-team and the boundaries between them were ambiguous. The counselling teachers admitted that the four sub-teams did not function as they were formally arranged; and Mr Lock, Gatherer of Counselling, was in charge of guidance work and got counselling teachers to work together. In describing their participation in the team, counselling teachers felt puzzled about their duties; some did not even realise that they were allocated to work in a specific sub-team as indicated in the Teachers' Handbook.

Figure 8.5 'Structure of the Counselling Team' in School E



('The Counselling Team', in the Teachers' Handbook, revised in August 1999, p.8)

*\*The number indicates the number of teachers involved.*

### 8.3.2 Organisational culture of discipline and guidance

Having described the structural arrangement of guidance and discipline at the departmental level, I will explore the organisational culture of these two teams and how this culture was connected to the relationship between guidance and discipline.

#### **In the Discipline Team**

##### *Culture of particularity, individuality and informality*

The organisational culture of the team was featured by particularity. This term is borrowed from Sergiovanni (1993) and refers to teachers' practice of resolving students' misbehaviour by considering the particular circumstances where the misbehaviour occurred; based upon these teachers make sense of students' behaviour.

The particularity was found in the fact that the discipline teachers did not manage students' misbehaviour mechanically according to protocol of procedures. For example, when describing how he handled students' misbehaviour, Mr Pool, Head of Discipline, insisted that he was used to helping these students as individual human beings, and to considering the situation in which the misbehaviour occurred. This was reflected in his account of '*the art*' and '*the handcraft*'. '*The art*' represented the ultimate target of discipline, that is, helping students to change their behaviour, and promoting their holistic growth. Meanwhile, '*the handcrafts*' referred to the means through which this target could be achieved, such as management, administration and protocol of procedures. In an interview, Mr Pool highly valued '*the art*', but not '*the handcraft*'. His account partly suggested why the discipline teachers were used to managing students' misbehaviour with respect to the unique and particular circumstances where the misbehaviour occurred. As Mr Pool put it,

*A main feature of my office is that I have nothing to show you if you request some document to read, because I have never kept any....I think nowadays the emphasis is placed too much on the flow of administrative procedure. This merely makes their work become a handcraft but not art... I always think management of students' behaviour is an art but not handcraft. If you just concentrate on passing documents in and out, and the flow of administrative procedures, the manpower will be bonded by the complexity of administrative procedures (E991029).*

In addition to particularity, school discipline in School E was featured by individuality; the division and delineation of duties was informally made, corresponding to individual teachers, who participated in the team by their free will, rather than for any institutional or contractual reasons. For example, in describing the Discipline Team, teachers in School E perceived that Mr Pool, Head of Discipline, and Mr York, Vice Head of Discipline, were the two key persons in the Team, but they rarely mentioned other work carried out by the sub-teams. In their view, Mr Pool specialised in two tasks: making referrals to the school social workers or the Gatherer of Counselling, and handling all referrals made by teachers. Meanwhile, Mr York was mainly responsible for the School Prefects Team, and handling all referrals made by prefects. As Miss Woods said, when describing the roles of Mr York and Mr Pool in the Discipline Team,

*Mr York's role is fully responsible for the prefects' team whereas Mr Pool is responsible for something at the broader level. I mean he [Mr Pool] cares for all students' behaviours and all teachers' discipline work too. But Mr York mainly checks on the prefects' work. Mr Pool will be never involved in any of Mr York's work... If I find any difficult students, I will hand them over to Mr Pool instead of Mr York... (E991117).*

In addition to individuality, the Discipline Team was characterised by informality. This refers to the patterns of teachers' working relationships, which was flexible and changeable in terms of the duration of their collaboration, the involvement of teachers in the team and the goals of their collaboration. Concisely, discipline teachers merely came to collaborate with each other to deal with particular incidents corresponding to requests made by the team head or vice team head. The duration of their collaboration was temporary; and their involvement was voluntary. This partly explained why discipline teachers regarded themselves as the '*helping hands*' of the team head or vice head. For example, when a discipline teacher described his role in the Discipline Team, he stressed that '*our participation [in the Discipline Team] is driven by our conscience*' (E991117-Interview data). Another discipline teacher endorsed the same

view, that *'participating in the discipline team, I feel that it is only necessary to work according to my desire'* (E990903-Interview data).

#### *Conflict with the organisational culture*

While the school was moving and changing, some teachers began experiencing conflict between the two patterns of collaboration, that is, *'old'* and *'new'*, informal and formal, or based on free will rather than contractual reasons, especially when they expected a higher level of teachers' collaboration in carrying out guidance and any discipline work.

For example, Mr York, Vice Head of Discipline, confirmed that the working relations between discipline teachers were informal, and that mostly teachers' collaboration was on the basis of their free will, rather than for institutional reasons. As a result of this, he found it hard to have any plan for collaboration. As he put it,

*You just can't push them [discipline teachers] to work. [If you do,] they will make a lot of excuses; and they merely pay you lip service. Eventually they do nothing at all. In such a case, I don't think you can blame them for anything because of this. This is one of our problems. I don't mean that our colleagues are not willing to work, but they are not so used to working in this way. In the discipline team meeting, things are not said explicitly; the allocation of the workload is done vaguely.... Things cannot get done because the allocation and targets of our work are not explicitly stated... (E991110).*

Some discipline teachers, like Mr York, asserted the need for strengthening their collaboration. They perceived that Mr Pool, Head of Discipline, seemed to *'take over all discipline tasks'*, and to carry these tasks out within *'a black box'* which was obscure to other teachers. Further, they contended that communication between teachers in the team might not be effective enough to promote a team spirit. For example, in discussing his expectations of the Discipline Team, Mr Chan, a guidance teacher, admitted that he felt puzzled about its operation. As he said,

*I rather feel that how things have been handled by the Discipline Team has never been made explicit to teachers. Similarly, after they [the Discipline Team] has formulated some rules, they have never told other teachers about*

*it. For the school, ... I have absolutely no idea what they have been doing [laughing] ... (E991124).*

Likewise, the principal admitted that Mr Pool, as Head of Discipline, was used to carrying out school discipline in his own way; his leadership and managerial style seemed ineffective to ensuring discipline teachers to collaborate with each other as a team. To make a change, the principal promoted Mr York to be Vice Head of Discipline, and expected him to promote team spirit and collaboration among discipline teachers. As my field notes recorded,

*The discipline head is responsible for a lot of work. Apparently he cannot complete the work as well as he did before, especially when he keeps doing things with his traditional way of management. He has never kept any minutes or documents since he participated in the department; hence, his experience cannot be recorded on paper. He always places the emphasis of the discipline work on efficiency and immediacy, but now the work is getting more and more heavy. In fact, it is impossible for him to keep working in such a way because the work that he is handling now is more than the amount that he can cope with. Because of this, Mr York has been promoted to be Vice Head of Discipline. It is hoped that by giving him such a legitimate post within the institution, he can organise work better and get discipline teachers to cohere and work together; also documents, agenda, and minutes can be well kept (E991015).*

In short, the structure of the Discipline Team was ambiguous, and the team did not operating as it was formally arranged. At one level, this organisational culture helped discipline teachers to look for a particular resolution for students' misbehaviour with respect to the unique circumstances where the misbehaviour occurred. But, at another level, this culture might not be effective in ensuring the desired collaboration when the school was moving and changing.

### **In the Counselling Team**

#### *Culture of informality*

Having described the organisational culture of the Discipline Team, I will examine the Counselling Team. Consistent with the ambiguity of its structural features, as I have described earlier, the organisational culture of the Counselling Team was

characterised by informality. This culture was reflected in two of its features: negotiation and collaboration.

Firstly, due to the fact that regular and formal meetings were rare in the team, Mr Lock, Gatherer of Counselling, needed to reach a working consensus with counselling teachers through an informal negotiation. In his words, this meant *'sitting together and having a chat'*. Secondly, Mr Lock stated, counselling teachers were not so *'enthusiastic'* about participating in the team; in most case, teachers worked together as a team only when he invited them to handle particular incidents. As he said, *'therefore, in general our collaboration is task-based. If we have a task, we then "sit together" and share the workload'* (E991210-Interview data).

In relation to this invitation, counselling teachers claimed that they were willing to participate in the team whenever necessary, and correspondingly described their role in the team as the Gatherer's *'helping hands'*. For example, when describing his relationships with the Gatherer, a counselling teacher said, *'Nothing at all! How to say? Well, perhaps just give him a helping hand if he needs it'*.

It is important to stress that the informality of teachers' collaboration was connected to how counselling teachers made sense of their guidance role. Here, two points are notable. First, some counselling teachers asserted that they were not professionals in counselling, since they had not received any training as the Gatherer of Counselling and the social workers had; this made them feel hesitant to describe themselves as *'counselling teachers'*, rather than *'the helping hands of the Gatherer'*. As Mr Young said, when requested to clarify his role as 'an outsider' in the Counselling Team as he portrayed himself,

*Regarding this [counselling] work, I am not as professional as they are. You know. Mr Lock [Gatherer of Counselling] is very experienced in this work, and the social worker is as well. I have made ever so many technical mistakes because of my unfamiliarity with counselling skills. For example, I could not use these skills properly to communicate with students; when handling cases I failed to dissociate myself from the students involved and to keep a distance*

*from them. I was so deeply affected eventually. Because of this, I strongly feel that I'm an outsider... (E991103).*

Second, counselling teachers perceived that their duties of school guidance were taken over by the social workers, form tutors and classroom teachers, who were used to playing the guidance role in helping students in need; in relation to this, classroom teachers rarely relied on the team to provide students with guidance service. To a great extent, counselling teachers considered the diffuse guidance role as a factor which hindered the proper function of the Counselling Team, and made the teachers' collaboration in the team became informal and flexible. This was evident in the account of referrals given by Mr Sung, a counselling teacher, as shown in the segment of transcript quoted below:

*Interviewer: .... In general have you dealt with many referral cases when working in the department in the last four years?*

*Sung: I've made referrals to social workers. However, other teachers have never referred any student to me. Never! But they've made them directly to a social worker.*

*Interviewer: .... Then in general how would you perceive the guidance role you are now playing in the team?*

*Sung: Basically, I am a teacher, so naturally I have to place the emphasis of my duty on teaching. In the team, I know I haven't received any training. So sometimes I merely carry out the work on the basis of my "common sense" knowledge. If I find any cases unmanageable, I will definitely refer them to a social worker. Sometimes, our work overlaps: if students have experienced some learning difficulty, to a very great extent, my role, as a counselling teacher, will overlap with the roles that classroom teachers should play.... In fact this is a big overlap. Therefore, in most cases, I find it hard to delineate clearly which role I am now playing. It is very hard to divide it clearly (E9912010).*

In short, both the Discipline and the Counselling Teams were characterised by the organisational culture of informality. Within this culture, the relations between school participants had become informal and changeable; and teachers liked to associate with each other according to their free will, rather than for any institutional or contractual reasons. Furthermore, with the discipline culture of particularity and individuality, the Discipline Team was used to looking for a unique resolution for

students' misbehaviour responding to the unique circumstances in which the misbehaviour occurred. Based upon this understanding, I will next illustrate the relationship between school guidance and discipline at the department level.

### **Diffuseness of discipline and guidance**

#### *A mechanism of discipline*

To describe the organisational culture of the Discipline and the Counselling Teams, I borrow the term '*diffuseness*' from Sergiovanni's study (1994) to indicate the phenomenon that teachers in School E, including both the discipline and counselling teachers, felt responsible for guidance and discipline in schooling, and viewed each other in ways which were not strongly defined and which allowed for broad interaction. In other words, they tended less to define each other narrowly by roles, role expectations and pre-determined work requirement.

The diffuseness of discipline and guidance was closely connected to the mechanism that the school intended to establish for changing students' misbehaviour. According to the principal, this mechanism was grounded on the notions of '*respect*' and '*care*'; and its function was more than to prevent the occurrence of students' misbehaviour, but to create an environment for helping students to rejoin the '*main stream*'.

According to the Teachers' Handbook, within this mechanism all teachers were expected to help students to resolve their behavioural and emotional problems, and provide them with '*long-term guidance, long-term encouragement and support*' so as to enhance their '*moral courage*'. By contrast, both the Discipline and the Counselling Teams merely played a '*short-term*' role in raising students' awareness of the need to change their behaviour. The minutes of a meeting for the implementation of the whole school approach to guidance and discipline endorsed the same view, that all teachers were responsible for teaching, guidance and discipline, and had to hold a '*long-term*' view on students' '*change*' and '*growth*', as stated below:

*We have a long-term expectation of our students. When living with students, teachers should be deeply concerned with the long-term development of student personalities and see their welfare as ultimate interests (A summary of the meetings on Whole School Guidance and Discipline, held on 19/20th October, 2000).*

#### *Diffuseness at the departmental level*

With this in mind, in School E, the diffuseness of guidance and discipline which was seen at both the department and individual levels made the connection between school guidance and discipline possible at the department level. In teachers' view, school guidance and discipline were not segregated at either the individual or departmental levels. This had been particularly true in the past. As a team head stated,

*In the past, they [school guidance and discipline] were not delineated. Sometimes you would find that the Discipline Team did some of the guidance work whereas the Counselling Team did some of the discipline work (E991022 -Interview data).*

Since the arrival of the present Principal, both teams were undergoing some changes, that is, from 'no orientation' to 'having a clear orientation', from 'individual work' to 'teamwork', from 'less humanistic' to 'more humanistic', and from 'suppression and control' to 'the promotion of intrinsic moral ability'. In the course of these changes, the distinction between the Counselling and the Discipline Teams became prominent in terms of their working ethos and their strategies for helping students. In spite of this, teachers confirmed, the relationship between the two teams stayed close to each other. For example, when Miss Chong, Gatherer of Extra-Curricular Activities, described the relationship between the two teams, she claimed that guidance and discipline were not segregated. Commonly, 'the discipline teacher would play a guidance role too' (E991210-Interview data). When describing the collaboration between the two teams, Miss Chong added that although the collaboration occurred only among some teachers in the two teams, these teachers were able to collaborate with each other to manage students' misbehaviour. As she put it,

*They [the experienced teachers] are used to working as they did in the past... It seems that they have never thought about co-operation.... But since a few years ago, they've begun co-operating with other teachers to organise things. For example, when the Discipline Team handles any cases and needs to see students' parents, they [discipline teachers] would invite counselling teachers to do it together. This means teachers from both teams would meet the parents together. ... Also they [teachers from these two teams] are carrying out the Self Rehabilitation Program together this year. Both teams collaborate with each other for this... to help students. Since two years ago, their collaboration has got closer. In the past, they were absolutely separate (E991210).*

#### *Diffuseness at the individual level*

In addition to the department level, teachers felt responsible for playing a diffuse role in guidance and discipline. The diffuseness was reflected in two ways, that is, no segregation of guidance and discipline within a helping process, and an expanded view of issues related to discipline and guidance. Firstly, when talking about guidance and discipline, teachers tended not to separate them into a duality. Rather, they viewed them as a united helping process. For example, when Mr Kate, a discipline teacher, talked about his role in the Discipline Team, he highlighted the point as follow:

*For this sort of work [student discipline], in my opinion, it is unnecessary to segregate the work as discipline or non-discipline. Whenever you see something happening, every teacher has a duty to sort it out. This is an advanced level of teacher collaboration.... Whenever things happen, we would like to follow up the students involved. We do not need any systems for making this happen (E991110).*

Similarly, Miss Woods, a discipline teacher, insisted that both guidance and discipline should not be divided at the practical level. When helping students to resolve their 'problem', she liked to manage students according to her personal practice. In any case when there was a need to make referrals, she would refer students involved to the social workers, but not to the Discipline or the Counselling Teams. In discussing the relationship between guidance and discipline, Miss Woods said,

*I like to carry out the work individually. I like to counsel students if my ability allows me to do so. If I find that students' problems are too big and I have not*

*sufficient ability to deal with them, I will pass these students on to the social workers. Obviously, both guidance and discipline should be carried out at the same time: I discipline you because you are naughty. Once I've disciplined you, I'll certainly offer you some counselling... (E991117)*

Secondly, teachers' expanded view of guidance and discipline was reflected in the following ways. When describing this helping process, teachers used positive words, such as care, support, love, and respect, and asserted that its focus was on seeking students' welfare, rather than misbehaviour or any collective interests. In talking about making referrals, teachers depicted this as '*asking other teachers for a helping hand*'; also the emphasis in '*referrals*' was placed more on students, but less on administration.

In talking about punishment, teachers regarded it as a means but not as an end, and its ultimate aim as helping students to change their misbehaviour. For instance, when Mr Rowans, a discipline teacher, talked about giving a demerit to misbehaving students as a way of punishment, he frequently used the term '*troublesome*' to depict all the administrative processes involved, and preferred '*sympathising their situation*', and '*having a talk with them*', rather than inflicting punishment upon them, or making referrals.

While teachers held an expanded view of issues related to guidance and discipline, some teachers generally had experiences of acting against school rules. For example, a discipline teacher said, '*regarding the instructions given by the Discipline Team, it is not absolutely necessary for me to follow all of them*' (E990903-Interview data). Similarly, another teacher Mr Young claimed that regarding the enforcement of discipline rules, '*I like to give students some allowance and let them to act in 'cracks' [grey areas] of school rules*' (E990928-Interview data). A similar view was evident in the account of the Whole School Approach to guidance and discipline, given by a counselling teacher Mr Sung. As he said,

*When handling difficult students, you have to at first show them understanding and try to understand why they are so disruptive. This is because the more we*

*understand the underlying reasons, the more likely we were to show them some sympathy.... School discipline is somehow like a manual... This is also like the laws... Personally I dislike following all of them strictly. The reason for this is that if I follow them strictly when I do something. There is a lack of flexibility. If a student fails to hand in homework three times, then a letter is sent to this student's parents and informs them that a bad mark is given to their kid.... There is no end of accumulating such records. Also doing things like this shows a lack of sympathy... (E991210).*

In sum, the diffuseness of school guidance and discipline was related to the adoption of the whole school approach to guidance and discipline, and made guidance and discipline well-connected at both the department and individual levels. Specifically, teachers were able to play the diffuse guidance and discipline roles, to make sense of human behaviour in expanded ways, and to view the guidance and discipline processes as a united helping process. To a large extent, the diffuseness was linked to the organisational culture of the Discipline and the Counselling Teams, which featured particularity, individuality, and informality, since this culture provided teachers with favourable opportunities for exercising autonomy on guidance and discipline, and focusing on students, rather than on school, when they managed students' misbehaviour.

#### **8.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have described the structural arrangement and the organisational culture of the Counselling and Discipline Departments/Teams in both Schools B and E. In School E, school guidance and discipline were more connected at the department level than in School B. Concisely, the disconnectedness in School B related to the domination of the discipline culture of systematisation, consistency and universality. The domination was made possible in two ways: the culture of blame, and the intrusion of the Discipline Department into the Counselling Department. Participating in this working situation, counselling teachers experienced goal conflict between achieving the goals internally assumed by the Counselling Department and fulfilling the goals externally imposed by the Discipline Department. Consequently, they felt puzzled about the purposefulness of their participation in the Counselling

Department; and those teachers who held an expanded view of discipline tended to show their submission to the discipline culture.

In School E, the diffuseness of guidance and discipline dominated both the Discipline and the Counselling Teams. This diffuseness was associated with the adoption of the whole school approach to guidance and discipline, and with the organisational culture of informality. At the individual level, teachers generally felt responsible for guidance and discipline, and were used to exercising their autonomy when managing students' misbehaviour, rather than relying on these two teams to do so. Also, they interpreted students' misbehaviour, referrals and punishment in expanded ways, and perceived both guidance and discipline as a united helping process. At the departmental level, the Counselling and Discipline Teams were well-connected. Teachers from these two teams could work together under the same ethos, that is, the promotion of students' welfare and holistic growth; and they were willing to collaborate with each other informally as a team for managing students' misbehaviour, and for resolving any problems arising in schooling, with respect to new needs. This form of collaboration was driven by teachers' free will, rather than by any institutional or contractual requirements.

## Chapter Nine

### Schools B and E: At the Classroom Level

#### 9.1 Introduction

Having looked at the relationship between guidance and discipline at the whole school and department levels, in this chapter I will examine how teachers' and students' knowledge of the classroom related to theme of guidance and discipline. My particular interest is to describe their classroom experiences, and how they perceived their interaction with others in the classroom. I will first examine teachers' and students' orthodox views of classroom teaching and learning, and then their construct of classroom knowledge in Schools B and E.

#### 9.2 Orthodox Views of the Classroom

In both Schools B and E, teachers and students held the orthodox views, that the classroom was an arena where teaching and learning should be carried out, and teacher-student relationships should be formalised. (The definition of the term 'orthodox view' can be found in the section on 'classification of roles', in Chapter Four, in p.71). These views were reflected in two phenomena: the insistence on academic matters, and the actual formality of teacher-student relationships.

Firstly, it was common that the classroom setting was described as an arena where teaching and learning were conducted. This is reflected in the Cantonese discourse of '*teaching*', which may be translated as '*to teach textbooks*', whilst the term '*studying*' means '*to read textbooks*'. It is possible to suggest that at the linguistic level, '*textbooks*' more or less represent a symbol of knowledge; and teaching and learning is seen as a process of transmission of '*textbook*' knowledge from teachers to

students. At the practical level, many discipline practices were formulated according to the centrality of *'textbooks'*. For example, most teachers in the two case-study schools whom I had spoken to, had their personal strategies for managing those students who failed to bring their textbooks for lessons. Also in School B, school rules were particularly formulated to forbid students to borrow textbooks from others. Those students who broke this rule would be punished accordingly.

Further, the insistence on academic was reflected in school participants' discourse about *'examination'*. In talking about the learning classroom, teachers and students usually associated teaching and learning with *'examination'*. They emphasised teaching and learning to achieve goals, such as *'sitting an examination'*, *'being promoted to a higher year'*, and *'entering universities'*, rather than as valuable processes.

The second orthodox view is the insistence on formality. In the Confucian perspective, teachers culturally hold a senior position, and are commonly portrayed as the authority on knowledge, whereas students take a junior position, and are supposed to be obedient, conformers and humble learners, as I have discussed in Chapter Two. Consistently, students in the two schools were expected to pay the tribute of politeness and respect to teachers whenever and wherever they were. For example, when teachers entered the classroom, students should stand up and greet them in a proper and honorific manner. Also, students should precede teachers' last name with the title *'Mr'*, or *'Miss'* in a respectful fashion. Those students who failed to do so were very likely to be accused of being non-compliant, disobedient and rebellious. Culturally, the teacher-student relationship in these two schools was formalised as between seniors and juniors.

Thus, teachers and students in Schools B and E shared the orthodox views that the classroom setting was dominated by academic matters, and that the relationship between teachers and students was culturally structured in hierarchical ways. This orthodox view is not only consistent with findings from the studies on Chinese social

psychology, summarised in Chapter Two, but also with the preliminary study, showing school participants' views that the classroom teachers should play their roles as instructors whereas students should be learners (see Appendix 4, p.262, Appendix 5, p.264, and Appendix 3, p.259); also, teachers tended to prioritise discipline and instruction over guidance when teaching in the classroom. Further, the preliminary study echoes Cheng's (1996) study, showing that discipline is emphasised in the classroom; this is evident in a Chinese saying, '*Guan jiao: xian guan huo jiao*', which is translated by Cheng as '*effective management of behaviour is the prerequisite of effective teaching in a classroom*' (p.16).

### **9.3 Construct of Classroom Knowledge**

Having examined the orthodox view of classroom knowledge shared among the teachers and students from both Schools B and E, I will summarise teachers' and students' construct of classroom knowledge, and contrast how teachers' classroom knowledge related to the theme of guidance and discipline in these two schools, on the basis of the main themes emerging from data of interview and field notes, and from my teaching experience in the classroom.

#### **9.3.1 In School B**

I will summarise the classroom knowledge of teachers and students with reference to three features: the insistence on classroom discipline, the streaming of students, and the impact of the Discipline Department.

##### **Insistence on classroom discipline**

In talking about teaching and learning, teachers emphasised '*control*' and '*punishment*', rather than guidance, though they admitted that discipline was not an effective way of getting students to learn and behave properly. This emphasis was particularly strong when their talks referred to students in the low-stream classes, or '*the bad classes*'.

An example is a new teacher, Miss Yuk, who defined most of the secondary-two and three students in the low streamed classes as failing learners, who did not hand in homework, and refused to engage in classroom activities. Teaching these difficult classes, she experienced considerable difficulty in playing the instructor's role as she had expected. To resolve this difficulty, Miss Yuk intended to take another teacher, Miss Ken, a well-known disciplinarian in the school, as an ideal model of a teacher whom she could learn from. By imitating Miss Ken's discipline strategies, Miss Yuk stated, she realised that maintaining classroom discipline should go ahead of teaching and learning, so that she would be able to gain students' co-operation and obedience, to get them to learn, and to play her role as an instructor as she had intended. Driven by this belief, she structured the teacher-student relationship as a hierarchy of the controller and the controlled, and of the authoritarian and the obedient. This was evident in the segment of transcript quoted below:

*Interviewer: Is there any discrepancy between your role and Miss Ken's role in the classroom?*

*Yuk: I think we take a different position.*

*Interviewer: Oh, different 'position'?*

*Yuk: Miss Ken has a strong sense of might and power to control students. It is ensured that students are attentive enough to 'learn'. I think that in the classroom the most vital thing is to manage classroom discipline well. If there is no one talking, students are able to be attentive...*

*Interviewer: Yeah! I know you observed how Miss Ken taught in the classroom. So, what have you learnt from her then?*

*Yuk: Yes, I did. I have learnt a lot from her, for example teaching methods, and... methods for controlling students' behaviour. Though I use the same methods that she [Miss Ken] uses, the outcome is so different. Perhaps, it relates to my style. For example, .... In a lesson, Miss Ken ordered a student to stand at the back of the classroom, the student just did as she instructed. I tried to do the same in the classroom. The student refused to do so. The situation was just bad .... I think it takes time to establish myself with her style... (B991123).*

While teachers stressed the importance of discipline in the classroom, students frequently mentioned teachers' discipline practices, and how school rules were enforced. Students asserted the need that teachers should maintain classroom discipline by playing a discipline role, but, they claimed, these discipline practices

brought them many negative feelings when exercised upon them in the classroom. This can be seen in a session with the focus group, when a new teacher was described as self-centred and socially far away from them, and as 'scolding' and 'never praising' in the classroom. By playing a discipline role, the students considered, the teacher intended to seek her personal agenda, but not the students' welfare, as the segment of transcript quoted below shows:

*Interviewer: Then how do you perceive her [the teacher] in the classroom?*

*Lai: I think she has her own methods for teaching. But I just hate her. Yes, I really do.*

*Lai: I hate her, not because she often acts against and annoys someone intentionally.*

*Interviewer: Then what makes you hate her?*

*Lai: Perhaps the methods she uses in the classroom....*

*Interviewer: How do you perceive the intentions behind her methods?*

*Lai: Perhaps she is a newcomer so she doesn't want it to be said that she is unable to teach.*

*Lai: I think she is very self-centred.*

*Interviewer: Ooh, you think she is very self-centred, do you?*

*Kin: It's very true that scolding is not the only method for teaching students, is it.... [Keep on murmuring about this teacher.]*

*Lai: She will never praise or give you any reward. But I don't know whether she will accept our opinions.*

*Interviewer: No reward at all!*

*Wah: Yeah! It would be good if she could exercise punishments, and give us rewards. But she will never do so (B991118).*

#### *Little room for school guidance*

Returning to the teacher's perspective, classroom teachers admitted that they experienced considerable difficulties in playing a guidance role as they intended. Such difficulties partly came from their worry about the risk that if teachers played this role, students might take advantage of this and misbehave. This, in part, led teachers to choose to play a discipline, rather than a guidance role, though they doubted enormously the effectiveness of playing this role in maintaining classroom discipline. This was reflected in a description of the integration of guidance and discipline by Miss Long, in which she stressed that to play a guidance role in managing students' misbehaviour would take her a lot of 'time and energy'. To gain

students' conformity within a short period of time, she claimed, the most effective way was through discipline (B991019-Field notes).

The teachers' perception of the necessity of playing a discipline, rather than a guidance role, was in fact maintained and reinforced by students' views that teachers should be *'hard'* and ensure the consistency of application of school rules so as to achieve the claim of fairness and justice, and that the teachers who played a guidance role were the *'soft'*, who were not strict, or *'hard'*, enough to maintain classroom discipline. For example, when Miss Wan intended to play a guidance role in the classroom in order to establish a positive relationship with students, some students reflected to her that she was too *'soft'* to maintain classroom discipline; and these students even accused her of breaking the coherence of school rules. To avoid this happening again, she determined not to play a guidance, but a discipline role, as was evident in the segment of the transcript quoted below:

*Interviewer: What do you think of the students' perception of you?*

*Wan: How to perceive me? They might think I am... quite mild and easy to get along with.... Because of this, they think I allow them to break any 'grey areas of laws'.... In their eye, I am not strict... and not harsh.... I think... they [3D students] are... they think I am too 'soft'.... They might even think I don't know how to manage classroom discipline. For this reason, whenever I make an order or something they have to do, I try my best to strictly ensure its enforcement... [Laughing]*

*Interviewer: [Laughing]*

*Wan: But I think I have been improving.*

*Interviewer: 'Improving' means?*

*Wan: This means if I proclaim that I'll exercise any punishment, I will definitely enforce it on my students (B991123).*

### *Control through teachers, test, and syllabus*

So far, I have shown that both teachers and students put great stress on discipline as basic for classroom teaching and learning on discipline. To a great extent, the insistence on discipline related to the phenomenon that classroom teaching and learning were controlled in the school system in two ways: through the instructor role of teachers, and through promotion of the academic performance of students.

Firstly, an administrative role was imposed upon classroom teachers by the Geography Department. When I, as a part-time teacher, taught in the classroom at School B, I felt obliged to fulfil administrative duties by meeting the teaching schedule designed by the subject department; I was expected to use unified teaching materials, such as short tests, worksheets and extra exercises and to prepare students well for a standardised test. Specifically, before I began to teach in the classroom, the Geography teacher for whom I substituted strongly insisted that I needed to teach the assigned syllabus and bear in mind the date of a standardised test, which was determined by the Academic Department. To fulfil the role imposed on me by the Geography Department and achieve my teaching plan, I needed to carefully monitor by myself whether I could meet my teaching plan after each lesson, and to reduce factors which might affect the progress of my teaching, especially students' misbehaviour. When playing an instructor role, I found that I emphasised playing a discipline, rather than a guidance role, so as to create favourable context for my teaching, rather than for students' learning. Finally, I failed to complete the assigned syllabus for the standardised test; driven by my anxiety and nervousness, I borrowed another three lessons from other teachers in order to do so.

Secondly, the school attempted to control the way of assessing the academic performance of students. This can be seen from the arrangement that a certain percentage of the mark that students had obtained in the standardised test would be added to their result in the final examination. Because of this, all teachers who taught Geography in the classes of secondary-three more seriously engaged in designing the paper. The year co-ordinator of Geography passed me the draft paper for the standardised test, and sought my feedback on this draft. Further, I was reminded to inform the class about the format of the standardised test, and to cross-check the marks with the students after the standardised test so that it was ensured that the marks given to each student were accurate. In the lesson where I cross-checked the marks with students, I found that they checked their papers carefully; some became very anxious about the marks that they had obtained; and some were very keen on asking me to clarify why I gave such a mark to them.

Since the classroom was controlled by teachers, tests, and the syllabus, teaching and learning had become academic-oriented; and their aims concerned not the process but the ends of learning, that is, an assessment of students' academic ability and achievement. For example, my field notes recorded how I split the learning process into means and ends and reinforced a concern for extrinsic rewards by saying to students, *'you have to prepare well for the standardised test because the mark you obtain will be added to your result in the final examination'*.

In sum, in School B, classroom teachers put the emphasis of teaching and learning on discipline, rather than on guidance. The insistence on discipline was maintained and reinforced by students who held the view that classroom teachers should be *'hard'*, not *'soft'*. More than that, a classroom in School B was seen as controlled when classroom teachers met the expectation that they would fulfil the role imposed by the subject department, and then assess the academic performance of students. As a result of this, the classrooms had become academic-oriented whilst teachers were aware of playing both instructor and discipline roles, rather than a guidance role.

### **Streaming of Students**

In School B, students were streamed into classes A to F with respect to their academic ability, as noted earlier. Routinely, the high ability students were assigned to the A and B streams, the moderate to the C and D streams, the least able being assigned to the E and F streams. Among the three main streams, the E and F streams were described as *'the bottom classes'*, *'the bad classes'* and *'the terrible classes'*, whereas the A and B streams were seen as *'the top'* and *'the good classes'*. Teachers and students acknowledged that *'the low-stream classes'*, or E/F classes, were where *'the less able'* and *'the misbehaving'* came from.

### *Participants' talk about the low-stream classes*

Under the streaming policy, school participants were used to talking about students with reference to which classes they were streamed into. This was evident when Miss Shan described how most 4C students were promoted from the low-stream classes in

the previous year; they were *'the inattentive'* and *'the poor learners'* and *'the misbehaving'* and felt pessimistic about getting the minimum results in HKCEE required for the matriculation (B991026-Field notes).

Students were used to describing themselves according to the stream in which they has been placed. It was obvious that *'low-stream'* students perceived that they had fallen behind the top classes and felt powerless to escape the stream of *'the less able'*, and improve their academic performance. Participating in the classroom, these students felt shamed and a low sense of belonging. Meanwhile, when teaching *'the bad classes'*, teachers strongly felt that their roles were threatened and asserted the need to defend their roles as instructors by using discipline strategies.

#### *The emergence of 'infamous' classes*

Under the policy on streaming, classes and students were divided. Among the low-stream classes, some were labelled as *'infamous classes'*. These included 3F, 2E and 2F. These classes had a notorious reputation for misbehaviour and being hopeless in learning. The theme of the *'infamous classes'* emerged in the first interview with the principal, where she revealed that in the previous year, 2F class, which was 3F at the time of data-collection, was notorious for being disruptive. In relation to this, two resolutions were made. First, the principal relocated 2F's classroom beside her office so that she could help to supervise the students in this class, and hoped that they would pay attention in lessons as a result. Second, a group-counselling program was organised for them with the help of the school social worker. The program aimed to enhance the students' self-esteem and, more importantly, to get the class into line. However, according to the principal, both strategies were in vain, and disappointingly caused no positive effects on whole-class behaviour. After this class was promoted to the current 3F class, the principal said, the problems still remained.

In School B, I was able to participate in a lesson with one of these *'infamous'* classes, 2E. This was a remedial class and had about 30 students. Two teachers were assigned to teach English Language. In that lesson, I was requested by the principal to

substitute for one of the teachers and work with the other teacher, Mr Mong. Before entering the classroom, Mr Mong clarified to me that the students in this class, 2E, was very notorious for misbehaving in lessons. He depicted them as *'the hopeless'*, who failed to learn and refused to engage in classroom activities. He then explained to me that when he taught with another teacher in this class, they were used to alternately playing the role of instructor and disciplinarian so as to reduce the possibility that the lesson would be interrupted by students' misbehaviour. After his clarification, I was told to act as the disciplinarian; and what I needed to do was to patrol around the classroom and get students on tasks; there was no need for me to teach. In other words, my main duty was to keep the class under control, and to maintain a favourable climate within which Mr Mong could conduct the lesson. Participating in such a classroom, I, as a researcher, found that I acted like a prison guard, whilst Mr Mong was like an instructor on the defensive, who needed to constantly struggle to play his instructor role. Most of the students did not work on their tasks, but continually performed misbehaviours, such as chatting with each other, writing personal letters, reading magazines, teasing each other, and pulling and pushing others. When I patrolled up and down in this classroom, students kept complaining to me in very annoyed tones that they were unable to follow Mr Mong's instructions given in English and to understand the English tape which was played during the lesson. Even though my teaching experience in 2E might not be valid to generalise to an overall picture of low-stream classes in School B, this experience led me to recognise that some students in the low-stream classes experienced considerable difficulties in learning, and that they mostly felt a sense of meaninglessness in the classroom. My field notes recorded how I dealt with the busyness and confusion of the 2E classroom:

*At 2:50pm I was going to lead S.2E to an audio-visual room for an English listening lesson. Getting to the classroom, I glimpsed the chaotic phenomenon that most students were out of their seats and wandering about the room aimlessly. When I was greeting the class, a boy rushed out and made a request to go out of the classroom. I refused. He then got really frustrated and grumbled angrily, with bad temper, when the class was still in confusion. The classroom was full of noise. Then I urged all students to line up and go to the audio-visual room because Mr Mong, another English teacher, had prepared*

*something there for the class. Then it took another three minutes to get them to line up, but most students only did this listlessly and chaotically. Some students kept on telling me that no matter how much time I spent they would not line up in a desirable way. Getting into the room, it took Mr Mong and me another twelve minutes to settle the students down and begin the lesson. In the classroom, I tried to perform the discipline role as Mr Mong told me to do previously. Throughout the lesson, I walked about the room and ensured the students could settle to their tasks. If any students intended to do something disruptive, I would get close to them. I strongly felt I was a prison guard instead of a teacher. In the lesson, half of the class had no interest in learning. They chatted and made some noise with the radio headset they used for listening... (B991208).*

In short, in School B, classroom and students were divided according to the streaming policy. In the low-stream classes, the students, especially those in ‘*the infamous classes*’, seemed to feel a sense of meaninglessness and also powerless to improve their performance, whereas teachers felt necessary to defend their instructor role by emphasising discipline rather than guidance. In the high-stream classes, students behaved well and had comparatively high academic ability; teachers were able to act as instructors. Teachers generally considered that guidance and discipline were more segregated in the low-stream than in the high-stream classrooms.

### **Impact of the Discipline Department**

The third feature of teachers’ and students’ construct of classroom knowledge is that School B provided classroom teachers with institutional devices which aimed to support teachers in managing students’ behaviour during lessons. These devices were offered by the Discipline Department, but none by the Counselling Department, and had a profound impact on how teachers managed classroom discipline. Although the Counselling Department provided students in need with a personal counselling service, classroom teachers rarely referred students who misbehaved during lessons to this department.

In the Discipline Department, many teams were structurally arranged for making these devices function (see Figure 8.1, p.169). Precisely, the Team for Cases Investigation was responsible for serious classroom offences, such as stealing,

fighting, bullying and cheating, whereas the Detention Team was responsible for general offences, such as disrespect to teachers, failing to hand in homework and having no textbook for lessons. Habitual misbehaviour that interfered with the teaching process could be referred to the Team for Classroom Management. Also, immediate assistance from discipline teachers was available during school hours. In relation to this structure, two implications can be identified. Firstly, teachers needed to generalise and categorise students' misbehaviour, and to adopt the language and categories of the Discipline Department in order to refer students to the appropriate team. Secondly, once a referral was made, misbehaving students would be decontextualised from where the misbehaviour occurred and engaged in a standardised and mechanical disciplinary procedure (see Figure 8.2, p.170).

#### *Teachers' construct of discipline devices*

In the teachers' view, there were two functions underlying these devices: to ensure support and consistency. First, they were considered as *'the supporting service'*, which aimed to help teachers to manage classroom discipline and to create a favourable climate for teaching and learning. Second, these devices put the notion of justice and fairness into practice because they would standardise the protocol procedures for handling students' misbehaviour. If teachers accessed these procedures, students could be managed in standardised ways.

Classroom teachers' reliance on these devices for discipline was evident in the list of students who were sent to the Detention Class, displayed on the notice board in the staff room, indicating that a large number of students were referred to the Detention Class every week. For example, I, as a classroom teacher, was socialised to manage a student, who was found eating candy during my lesson, by making the threat that I would send him to the Detention Class. As my field notes recorded,

*In the course of the lesson, I noticed that a boy, Kei-Lin, was eating a candy. Having urged him to spit it out, I then punished him by telling him to stand at the back of the classroom. He moved listlessly as instructed, and did not stand properly. Having given some warning through my body language, I warned him in a serious tone, 'If you still stand in such an improper way I won't let*

*you stand in the classroom. Instead, I will send you to the Detention Class. Which would you prefer? You can choose yourself.' When I said this, he stood straight and properly at once (B991201).*

In the school, teachers were in fact socialised to rely on such devices to discipline students. An example is that when Miss Liang recalled her early teaching experience in this school, she revealed that she once disciplined a schoolgirl who was accused of cheating in a test. She did not access the institutional device to do so, but punished the girl by detention after school for a month. This sanction unexpectedly provoked enormous discontent and resentment in the girl. Afterwards, an experienced discipline teacher, Miss Fook, recommended her to refer students with misbehaving problems to the Discipline Department, instead of handling it with her personal strategy, because it was likely that these students would be managed in fair and just ways. When Miss Liang described this event, she said,

*Later on, Miss Fook reminded me of the vital thing when I handle this sort of case again. She assured me that it would have been a lot better if I could have reported this case to the Discipline Department, because this was regarded as the best way to make the girl learn 'a lesson' (B991028).*

Furthermore, classroom teachers were socialised to maintain the operation of these devices through enforcing discipline policies, maintaining the protocol procedures of discipline, and carrying out punishments on behalf of the Discipline Department. For example, when I taught class 4A, one student asked me to sign a form issued by the Team for Classroom Management if I felt satisfied with his engagement and performance in that particular lesson; further, as instructed by the Uniform Team, I was obliged to punish students, who broke the uniform code, by making them stand during my lesson on behalf of this team (B991208-Field notes).

#### *Students' construct of discipline devices*

In the students' view, these devices helped to achieve the claim of justice and fairness, but, they admitted that being referred to the Discipline Department aroused negative feelings in them, such as being banished, unsafe, anxious, and threatened.

Students were inclined to avoid this by various strategies, such as showing their conformity, arguing with teachers about the standards and definitions of rules, and escaping from the Detention Class. This was evident in a focus group interview, where students talked about how a teacher, Miss Yuk, threatened them with referral to the Detention Class in order to ensure that all students brought their own textbooks for lessons; and their discussion mainly focused on the fairness of the discipline strategies used by Miss Yuk, rather than the behaviour of *'having no textbook for lessons'*. This can be shown by a segment of the transcript, quoted below:

*Interviewer: Would you say more about it and give me some specific examples?*

*Lai: For example, she [Miss Yuk] punishes [us] strictly.*

*Siu: Yeah, if you haven't textbook for her lesson, you are punished by 'having to copy the textbook'. ...*

*Lai: After the third time [of having no textbook for lessons], you are immediately sent to the big detention class. No 'qin' [mercy] is given.*

*Ken: In the very beginning, I thought that if you did the copying, the detention could be cancelled. But it's not like that. Now she has clarified to us that if we have no textbooks, both copying the textbook and sending to the detention will be exercised upon us. She just pushes you to 'die' twice [all laughing].*

*(B991118).*

Furthermore, students pointed out that once they accessed the routine of referral, the cause underlying their behaviour might not be realised by the Discipline Department; and sometime, the referral aroused their negative feelings. My field notes recorded an example of a secondary-seven boy who accessed a routine of referral after he was accused of leaving the classroom without a teacher's permission. In the course of referral, the discipline teachers involved were concerned only with the consistency of application of school rules, but not with the cause underlying the boy's *'misbehaviour'*, that is, as the boy claimed, there was no teacher whom he could ask for permission to leave the classroom when he needed to clean his face after a terrible sneeze. This made the boy feel misunderstood, irritated and frustrated, in particular when his form tutor, Miss Au, attempted to convince him to accept the verdict and sentence made by the Head of Discipline. As my field notes recorded,

*I chatted with Miss Au, a S.7 form tutor, sitting at her desk and looking puzzled and grave. She told me that a boy in her class was accused of being out of the classroom without obtaining a teacher's permission after the morning roll call. The boy was caught and scolded by a discipline teacher, Mr Kam. He was then requested to stand for 15 minutes as a punishment in the first lesson, which was a RE lesson taught by Miss Shan. In the RE lesson, the boy complained to Miss Shan about what Mr Kam did to him, and strongly refused to stand, because the boy insisted that he did nothing wrong in leaving the classroom for cleansing his face after a terrible sneeze, especially when there was no teacher in the classroom whom he could ask for permission to do so. When the lesson finished, Miss Shan reported the boy's reaction to Mr Kam. Then Mr Kam got angry and reported the whole event to Mrs Liao, Head of Discipline. Mrs Liao was irritated enough to call the boy to see her at once. From Mrs Liao's point of view, no matter what the situation, it was wrong for the boy to leave the classroom without a teacher's permission. She also felt disgusted because the boy talked to her in a rude manner. In Mrs Liao's words, the boy was 'seriously disrespectful' to her. Eventually, Mrs Liao made a sentence by sending him to the Detention Class. Correspondingly, a letter to his parent was issued, in which his offence was stated as 'leaving the classroom without a teacher's permission and being very rude to teacher'. The boy was then ordered to leave.*

*When Miss Au, the boy's form tutor, knew that the boy was released, she intended to have a talk to him. The boy was very irritated and complained with a strong sense of anger that he did nothing wrong when he left the room, and hence, the sentence for his offence was completely unreasonable. He complained about Mr Kam's bad manner and the verdict made by Mrs Liao. The boy moved on to blame Miss Au for leaving the classroom too early after a morning roll call, and Miss Shan for coming too late for the RE lesson. After hearing this, Miss Au was extremely irritated and assured him that he really committed an offence and should accept being punished as sentenced... (B991208).*

### *Teachers with an expanded view of discipline*

Under the impact of the Discipline Department on the behaviour of teachers and students in the classroom, as mentioned above, those teachers who had an expanded view of discipline needed to work against the grain of the discipline devices. An example can be seen in a discipline teacher, Miss Liang, who intended to play a guidance role in the classroom, but found that the current school climate was not favourable for playing this role as she had intended. In particular, she experienced conflict between playing a form-tutor and a discipline role, because to play a form-

tutor role, in her view, was to cater for individual students' interests, but this role was seemingly opposed to the role which the Discipline Department expected all teachers to play, that is, all teachers were responsible for seeking collective interests, rather than individual students' interests, and for maintaining the fairness and justice of school discipline. The conflict between playing these two roles was indicated by the powerful expression, *'the royal military'*, as opposed to a form tutor, which Miss Liang used for depicting how enormously the school expected teachers to commit themselves to enforcing school rules, and ultimately seeking collective interests. As she put it,

*In my opinions, form tutors had a vital role in redressing the balance between the needs of the school and individual students... Now, teachers enforce school rules like the royal military. Somehow, form tutors should have room where they can sort something out in flexible ways; they shouldn't be too strict when handling students' behaviour... 'A grey area' should be made where students can learn how to take responsibility for their own behaviour (B991028).*

In practice, she resolved this conflict by using her personal strategy for dealing with students' misbehaviour, and by avoiding referring students to the Discipline Department. When describing her form-tutor role, Miss Liang stressed,

*When I am a form tutor, I like to deal with students flexibly and pretend not to see anything when an offence is committed. It doesn't mean I ignore it. I merely don't report the cases to the Discipline Department. I always remind my class, 'if a thing happens, you have to let me know. If you do so, I can deal with it flexibly. If you don't, and the case is reported to the Discipline Department, I must handle it in a very rigid way' (B991028).*

At the classroom level, School B structurally arranged a set of institutional devices for discipline, which functioned as a referral system, and where students' misbehaviour, it was claimed, could be handled in fair and just ways. Teachers were used to relying on these devices for classroom discipline, and were socialised to maintain its operation. However, their reliance disempowered their autonomy in handling students' misbehaviour. Participating in this workplace, those teachers who

held an expanded view of discipline felt that it was necessary to work against the grain of the institutional devices so as to cater for individual students' interests.

Up to this point, I have described how the classroom knowledge of teachers and students in School B related to the theme of guidance and discipline. It can be seen that generally, students were divided according to their academic and behavioural performances. In the classroom, discipline was more dominant than guidance. This was particularly true in the low-stream classes where teachers and students tended to define each other in negative ways.

### 9.3.2 In School E

In School E, teachers' and students' construct of the classroom knowledge will be summarised with reference to three features: the insistence on teaching and learning, the destreaming of students, and discipline through personal strategy. They will be illuminated below.

#### **Insistence on teaching and learning**

Teachers in School E were able to perceive themselves as managers of learning. They were more concerned with how they could get students to learn and resolve their learning difficulties, than were teachers in School B. Reciprocally, students in this school defined themselves as learners. Unlike the students from School B, they talked more about issues related to learning, such as their lack of ability in the use of English for learning, and the appropriateness of teaching methods, and less about teachers' discipline practices.

#### *Control through teacher-student participation*

The insistence on teaching and learning in the classroom can be seen from my teaching experience with 3B. The Geography teachers whom I worked with intended to help students cope with their learning difficulty by adjusting the curriculum and teaching materials for the subject. This was evident when a Geography teacher revealed to me that they intended to simplify the content of the textbook into note

form in order to help students learn the subject; regarding the Geography test, this teacher reassured me that the test would not be difficult, since Geography teachers intended to help students to pass the test.

In contrast to my teaching experience in School B, when teaching in 3B I found that the classroom was less controlled in terms of the use of teaching materials and the need to fulfil the roles imposed by the subject department; I could operate my teaching plan without borrowing any extra lessons from other teachers, and felt less pressurised to cover the assigned syllabus and to prepare students for the test.

Besides, it was obvious to me, as a Geography teacher, that the classroom was controlled not only by the teacher's, but also by students' participation in classroom activities. For example, during lessons, students kept drawing my attention to their difficulty in using English for learning, and frequently requested me to explain the English terms used in the textbook and lessons, and to translate these terms into Chinese. Some students habitually refused to engage in classroom activities as a way of drawing my attention to this difficulty, and expected me to help them individually to resolve their difficulties. Thus, in 3B both teachers and students took part in exercising control the classroom; and students' participation drew me, as a classroom teacher, to feel responsible for meeting their needs, and reacting corresponding to their expectations.

#### *Concerned with classroom learning*

As well as in my teaching experience in 3B, the insistence on teaching and learning was reflected in school participants' discussion about the policy of English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI). (The background of this policy can be found in the section on 'medium of instruction', in Chapter One, pp.11-13). In their view, this policy caused students to have enormous learning difficulties, and their concern surfaced as a main theme in one of the focus group interview sessions, where the students communicated the fact that learning in English brought them much anxiety and powerlessness. As one of the students Kali said, *'Whenever you sit [in the*

classroom], you open your textbook. You then see a lot of English. This makes me very bored indeed' (E991117). Similarly, two other students, Keung and Chan, admitted that they experienced enormous difficulties in learning in English. As my field notes recorded,

*Then, the subject of our talk was changed to their learning difficulty. Keung expressed his profuse worry about learning all school subjects in English. To cope with this, he merely memorised all the facts in the textbooks. Another student, Chan, felt the same as Keung did, and grumbled that he did not spend time studying the subject matter but checking the dictionary about the meanings of words written in textbooks (E990924).*

In parallel, teachers shared the same concern as the students, and found that the EMI policy constrained not only effective learning, but also the promotion of students' holistic growth. My field notes recorded how Mr Cook discussed this policy.

*It is very wrong for the principal to insist on using English as the teaching medium, the EMI policy, because students do not have the basic ability to use the English language for learning. In fact, about seven years ago the Chinese teaching medium, the CMI policy, was used instead, but now EMI has been adopted. (What do you think of this change?) He strongly disagrees with the adoption of EMI, since students just cannot learn as they are supposed to do in the classroom if everything is taught in English. Apparently the English language has become a main barrier, which confines the development of students' creativity and potential... (E990913).*

#### *Teachers as managers of learning*

While school participants were concerned with the impacts of EMI on students' learning, teachers became aware of playing the role of managers of learning, who ought to help students overcome their learning difficulties. For example, an English teacher, Mr Rowans, tried to modify the curriculum and teaching materials in order to help students to cope with the English language and to pass school examinations. By doing so, he intended to enhance their sense of success in academic performance, and avoid any possibility that students might give up engaging in classroom learning because of their difficulty in using English in learning.

Another teacher, Miss Chong, like Mr Rowans, intended to enhance individual students' motivation to learn by creating a safe atmosphere and by lessening the formality of the teacher-student relationship. In relation to this, she empathised with students who might feel exposed and nervous if they were requested to stand up before answering her questions. As she stressed, when she described her interaction with students,

*They [the students] are always so scared to stand up and read an answer aloud even though they know their answer is correct. It is a lot better if you allow them to speak out an answer without standing up. Then they can do it and feel more proud of giving a right answer....*

*Interviewer: What do you think about this?*

*Chong: They [the students] feel more safe when answering without standing up. Also they feel less formal. If you request them to stand up and speak it outright, they might think it is something very formal; in this case, they feel no confidence to do it well. Then they feel so scared. Now, they feel less that they are the focus of attention when giving a wrong answer and sitting on their seat. But they will do, if they are requested to stand up and they give a wrong answer (E991124).*

In short, the classroom in School E was not as controlled as in School B, in terms of teachers' fulfilment of the roles imposed by the subject departments, and of the academic performance of students. Further, in the classroom both teachers and students emphasised teaching and learning, rather than discipline, and were concerned with the impact of the EMI policy on students' learning. In relation to this, teachers became aware of a need to modify teaching materials and parts of the curriculum, in order to help students overcome their learning difficulties, and to create a favourable context for teaching and learning.

### **Destreaming of Students**

In School E, students were destreamed. According to the principal, the rationale underlying the destreaming policy was to actualise the ethos of Whole Person Education, and to create a positive environment for teaching and learning, specifically to reduce the possible effect of labelling students according to their academic performance.

### *Teachers' construct of the destreamed classrooms*

Teachers generally welcomed the destreaming policy, but they insisted that the policy intensified the distinction between the more able and the least able within a class where students varied very much in terms of their academic ability, learning motivation and classroom behaviour. Consequently, teachers found it difficult to meet the needs of the great diversities of students. For example, a History teacher, Mr Tans, highlighted this point by saying,

*I think most students are very attentive in the class. But some have very low motivation in learning. There is a wide range of academic performance indeed. Some are very good but some are really poor. Some want to learn but they haven't the necessary ability. They want to work hard but their foundation is so poor. They find it hard to catch up (E991124).*

In relation to the great diversity of students, teachers experienced considerable difficulties in fulfilling the needs of the great variety of students. Some teachers declared that they could only care for the more able, but not provide the least able with sufficient help and support. For example, I, as a geography teacher, experienced such a difficulty when teaching in 3B (E991108- Field notes).

Similarly, teaching in a destreamed classroom, Miss Chong experienced some conflict between playing a form-tutor and a discipline role, and between dealing with two distinctive groups of students: *'the sly'* and *'the well behaved'*, or *'the inattentive'* and *'the quiet'*. Specifically, when interacting with the group of *'the sly'*, Miss Chong felt it necessary to play a discipline role. Because she played such a role, it seemed to her that the group of *'the well-behaved'* or *'the quiet'* defined her as a disciplinarian, and this made them feel hesitant to seek help from her (E991124- Interview data).

### *Students' construct of the destreamed classrooms*

Students' talk about their classroom also reflected the impact of destreaming, that is, the impact of the great diversity of students within a class. As many students said,

*'students with different academic abilities were mixed up in all the classes'*. Students asserted that students within a class were divided into sub-groups of the more and less able, and of the well-behaved and the misbehaving, and they found that there were some conflicts between these sub-groups of students, who had opposing aims of schooling, and contrasting patterns of classroom behaviour. For example, when the students talked in a focus group interview about the noise in their classroom, they alleged that the noise was mainly made by a sub-group of boys and girls. This sub-group was described as those who had not only low academic ability and low learning motivation, but also a tense relationship with other students. This was evident in the choice of the Chinese expression, *'bullying the kind but being afraid of the outrageous'*, that the focus group members used to depict the feature of this sub-group. The conflict is shown in the segment of transcript below:

*Interviewer: How would you perceive your classmates?*

*Kali: They are divided into several groups.*

*Tin: it's just normal.*

*Man: I have no opinions at all.*

*Kala: Some are good but some bad. Nothing very special at all. ...*

*Interviewer: Would you [Tin] tell us what you think about it [the noise]?*

*Tin: I find it hard to pay attention to the lecture, when the girls make a noise.*

*Interviewer: How would you think of the girls then?*

*Tin: They are just troublesome.*

*Interviewer: Troublesome! Do you know why they have so much to talk about?*

*Man: Their heart is not oriented to school at all, that's why.*

*Interviewer: I see. Their heart is not oriented to school.*

*Kala: The boys are used to making a noise too...*

*Interviewer: In the group, both the boys and girls are used to making a noise. Are there any differences between them?*

*Kali: I think some (boys) are bad. They just look awful. It seems that you have to bow to them and show them obedience.*

*Man: They are the sort of 'bullying the kind but being afraid of the outrageous'.*

*Interviewer: What do mean by, 'bullying the kind but being afraid of the outrageous'?*

*Man: They like to suppress the weak but always look timid in front of the strong (E991210).*

In sum, in School E, the classrooms were destreamed, but students were still divided according to their academic and behavioural performances. In a destreamed classroom, teachers felt that it was necessary to play different roles when interacting with the two distinctive groups of students; and students themselves noticed that class were characterised by the great diversity of students, who had opposing aims of schooling, and performed contrasting patterns of classroom behaviour.

### **Discipline with personal strategies**

The third feature of classroom knowledge is that teachers in School E were accustomed to using their personal strategies for disciplining students, and perceived that discipline was their own responsibility. They rarely accessed any institutional device for discipline, or referred misbehaving students to either the Counselling or the Discipline Teams.

### *Lack of institutionalised devices for discipline*

In contrast to School B, School E provided teachers with very few institutionalised devices for discipline, except the Guideline for Managing Students' Misbehaviour, included in the Teacher's Handbook. The guideline recommended teachers only to impose sanction upon students in three conditions, out of eight, which were applicable in the classroom. These conditions included the interruption of the teaching process, the failure of handing in homework, and having no textbook for lessons. Some optional sanctions were suggested, including seeing parents, sending a warning letter, and giving a bad point or demerit. In teachers' view, the guideline served as a reference, and they felt very little official responsibility for its enforcement. In parallel, the unavailability of institutionalised devices for discipline was evident in another phenomenon: students in School E rarely mentioned any institutional devices for discipline when talking about the classroom; instead, they discussed how teachers maintained classroom discipline by using their personal practices.

*Discipline with personal strategies*

Consistent with the students' account, teachers declared that they preferred taking their own responsibility for discipline rather than referring students with misbehaving problems to any school teams. An example is a Chinese Language teacher, Mr Stage, who ascertained that the discipline system in the school was invisible, loose and flexible; he preferred to helping students resolve their behavioural problems and personal difficulties with his personal strategies, rather than referring them to a team of other teachers. My field notes recorded how he talked about his relation with the discipline team and how he compared his teaching experience in School E with the school where he had taught previously:

*Mr Stage told me that in School E, the discipline system is really flexible. Within this system, enormous space is left for teachers, where they can deal with students' offences in their own ways. Mr Stage then described the team as having no system. To explore what he means by 'no system', I invited him to tell me something about the procedure for issuing demerits to students. In relation to my question, he instantly became hesitant and seemed to know nothing about the procedure involved. He looked puzzled and explained to me in a sort of unsure tone that a form should be completed and then passed it on to Mr York, Vice Head of Discipline. Further Mr Stage explained that when students do something wrong or act disruptively, he feels responsible for managing their problems by himself rather than passing it on to the Discipline Team; he assured me that this is the most proper way for helping students to resolve their difficulties (E990924).*

While teachers were used to managing students' misbehaviour with personal strategies, some teachers revealed that they had experience of acting against discipline policy so as to safeguard students' welfare. For example, Mr Young explained that his role was to seek students' interests. Whenever necessary, he would identify the grey areas of school discipline and try to relax discipline policies and school rules. He exemplified this point by telling me that in the previous year, he felt very discontented with the policy of a ban on leaving textbooks in the classroom overnight. He refused to enforce this policy, because he realised that the ban would cause the students in this class to carry more textbooks and increase the load of their schoolbag. He finally made a contract with the class, and allowed them to leave their Mathematics textbooks in classroom lockers if they agreed about taking these

textbooks back home to study every Friday. All students felt very happy about this arrangement, were able to fulfil their promise and kept the contract very well. More importantly, in Mr Young's view, all students felt deeply that Mr Young was able to empathise with their difficulty (E990917-Field notes).

In sum, unlike School B, School E provided teachers with very few institutional devices for discipline. Teachers in School E were used to taking up their responsibility for managing students' misbehaviour, instead of referring students to any school teams. Also they held an individual views of issues related to school discipline, and had some experience of acting against discipline policies in order to safeguard students' welfare.

Hitherto, I have described how the classroom knowledge of teachers and students in School E related to the theme of guidance and discipline. At the classroom level, teachers in School E intended to help students resolve their learning difficulties; there was less division between students from different classes; and teachers were used to managing students' behaviour with their own strategies.

## **9.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have contrasted how the knowledge of teachers and students in Schools B and E related to the theme of guidance and discipline. It can be seen that teachers' and students' talk about the classroom was connected to how the school was organised, such as the arrangements for streaming or destreaming, the availability of discipline devices, and the different ways of control in the classroom. In addition to the school organisation itself, the wider context of Hong Kong society and Chinese culture has its impact on the classroom culture. This was reflected in two orthodox views: the insistence on academic matter, and the formality of teacher-student relationships. The first view consistently echoed the examination-oriented atmosphere, which is commonly described as a feature of secondary education in Hong Kong society. The second view was connected to the Confucian beliefs about teacher-student relationships, as noted in Chapter Two. This analysis leads us to

understand that the classroom knowledge of school participants is not only connected to the school organisation itself, but also to the culture of the wider context where the school is located. Despite the fact that Schools B and E are situated in the same wider context, and have some similarities, it is noticeable that teachers and students in these two schools constructed their classroom knowledge in different ways.

In School B, guidance and discipline tended to be disconnected in the classroom; and discipline was more dominant than guidance. The disconnection relates to three features of organisational framework in this school: the insistence on classroom discipline, the adoption of a streaming policy and the availability of discipline devices. First of all, the classroom was controlled through teachers, tests, and the syllabus. In the classroom, teachers were expected to fulfil the roles imposed by the subject departments, to teach all classes with the use of unified teaching materials, to assess students' academic ability, and to complete the teaching schedule designed by the subject departments. As a result of this, classroom teaching and learning became academic-oriented. Such a classroom culture led teachers to pay more attention to playing a discipline rather than a guidance role, because, as they believed, good management of classroom discipline was the prerequisite for effective teaching and learning.

Secondly, the streaming policy was another organisational framework related to the disconnection. This policy inevitably intensified the division between classes, that is, the high-stream and the low-stream classes; and between students, that is, the more able and the less able, and the well-behaved and the misbehaving; especially, the policy made guidance and discipline more disconnected in the low-stream than in the high-stream classes. Teaching in the low-stream classes, teachers became more aware of playing a discipline role, in order to create a favourable context for teaching and learning.

Thirdly, the arrangement of the discipline devices made teachers rely on the Discipline Department to manage students' misbehaviour. Since the classrooms were

academically-oriented, teachers tended to specialise teaching in order to fulfil duties imposed by the subject departments. All matters of managing students' misbehaviour were referred upward to the Discipline Department. In part, teachers' reliance on the department to manage misbehaviour led them to disconnect themselves from school discipline and guidance.

In School E, guidance and discipline were better connected than in School B. This connectedness related to three features of the organisational framework: the insistence on teaching and learning, the destreaming policy and comparative unavailability of discipline devices. Firstly, teachers and students both took part in exercising control in the classroom. When teaching in the classroom, teachers felt less obliged to fulfil roles imposed by the subject departments; also, they were expected to help students to overcome their learning difficulties corresponding to students' expectations. Such a classroom culture created a favourable context for guidance, though classroom teachers still emphasised the importance of discipline.

Secondly, the connectedness was linked to the destreaming policy. Under the impact of this policy, classes were less divided from each other according to students' academic and behavioural performances. However, teachers experienced considerable conflict in meeting the needs of the great diversity of students. Like the teachers, students became aware of the fact that there were different sub-groups of students in one classroom; and each had opposing aims of schooling, and performed contrasting patterns of classroom behaviour.

Thirdly, discipline devices were comparatively unavailable in School E. This unavailability helps to explain why in School E teachers held more expanded view upon issues related to school discipline and students' misbehaviour than the teachers in School B; and why teachers in this school mostly managed students' misbehaviour with their personal strategies, instead of referring students upward to any school teams.

All in all, Schools B and E are situated within the same contexts of Hong Kong society and Chinese culture; and school participants in these two schools held the orthodox views that academic matters should be emphasised in schooling, and that teacher-student relationship should be formalised. Despite this similarity, there was a difference between them; that is, the classroom knowledge of participants in School B was more consistent with the orthodox views and the wider culture of Hong Kong society and Chinese culture than in School E. The difference and similarity in the classroom knowledge of participants in these two schools implies that the wider culture has a profound impact on the classroom culture, especially when the wider culture, in which the school is located, is stronger than the organisational culture of the school itself. Of course, the organisational culture of each school had a profound impact on the classroom culture, and contributed to making the classroom culture differ between the two schools. The organisational culture of School E was strong enough to create a distinctive classroom culture which differed from the classroom culture in School B whereas the organisational culture of School B was not strong enough to resist the impact of the wider culture of Hong Kong society and Chinese culture. This wider culture was more identifiable in School B than in School E, with respect to the relationship between school guidance and discipline.

# **Chapter Ten**

## **Conclusions and Implications**

### **10.1 Introduction**

The preliminary and main studies confirm that in Hong Kong as elsewhere schools make a difference, in that the relationship between school guidance and discipline differs from school to school. Reasons for such differences lie in organisational factors, such as school history, structure, culture, and in human factors, such as school participants' definition of the situation in which they participate, and their construction of school realities. It is believed that this analysis will illuminate how some schools find their own answer for the question initiating this study, that is, how can school guidance and discipline be well connected or integrated within the school? In what follows, I will summarise the preliminary and main studies, and continue by indicating the contribution of this research to knowledge of guidance and discipline. I will then clarify its implications for the relationship between school guidance and discipline. Finally, I will suggest further research needed in this area and make appropriate recommendations for change.

### **10.2 Summary of the Study**

#### **10.2.1 The preliminary study**

The preliminary study showed that school guidance and discipline in the five schools were similar in some ways, such as the structural arrangements of the guidance and discipline teams, the prioritisation of discipline over guidance, and the insistence on discipline in classroom teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the five schools had different orientations for the relationship between guidance and discipline. Among them, School B was the most fragmented, and School E was the most integrated. The

respondents from the schools with a more integrated orientation tended to describe school participants' behaviour in expanded ways, and claimed that there was a close relationship between the counselling and discipline teams. In contrast, the respondents from the schools with a more fragmented orientation tended to describe others' behaviour in narrow ways, and considered that each team was isolated from the other.

### **10.2.2 The main study**

The main study moved on to look in depth at Schools B and E in an organisational perspective, and described the relationship between school guidance and discipline at the three levels of whole school, department and classroom in these two schools. It was notable that the organisational culture and structure of School E created a more favourable context for the connectedness between guidance and discipline than those of School B.

#### **In School B**

School B was described as '*a machine*', where schoolwork apparently was departmentalised, and the relationships between school participants and school departments were formalised and contractual. All departments worked independently within the school, but within a dominant emphasis on the promotion of students' academic performance. Specifically, the Discipline and the Counselling departments were delineated as two separated territories. Since the disciplinary culture of systematisation, consistency and universality was dominant at the whole school and department levels, the Counselling Department had to work against the grain of such culture; teachers felt obliged to maintain the disciplinary culture of consistency and universality as a way of safeguarding their collective interests.

Consistently, when teaching in the streamed classrooms, teachers emphasised discipline, rather than guidance, as a way to create a favourable context for teaching and learning. Correspondingly, the Discipline Department arranged discipline devices which supported teachers in achieving this target. Accessing these devices, teachers

were expected to refer misbehaving students to the Discipline Department; and mostly these students were handled within a routine of referral, in which the processes of guidance and discipline were disconnected, and students were decontextualized from where the misbehaviour occurred. In the classroom, the distinctions between teaching, guidance and discipline became profound.

### **In School E**

In contrast to School B, participants in School E described the school as *'an organism'*, which was moving forward and *'getting more and more healthy'*. The organisational culture in this school was characterised by the diffuseness of guidance and discipline, within which teachers felt responsible for the provision of both school guidance and discipline. The diffuseness, to a great extent, related to the expanded version of school ethos, that is, whole-person education, which was deliberately transmitted into various areas of schooling, and led teachers to hold a developmental and expanded view of their roles and of issues related to school guidance and discipline.

To meet the new needs arising from the change of both the internal and external school environments, the school established an informal and comparatively ambiguous structure, wherein various school teams overlapped with each other; teachers held more than one post across two or three teams and collaborated with others as a team; also they mostly associated with each other by their free will, rather than for any institutional or contractual reasons. Within such an organisational structure, the Counselling and the Discipline Teams were characterised by cultures of particularity, individuality and informality. Teachers from these two teams perceived school guidance and discipline as a united helping process. In the course of managing students' misbehaviour, all the teachers were used to looking for unique resolutions and to considering the unique circumstances where the misbehaviour occurred, instead of referring these students to other school teams or managing them with protocol procedures as teachers in School B did.

Consistent with this organisational culture, when teachers taught in the destreamed classrooms, they were aware of playing a guidance role though at the same time they emphasised the importance of maintaining classroom discipline. In contrast to School B, classroom teachers in School E were accustomed to managing students' misbehaviour with personal strategies, to caring for individual students' needs, and to promoting positive teacher-student relationships.

### **10.3 Contribution of the Study**

Having summarised the preliminary and main studies, I will highlight the contribution of this study to our understanding of two areas: 1) the impact of wider contexts on the school organisation, 2) the connectedness of the three levels within the school. I will then point out how this study offers an appropriate way of explaining the relationship between school guidance and discipline, and continue by explaining the methodological contribution of this study.

#### **10.3.1 Impacts of wider contexts**

First of all, this study enhances our understanding that any school cannot be separated from the wider contexts, in which it is located, such as that of Chinese culture and of local educational policy, as shown in Figure 10.1 (p.232); and the culture of these wider contexts has a profound impact on the school itself; simultaneously, the school itself can create a distinctive culture which resists the impact of the wider culture. Specifically, School E was more able to create a distinctive organisational culture which resisted the permeation of the wider culture than was School B. Also in School B the impact of Chinese culture on the teachers' perception of school discipline was more identifiable than in School E. In relation to these differences, the questions which I would raise are: what factors have contributed to such a difference between these two schools; and why do they operate differently though they are situated in the same wider contexts?

The differences between Schools B and E relate to many organisational factors, such as school history, ethos, structure, and organisational culture. To put it briefly, School

**Figure 10.1 Wider contexts of Schools B and E**



B is more permeable in responding to the impact of Chinese culture. Such a permeation is associated with the insistence on the promotion of students' academic performance, which leads teachers to consider this promotion as the central aim of schooling. While the school ethos is narrowly defined in such a way, the normative values of Chinese culture become the most legitimate reference, so that teachers play their instructor roles in the classroom, create meanings related to that culture for school discipline, and subsequently make sense of it as the most appropriate way of socialising students to become civilised persons, and of creating a favourable context for teaching and learning. These beliefs are then reinforced and maintained within the school system of School B, when the practices of school discipline are institutionalised, systematised and standardised. Consequently, school discipline

strongly emphasises conformity, control, compliance, submissiveness, obedience and collectivism; and students are expected to sacrifice individual interests so as to preserve collective interests. These phenomena, to a great extent, are consistent with the culture of Chinese society, as I have summarised it in Chapter Two. Since the organisational culture of School B is not strong enough to affect teachers' and the school's practices of school discipline, the impact of the wider context of Chinese culture becomes strongly identifiable within the school system.

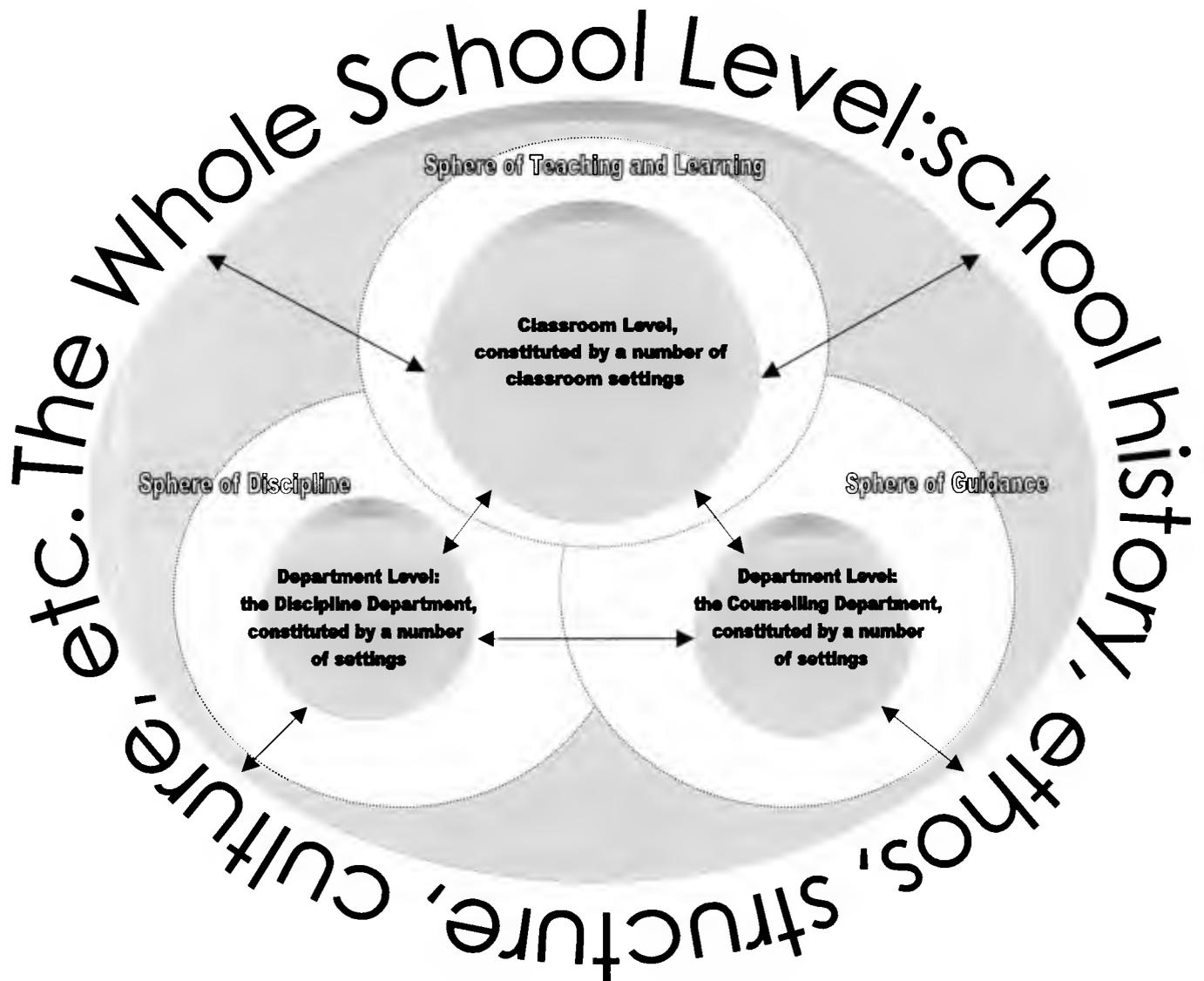
School E, by contrast, is less permeable to the impact of Chinese culture. The reduced permeation relates to many organisational factors, such as the absorption of Christianity in schooling, the change initiated by the present principal, the expanded version of education as for the whole person, the organisational culture of guidance and discipline as diffused, and the ambiguity of the organisational structure. All these organisational factors create a normative foundation upon which teachers share a humanistic and developmental view of students' growth and of issues related to school guidance and discipline. Such a view leads teachers from the Counselling and the Discipline Teams to see students as individual human beings, rather than as a collective, and not to divide any helping process into the duality of guidance and discipline, though school guidance and discipline are still structurally arranged as the concern of two separate teams.

To summarise, the wider context where the school is located has some impact on how school guidance and discipline are practised and organised in the school, especially when the wider culture is stronger than the organisational culture of the school. At the same time, the school itself is able to create a distinctive organisational culture, which affects the behaviour of school participants, and lessens the impact of the wider contexts on the school itself.

### **10.3.2 Connectedness of the three levels within the school**

While the study throws light on the connectedness between the wider contexts and the school itself, it also draws attention to the connectedness between guidance and

Figure 10.2 Connectedness of three levels within the school



discipline at the three distinct levels of whole school, department and classroom within the school, as shown in Figure 10.2. It is necessary to highlight that the inclusion of these three levels is unique in this study, which has described how school guidance and discipline at these three levels in the two schools were closely connected to each other. Specifically, in School B the disconnectedness between

school guidance and discipline, and the insistence on discipline, which were features of the department and the classroom, relate to three organisational features: the departmentalisation of the workplace, the systematisation of school discipline, and the domination of a disciplinary culture. In School E, the connectedness between school guidance and discipline, and teachers' practices of disciplining students with a personal strategy, which were features of the department and the classroom, relate to the organisational feature of informality, and that of the diffuseness of guidance and discipline. With these contrasts in mind, the study confirms that the culture and structure of the school organisation are associated with how discipline and guidance are practised in the classroom and the department.

In addition to the inclusion of three levels, the investigation of the classroom level is another unique aspect in this study, especially because no studies have yet been made of the relationship between school guidance and discipline in the classroom. The value of the inclusion of the classroom level in this study can be seen from the school participants' description of their school lives, which confirmed that the classroom constituted the core of schooling. Teachers and students are placed together for most of their school day in classrooms where teaching and learning are carried out and participants interact with each other. How they make sense of the lessons in which they participate constitutes a significant part of their knowledge of school realities.

In addition, the classroom is the most important arena where school policies and organisational arrangements are implemented. Teachers play not only the role of instructors, who are responsible for transmitting knowledge of school subjects to students, but also that of administrators, who enforce school policies relevant to classroom teaching and learning, and who teach according to the school's structural arrangements, such as the time-table for lessons, the school calendar with its standardised texts and examinations, and its definition of the progress of teaching, and the coverage of the syllabus.

Although school policies on classroom teaching and learning affect the behaviour of both teachers and students, in most cases teachers are the key persons who enforce these school policies and make classrooms into whatever they become. For example, how teachers play the two inevitable roles of instructors and administrators, how they deal with their disagreement about school arrangements and how they perceive the classroom where they participate have a profound impact on what kinds of classroom will be created and on how they interact with students.

In the light of this analysis, this study helps us to confirm that the classroom is the core of schooling, and constitutes a vital component of the school organisation, as shown in Figure 10.2 (p.234); and the connectedness of the three levels of classroom, department and whole should not be structured hierarchically in the way that one level sits above another, as I have discussed in Chapter Five (see ‘five levels of schooling’, p.107). Instead, each ‘level’ of schooling should be seen in a non-hierarchical way, as it is constituted by a number of settings in the classroom, department and whole school, where school participants interact with each other, and accordingly, the multiple realities of schooling are constructed.

### **10.3.3 Appropriate ways of explanation**

This research not only leads us to be more aware of the complexity of school lives and of how school participants construct the multiple reality of schooling in various settings in the classroom, the department, and the whole school, but also offers us appropriate ways of explaining the relationship between school guidance and discipline within the school organisation. For example, examining the school in an organisational perspective, the author found that school organisation added explanatory power to describe this relationship at the three levels, and the connectedness between these three levels. Also, by using this perspective, we can understand how different schools create different contexts at three levels, at which the relationship between school guidance and discipline in turn makes a difference.

Based upon this understanding, the study confirms that any explanation for the relationship between school guidance and discipline needs to focus on individual schools, and to use an organisational perspective. No studies of this issue have yet been made using this perspective. Most existing literature on guidance and discipline which deals with Hong Kong secondary schools, has focused only on specific aspects of practice, management, or school policies, as summarised in Chapter Three. Although some UK studies considered the impacts of school organisation on the practices of pastoral care and school discipline, they considered only certain aspects of school organisation. For example, Galloway (1983) and Galloway *et al.* (1982) focused on the impact of organisational climate on students' performance. Lawrence *et al.* (1989) considered the impact of school ethos on teachers' perception of disruption. Munn *et al.* (1992) were interested in the management levels, and suggested that management makes a difference from school to school. Gillborn *et al.* (1993) paid attention to the relation between the teachers' definition of indiscipline and the discipline strategies adopted in the school. Best *et al.* (1983) understood a school's organisation as the structural arrangement of the Years and House systems, and tried to establish the impacts of this arrangement on the functioning of the pastoral care system in the school organisation.

It is hoped that this study extends knowledge about guidance and discipline in Hong Kong secondary schools, and equally important, directs the attention of educators, the government, and school managers to the connectedness of school organisation when they consider the relationship between guidance and discipline.

#### **10.3.4 Methodological contribution**

Last but not least, it remains for me to explain the methodological contribution of this study. The methodology of ethnographic and naturalistic inquiry adopted for it helped me to examine the internal life of school that has not yet been touched by the existing surveys and case studies, which have dealt with Hong Kong secondary schools. Most of these studies conceptualised the daily life of school participants using an input-output model, in which school activities and participants behaviour are treated as

'factors' and 'variables', and focused on testing the strength of the relations among the input and output variables, or they described certain aspects of school life, instead of viewing the school as an organisation. In contrast to these studies, the methodology used in this study can provide readers with detailed descriptions of school events and the behaviour of school participants, and draws our attention to the processes and the outcomes of the structuring activities that construct the social facts of schooling. This study has contributed to remedying the deficiency of existing studies, and, it is hoped, shifted the focus of future study on guidance and discipline to a different realm.

#### **10.4 Implications of the Study**

Hitherto, I have summarised the preliminary and main studies, and asserted the contribution of this study. I will next clarify its implication for the relationship between school guidance and discipline. This research suggests that part of the answer to the question initiating this research, that is, how guidance and discipline can be made well-connected or integrated in schooling, depends on the structural arrangement of the guidance and discipline teams, and their individual practices of guidance and discipline. Equally importantly, what organisation the school intends to create is an essential factor determining the connectedness between school guidance and discipline within the school organisation, because as the main study describes, school organisation itself is one of the vital factors influencing how school participants make sense of guidance and discipline, and eventually affecting their practices of guidance and discipline. The school is an organisation where all parts, sections and levels dialectically link to each other, and any change in one of those would eventually affect others, as shown in Figure 10.2 (p.234). The examination of the value of school connectedness is not the focus of this research, but before moving on to clarify the implications of this study, I will review studies in this area below.

##### **Value of school connectedness**

The literature on school organisation indicates that building up a school as a well-connected, communal or collaborative organisation is empirically proved to be as a way of improving schools' and students' performance, as I have noted in Chapter

Three (see 'research on the degree of school connectedness', pp.43-46). For example, Bryk, Lee and Smith (1990) state that in the schools with higher levels of communal organisation, students were more keen on academic achievement and more orderly, whereas teachers experienced a higher efficacy and satisfaction, higher staff morale, and greater enjoyment of their work. Further, Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) suggest that '*a personal-communal model*' of school organisation is more effective than '*a rational-bureaucratic model*'. Resnick *et al.* (1997) claim that students who are well connected to schools engaged in less risky activities than those who are less well connected. They stress that school connectedness serves as a protective factor against a variety of risk behaviours.

The value of school connectedness is highlighted in two other studies by Sergiovanni (1994) and Rosenholtz (1989). Sergiovanni (1994) found that a communal school which was bounded by moral commitment, trust and a sense of purpose was more able to provide school participants with a sense of '*identity*', '*belonging*', and '*place*' (p.xiii), than a school organised on the basis of contracts and rewards. The study of Rosenholtz (1989) identified two forms of schools: collaborative and isolated; in a collaborative school teachers had high values on goal consensus, and liked to request and offer advice and assistance to accomplish agreed-upon goals. Few teachers mentioned conversation about students' misbehaviour, and the substance of that conversation took a positive inclination. New teachers in these schools sustained their initial humanistic views about caring for students' individual needs, and tried to develop a portfolio of strategies to meet them. The organisational culture itself provided new teachers with sufficient support and practical knowledge to avoid custodial orientations.

In an isolated school, by contrast, teachers gave low value to goal consensus. They considered some students' misbehaviour to be major school problems. They neither asked for nor expected any help, and could not be imposed upon by other teachers. New teachers in these schools soon abandoned their initial humanistic notion about caring for students' individual needs in favour of adapting themselves to the custodial

view of schooling, where order was stressed over learning, and where students were treated impersonally, punitively, and distrustfully. This led beginners to assert the essential need for maintaining adequate classroom control.

Summarising these studies, it can be seen that school connectedness has its value in the school organisation in building a friendly, supportive, trusting and intimate culture among the teachers. Within this culture, school practitioners are able to unite together with a strong sense of community, collegiality and ownership, and to share the same value system, a common agenda of activities and collegial relations. Further, this school culture leads school practitioners to realise that they are needed by the school and belong to the school. This sense of belonging drives them further to commit themselves to the school community by their altruism, love and free will, rather than for institutional or contractual reasons.

Regarding guidance and discipline, in well-connected schools guidance and discipline are well integrated; school practitioners share the culture of the community. Teachers feel responsible for teaching students citizenship and helping them to become caring adults. Although rules, rewards and punishment might be used in such schools, they are not at the heart of what matters. Teachers' main concern is about the standards, values and commitments that make up a school community where people live together. Norms count more than rules; students are motivated to behave in certain ways because they feel obliged to abide by these norms, rather than because they conform to extrinsic control or avoid punishment.

Thus, a school, like School E, where guidance and discipline are better connected at the three levels than in School B, creates a more favourable context for the connectedness between guidance and discipline than a less well-connected school like School B. In relation to this, a question which may be raised is: how can such a school organisation be established? Specifically, how can guidance and discipline be made well-connected? There has been no shortage of suggestions on what practices schools can use for promoting good guidance and discipline, and integrating them

into schooling. These include using soft systems methodology (Frederickson, 1990), drawing up a behaviour policy (Department for Education, 1994a, b, c), using systematic problem-solving (Stratford, 1987; Galvin *et al.*, 1994), introducing a whole-school practical approach to school discipline (Watkins and Wagner, 1987), developing a staff sharing scheme (Gill and Monsen, 1996), integrating school, home and community issues (Williams, 1996), and changing teacher culture (Miller, 1996). In what follows, based on the implications of this research, I will suggest two strategies for the establishment of well-connected or communal schools, where the connectedness of guidance and discipline is made practicable. These strategies are: using stories to shift attitudes, and using the team approach to guidance and discipline.

#### **Using stories to shift attitudes**

Analysis of the data collected shows clearly that how school participants talked about their school, guidance and discipline closely relates to the features of school culture and those of the structural arrangements for guidance and discipline. For example, in School E, a *'moving'* school with an integrated orientation for the relationship between guidance and discipline, teachers depicted their school in positive ways, such as *'The school is getting more and more healthy'*; *'We need to promote the quality of students' everyday life'*. They described school guidance and discipline in integrative ways, for instance: *'Discipline teachers play a guidance role too'*, and *'The Discipline Team does some guidance work whereas the Counselling Team does some discipline work'*. When discussing referrals, teachers depicted such a process as *'asking other teachers for a helping hand'*. When describing students' misbehaviour, they narrated their own work as a helping process, and said that they liked to *'have a talk with them (students involved)'*.

In School B, a *'stuck'* school with a fragmented orientation, teachers depicted their school very differently: *'We rarely consider each other in our work'*; *'The school is really strict'* and, *'There are too many rules in the school'*. Talking about school guidance and discipline, they described their relationship as fragmented: *'Discipline*

*goes ahead of counselling*', and *'Strictness should go ahead of counselling'*. The Discipline Department was described as *'powerful', 'strong', 'aggressive', 'firm' and 'strict'* whereas the Counselling Department was depicted as *'weak'* and the collaboration among counselling teachers were narrated as isolated and fragmented like *'a host of losing sand'*.

Thus, there is a close relationship between everyday conversation or talk and how individuals construct their knowledge of social reality. In fact, this relationship has been stressed in many studies. For example, Sarbin (1986) proposed that *'human beings think, perceive, imagine and make moral choices according to narrative structure'* (p.8). Witherell and Noddings (1991) claimed that stories embody people's understanding about work on both an organisational and individual basis. Similarly, Clandinin and Connelly (1992) stated that the process of storytelling in human conversation is a fundamental feature of personal and social growth because through this process, individuals construct meaning and make sense of new life experiences, which, in turn, influence how they construct their knowledge of social reality.

Likewise, many educational studies have suggested that the language used by teachers and students in schooling, and the stories shared among them, have significant influences on how they make sense of school realities, because school realities are made up of the lives and experiences of school practitioners, which are mostly stored and communicated in the form of stories, not as detached lists of facts and figures; eventually these stories construct parts of school realities which are shared among teachers and students. As Danzig (1996) suggests, *'issues related to school culture, personal relations, values and beliefs, and rituals and myths, take on more meaning as they are presented in stories of practice'* (p.129). Boyce (1996) endorses the same view, and suggests that telling stories among teachers allows commonly shared organisational purposes to be developed, sharpened and reviewed.

Similarly, Quong and Walker (2000) are interested in using stories to shift school practitioners' beliefs about the organisations wherein they work, and their

understanding of their workplace. They state that school practitioners' values, feelings, and attitudes are communicated by telling and re-telling the stories through which interpersonal relationships and organisational culture are created and maintained within the school. Further, these authors suggest that changing the stories which teachers tell and re-tell each other can change schools' underlying beliefs and assumptions about schooling. In doing so, changing the stories may shift the school to adopt a positive and proactive approach to the problem which caused concern.

The studies mentioned above lead us to see that how school practitioners talk about their workplace and school experience is associated with school culture and management; also the features of the school structure and those of protocol procedures closely relate to how school participants depict their school lives. In view of this, school managers, at the reactive level, may need to consider how far a school's structural arrangement and organisational climate may affect teachers' and students' everyday talk about their school lives, what stories they tell and retell among themselves, and how such talk in turn contributes to the existing school climate. At the proactive level, 'positive' talk among teachers and students need to be intentionally promoted in various spheres of schooling, such as teaching and learning, guidance and discipline, through all the contexts of schooling, such as staff meetings, a sports days, and educational units. By promoting 'positive' talks among teachers and students, the school may create a positive school climate and a favourable context for connectedness between school guidance and discipline.

### **Transformation from a referral to a team approach**

In addition to the promotion of 'positive' talk, the study implies that the team approach, which was adopted in School E for the management of students' misbehaviour, makes the connectedness between guidance and discipline more practicable at the department level than the referral system used in School B.

Many writers have been concerned with the function of referral systems and the use of a team approach in schooling. For example, drawing on the evidence from relevant

studies, Watkins and Wagner (2000) claim that the process of referral is mostly a regular transaction between teachers, in which students involved are referred like '*passing the parcel*' (p.123); also the function of a referral system may be not to resolve the problems of students' misbehaviour, but to support a minority of teachers who may have experienced considerable difficulty in handling the social process of the classroom. Further, a referral system is, to a great extent, counter-productive to teachers' collaboration, because teachers have been specialised in playing particular roles when they have been specialised in a chain of referral. Because of this, as Watkins and Wagner (2000) argue, a referral system cannot be seen as an effective way of improving both student and school behaviours.

Meanwhile, other writers have considered the value of the team approach in schooling. Intili (1977), for example, stated that when teachers' participation in team arrangements is intensive and sustained, decisions made by these teachers become reflective. Similarly, Bird and Little (1985) claimed that a team approach to schooling can enrich classroom environments; students' achievement can be improved; additionally, this approach makes teachers produce more good ideas about teaching methods and materials than they could have produced alone.

A more detailed study of the team approach to teachers' collaboration was completed by Krus and Louis (1995). In their study, teaming is defined as a way in which teachers from different groups or school departments are assembled to work together as a '*core group*' for achieving certain educational targets. These authors stress that the teaming approach is effective in four aspects: improving students' achievement, giving students standards of achievement as goals, helping teachers feel more effective, and giving teachers a sense of collegiality.

Returning to the main study, the team approach adopted in School E made teachers' collaboration in managing students' misbehaviour problems and the diffuseness of guidance and discipline more practicable than the referral system used in School B, where teachers handled students with disciplinary problems by referring these

students to the Discipline Department. When teachers and students assessed the referral system, the helping process was divided into guidance and discipline; students involved were mostly decontextualised from where the misbehaviour occurred, and handled by the department mechanically in routine procedures. Furthermore, when teachers in School B accessed the referral system to manage students' misbehaviour, teachers' collaboration and their role were structured by the roles and duties assigned by the school; these teachers seemed to feel it more necessary to fulfil their administrative roles, than to provide students with help and support.

By contrast, the team approach to guidance and discipline, adopted in School E, creates ample room for the diffuseness of guidance and discipline, wherein teachers felt responsible for both guidance and discipline, and accordingly to facilitate their autonomy in dealing with issues related to school guidance and discipline. When working as a team, teachers in this school were able to define their role and students' behaviour in expanded ways; they intended to find out the reasons underlying students' misbehaviour, and to focus more on the contexts where students' misbehaviour occurred and on individual students who misbehaved, and less on the behaviour which was performed. To a great extent, the team approach adopted in School E made the connectedness between guidance and discipline practicable.

It may therefore be suggested that teachers' reliance on a referral system to manage students' misbehaviour should be reduced to a minimum; and that to promote the connectedness between school guidance and discipline at the department level, a school needs to create contexts where the team approach to school guidance and discipline is made feasible, such as through assigning teachers from different departments to work for the same educational programmes, creating time during the school day for these teachers to meet and help students in need, offering common opportunities for training, and giving teams some measure of control over their practices.

## 10.5 Suggestions for Further Research

In this section, I will make suggestions for further research on school guidance and discipline at the four levels of the wider contexts, the whole school, the department and the classroom on the basis of the contribution and implications explicated above.

At the level of the wider contexts, the study leads us to recognise that the wider culture has profound impacts on the school itself; also, school practitioners' knowledge of school realities cannot be examined in isolation from features of the wider context where their schools are located, such as Chinese culture and of local educational policy. Since this level is not one of the foci of this study, more data are needed to verify the impacts of the wider culture on the schools' and teachers' practices of school guidance and discipline, on the arrangements for them within each school, and the variation of these impacts among schools.

Specifically, in terms of the wider context of educational policy, a study could be undertaken to investigate how far educational policy has impacts on the schools' and teachers' practices of school guidance and discipline, how such impacts differ from school to school and accordingly what school factors make a difference. Apart from this, some interesting areas which are worth investigation have been highlighted in the section on 'the wider level of educational policy' in Chapter Five (see p.110). In terms of the wider context of Chinese culture, more research should be done on how 'borrowed' educational policies on school guidance and discipline, for example 'the whole school approach', should be modified in order to ensure that these policies can be implemented effectively and productively in Hong Kong secondary schools where most teachers and students have maintained their inherent Chineseness.

At the whole school level, the study highlights that the school is an organisation where school components, such as teaching, learning, school curricular and extra-curricular activities, are dialectically linked to each other. This understanding leads to the realisation that more research is needed to verify the extent to which the practices and arrangements for school guidance and discipline are more integrated in well-

connected schools than in schools where school components are fragmented into parts. Such research would be of value which investigated the relationships of school guidance and discipline with the other school components mentioned, and how these relationships could contribute to the connectedness of a school organisation. Another study that would be of value could investigate what kind of organisational arrangements for school guidance and discipline would be beneficial for promoting their connectedness. For such study, it would be insightful to recruit more schools so as to examine various designs of school organisation, and how they are linked to different patterns of relationship between school guidance and discipline.

At the department level, having analysed the data collected, I, as a researcher, found that there is an important micropolitical dimension among teachers from the guidance and discipline teams. Regarding this, a study could examine the micropolitics not only between the guidance and discipline teams, but also among teachers from the same team, and how far this micropolitics is linked to the existing arrangements for school guidance and discipline and to the organisational culture of the school where they are in force.

Further, it could be valuable to examine in depth the relationships of the guidance and discipline teams with other teams, and how these relationships are maintained and institutionalised within the school system. Another study could be conducted to investigate how to restructure and 're-culture' the guidance and discipline teams, and how to establish a positive rapport between school teams in order to improve the relationship between school guidance and discipline, while considering the organisational structure and culture of the schools where these teams are located. In addition, in relation to the acknowledgement that the diffuseness of school guidance and discipline creates a favourable context for integrating guidance and discipline into schooling, it would be interesting to carry out a theoretical study to clarify what roles the guidance and discipline teams have to play in a school where all teachers feel responsible for playing the diffuse role of school guidance and discipline.

At the classroom level, this study confirms that the classroom as a sociological entity is the core of schooling. In relation to this, more research needs to be done to enhance our understanding of how teachers and students interact with each other, and how the various spheres of schooling, such as discipline, guidance, teaching and learning, overlap in the classroom. Such research is particularly necessary because the relationship between guidance and discipline in the classroom has been under-researched. Concisely, a study would be of value in comparing how school guidance and discipline are practised differently by individual teachers taking account of the various groups of students whom they deal with, in terms of their age, academic and behavioural performances, and how these various groups of students feel and react reciprocally. Another study could examine how guidance and discipline can be integrated into classroom teaching and learning, and what difficulties teachers may encounter when they do so. After exploring all these areas, it would be necessary to find out how existing arrangements for school guidance and discipline can be modified at the classroom level so as to create a favourable context where classroom teachers are able to deliver school guidance and meet the needs of these specific groups of students.

## **10.6 Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this final chapter, I have summarised the preliminary and main studies, and continued by explicating the contribution of this research and the implications for the integration of school guidance and discipline into schooling. Lastly, some suggestions for further research in this area have been made.

It is hoped that this research helps us to understand the school itself as an organisation, and its impact on both the school's and teachers' practices of guidance and discipline, and on connectedness at the three levels of the whole school, the department and the classroom. In fact, in Hong Kong educational policy makers have become aware of the impact of school organisation itself on schooling since the publication of ECR no.4 in 1990, and specifically has come to accept the view that when educational changes are made, the school-based features and circumstances

should be considered. ECR no.4 states, for example, that the Whole School Approach is the most appropriate way to resolve students' developmental problems (Education Commission, 1990). Similarly, the booklet on the School Management Initiative (SMI) highlights that changes should be made at the school-based level, and within the inter-organisational and intra-organisational dimensions of each school (Educational and Manpower Branch and Education Department, 1991).

However, the recommendations made accordingly overtly focus on changing the structural framework of the school and on promoting school effectiveness, and less on the values underlying such changes. For example, the recommendations cited in the document on the SMI (1991) aim to help schools to establish effective systems by reforming the school management system (EMB and ED, 1991). ECR no.7 presents 56 recommendations for schools on promoting quality education; these mainly focus on the development of indicators, the establishment of a quality assurance mechanism, the use of incentives to encourage quality school education, and the enhancement of the professional standards of principals and teachers (Education Commission, 1997).

To deal with what is missing from these educational policies, the recommendations which I will make below emphasise not only structural changes, but, equally important, the values underlying these changes. In fact, definite and general recommendations of structural changes within the school system are unlikely to help all schools to resolve their concerns with the relationship between school guidance and discipline unless such recommendation are based on an understanding of the organisational structure and culture of these schools. This is partly because the features of school systems, the patterns of students' behaviour, and problems which schools encounter differ enormously from school to school. In view of this, the recommendations of this study are mainly made in relation to the values underlying educational changes, and aim to promote the connectedness between school guidance and discipline within the school organisation at the three levels.

At the whole school level, school managers need to view any school organisation as a system, wherein all the parts, settings, and dimensions of schooling are dialectically interconnected to each other. Besides, within the school organisation, a communal culture needs to be created intentionally so that teachers and students feel that they belong to and care for each other, and are able to relate themselves to the expanded or holistic version of school's ethos and to the values that the school creates for them. Such a culture requires the identification of the school's purposefulness, the establishment of supportive mechanisms, the setting of proactive school policies, and encouraging teachers' and students' 'positive' talk about schooling.

Furthermore, in Hong Kong both school managers and educational policy-makers need to recognise that the school organisation functions as a system which is continually in contact with the wide context of Chinese culture and of educational policy, wherein the school is located. In establishing the communal culture at the school level, school managers ought to take account of the impact of these wider contexts on both the school's and teachers' behaviour and on their practices of guidance and discipline; and educational policy makers have to ensure that educational policies should be formulated considering not only the school-based, but also the Chinese culture, particularly when 'borrowed' educational models and policies, as I have discussed in Chapter One (see 'conclusion', pp.17-19), are adopted and implemented in Hong Kong secondary schools.

At the department level, the school has to strengthen teachers' capacity and their roles in dealing with the complex issues related to school guidance and discipline, and to encourage them to coalesce with each other in flexible and 'organic' ways so as to meet new needs initiated by both the internal and external changes in school organisation. Also, the school should help teachers to link their efforts to the shared purpose of the organisation, and to identify the purposefulness of their participation in their workplace. To achieve this, it may be worthwhile for the school to adopt '*a team approach*' (Krus and Louis, 1995) for getting teachers to collaborate with others flexibly as a team to help students in need. Regarding the structural arrangement of

the guidance and discipline teams, school managers can consider transforming the roles of these teams into consultation agencies (Watkins and Wagner, 2000; Dowling and Osborne, 1985), which are aimed at motivating teachers to exercise their own autonomy in managing students' misbehaviour and at helping teachers to see their roles and students' behaviour in expanded ways, and to contextualise the misbehaviour so as to find out the underlying reasons for it.

At the classroom level, teachers need to recognise that they are the major factor in the classroom situation who determine what kind of classroom is created, for example creating either a positive classroom climate, or conditions which generate difficulties; further, simply referring students with behavioural problem to another team of teachers cannot be seen as an appropriate way of helping these students to change their behaviour. Assuming that they recognise these points, classroom teachers are recommended to define their roles and to interpret students' behaviours in expanded ways so as to deal positively and flexibly with the complexity of classroom situations, and to create a positive and communal climate therein. Although I have stressed that the teacher is the major element in the classroom, school managers should be aware that organisational policies and features of school systems, such as departmentalisation and the diffuseness of guidance and discipline, have profound impacts on teachers' and students' behaviour in the classroom; and they need to ensure that an appropriate mechanism is designed for supporting classroom teaching and learning.

All in all, the recommendations made above draw our attention to the fact that any educational change should be made not only by restructuring, but equally important by 're-culturing' the school organisation; and such a change should involve changes of meaning, values, ethos, culture and the purposefulness of the school lives of participants. It is hoped that this research will provide teachers, school managers and the government with insight into the connectedness between school guidance and discipline at the three levels of whole school, department and classroom; also that the findings will encourage and assist some Hong Kong schools, at least, to implement at

the school level educational policies such as the Whole School Approach and the School Management Initiative, in order to improve the relationship between school guidance and discipline for students' holistic growth and welfare.

## **Appendixes and References**

## Appendix 1

**Table of the UK and Hong Kong terminology  
for primary and secondary education**

	<b>Hong Kong Terminology</b>	<b>The UK Terminology (for state schools)</b>
<b>PRIMARY EDUCATION</b>	<p>Primary-One Primary-Two</p> <p>Primary-Three Primary-Four Primary-Five Primary-Six</p>	<p><b>Key Stage One:</b> Year One Year Two</p> <p><b>Key Stage Two:</b> Year Three Year Four Year Five Year Six</p>
<b>SECONDARY EDUCATION</b>	<p><b>Junior Secondary:</b> Secondary-One Secondary-Two Secondary-Three</p> <p><b>Senior Secondary:</b> Secondary-Four Secondary-Five</p> <p>Secondary-Six Secondary-Seven</p>	<p><b>Key Stage Three:</b> Year Seven Year Eight Year Nine</p> <p><b>Key Stage Four:</b> Year Ten Year Eleven</p> <p><b>(Key Stage Five)</b> Year Twelve Year Thirteen</p>

## Appendix 2

### The interview guide for the preliminary study

**The Interview Guide (December 98)**  
*A study of Teachers' and Students'*  
*Definition of the Situation in Five Hong Kong Secondary Schools*

#### (1) Questions for interviewing discipline teachers

##### (a) Background information

- (i) What is the band of your school?
- (ii) How many years have been you teaching in the school?
- (iii) What subject and which class do you teach?
- (iv) What is your non-teaching duty in this school?

##### (b) Definition of the situation

###### *In the classroom setting*

- (i) What role did you expect to play?
- (ii) What role did you play actually?
- (iii) What role did you think your students expected you to play?  
How far does it differ from the actual role that you played?
- (iv) What role did you expect your students to play?
- (v) How far does your expectation of students' role differ from the actual role that your students played?
- (vi) What did you do when you played a discipline role?
- (vii) What was your intention when you played this role?
- (viii) How did the students involved perceive the role that you have just described?
- (ix) What did you do when you played a guidance role?
- (x) What was your intention when you played this role?
- (xi) How did the students involved perceive the role that you have just described?

###### *In the discipline setting*

- (xii) What discipline programmes are currently implemented in the school?
- (xiii) What are you responsible for in the discipline team?
- (xiv) Being a discipline teacher, what role did you expect to play? How far does it differ from the actual role that you played?
- (xv) What discipline role did you think your students expect you to play? How far does it differ from the actual role that you played?

- (xvi) What was the target of your work? What intentions did you attribute to students?
- (xvii) How did students perceive the discipline work that you carried out in the school?
- (xviii) How did you perceive the existing arrangements for school discipline in the school?

**(c) Relationship between the school guidance and discipline teams**

- (i) How would you describe the relationship between the guidance and discipline teams in your school? How far does this relationship differ from your expectation?
- (ii) Was there any overlap of shared ground for the work of the two teams? If so, what was it?

## **(2) Questions for interviewing guidance teachers**

**(a) Background information**

- (i) What is the band of your school?
- (ii) How many years have been you teaching in the school?
- (iii) What subject and which class do you teach?
- (iv) What is your non-teaching duty in this school?

**(b) Definition of the situation**

***In the classroom setting***

- (i) What role did you expect to play?
- (ii) What role did you play actually?
- (iii) What role did you think your students expected you to play?  
How far does it differ from the actual role that you played?
- (iv) What role did you expect your students to play?
- (v) How far does your expectation of students' role differ from the actual role that your students played?
- (vi) What did you do when you played a discipline role?
- (vii) What was your intention when you played this role?
- (viii) How did the students involved perceive the role that you have just described?
- (ix) What did you do when you played a guidance role?
- (x) What was your intention when you played this role?
- (xi) How did the students involved perceive the role that you have just described?

***In the guidance setting***

- (xii) What guidance programmes are currently implemented in the school?

- (xiii) What are you responsible for in the guidance team?
- (xiv) Being a guidance teacher, what role did you expect to play? How far does it differ from the actual role that you played?
- (xv) What guidance role did you think your students expected you to play? How far does it differ from the actual role that you played?
- (xvi) What was the target of your work? What intentions did you attribute to students?
- (xvii) How did students perceive the guidance work that you carried out in the school?
- (xvii) How did you perceive the existing arrangements for school guidance in the school?

**(c) Relationship between the school guidance and discipline teams**

- (i) How would you describe the relationship between the guidance and discipline teams in your school? How far does this relationship differ from your expectation?
- (ii) Was there any overlap of shared ground for the work of the two teams? If so, what was it?

## **(2) Questions for interviewing students**

**(a) Background information**

- (i) What class are you in?

**(b) Definition of the situation**

***The classroom setting***

- (i) What role did you expect to play?
- (ii) What role did you play actually?
- (iii) What role did you think your teachers expected you to play?
- (iv) How far does it differ from the actual role that you played?
- (v) What role did you expect your teachers to play?
- (vi) How far does it differ from the actual role that they played?
- (vii) What did teachers do when they played a discipline role?
- (viii) What intention did you think your teacher attributes to you when they played the role that you have just described?
- (ix) What did teachers do when they played a guidance role?
- (x) What intentions did you think your teacher attribute to you when they played the role that you have just described?

***The guidance and discipline settings***

- (xi) Would you tell me what guidance and discipline programme are carrying out in your school?
- (xii) What role did you expect guidance teachers to play when they carried out their duty?

- (xiii) What role did guidance teachers play actually?
- (xiv) How far does it differ from the ideal role that you expected them to play?
- (xv) What intention did these guidance teachers attribute to you when they played the role you have just described?
- (xvi) What role did you expect discipline teachers to play when they carried out their duty?
- (xvii) What role did they play actually?
- (xviii) How far does it differ from the ideal role that you expected them to play?
- (xix) What intention(s) did these discipline teachers attribute to you when they played the role you have just described?

**(c) Relationship between the guidance and discipline teams**

- (i) How would you describe the relationship between the guidance and discipline teams in your school?
- (ii) What ideal relationship of the two teams would you like to see?

## Appendix 3

### The Categorization of Teacher's and Students' roles in the preliminary study

#### Definition of the Situation: The Fragmented Orientation

***Teacher as a role defender:*** This refers to a teacher who experiences conflict in playing his/her expected roles and the actual role in the classroom. This teacher has to continually confront students in order to be in control of the classroom. In doing so, s/he spends most of the time in lessons on handling students' misbehaviours.

***Teacher as a traditional person:*** This refers to a teacher who puts little emphasis on teacher-student interaction in the process of teaching and learning. This teacher is not very able to eliminate the role distance between his/her teaching and disciplinarian role, and to take the roles of students and get into their world.

***Teacher as a disciplinarian:*** This refers to a teacher who is accustomed to strictly and constantly disciplining students. This teacher asserts that administering punishments and using the technique of scolding are the most appropriate ways to modify students' misbehaviours. In doing so, s/he emphasises justice and fairness.

***Teacher as a rules reminder:*** This refers to a teacher who likes to remind students orally about conforming their behaviours to school and classroom rules.

***Teacher as a label giver:*** This refers to a teacher who wittingly or unwittingly labels students in negative ways, such as problematic persons.

***Student as a passive learner:*** This refers to a student who has to conduct the classroom activities by following teachers' instructions. His/her learning motivation is very low, and s/he is mostly extrinsically orientated, rather than intrinsically. This student prefers 'sitting and listening' in the classroom, rather than participating in any other classroom activities.

***Student as a conformist:*** This refers to a student who is expected to conform or is used to conforming his behaviour to teachers' instructions and school rules.

***Student as 'an ignorant of schooling':*** This refers to a student who behaves badly and has a very low motivation for learning. This student is unable to identify with the meaning of learning in the school.

***Student as a sufferer:*** This refers to a student who asserts the need for putting one's preference aside in order to pursue the collective interest. In doing so, this student feels suppressed, misunderstood, and not listened to.

### **Definition of the Situation: The Orthodox View**

***Teacher as an instructor for learning and examinations:*** This refers to a teacher who helps students to learn, and prepares them for examinations. This teacher intends to transmit knowledge of school subjects to students.

***Teacher as an administrator:*** This refers to a teacher who feels responsible for fulfilling school duty assigned by the school authority. Discipline teachers should enforce school discipline policy and school rules, and administer punishment upon students according to the offence which they have committed. Counselling teachers should carry out the guidance programs, and deliver counselling service.

***Student as a learner:*** This refers to a student who has to study hard and pay attention in the classroom so as to attain good results in examinations.

### **Definition of the Situation: The Integrated Orientation**

***Teacher as a self-esteem promoter:*** This refers to a teacher who deliberately attempts to enhance students' self-esteem in the process of teaching and learning. This teacher feels confident in managing classroom discipline and students' misbehaviour.

***Teacher as a pastoral carer:*** This refers to a teacher who is able to care for students' feelings and individual needs, and accordingly to show these students some emotional or affective support. This teacher likes to depict himself/herself as students' parent.

***Teacher as a counsellor:*** This refers to a teacher who facilitates students' learning or helps them to sort out their personal problems, with the use of counselling skills.

***Teacher as a problem solver:*** This refers to a teacher who helps students to sort out their difficulties, and focuses less on getting students to take the responsibility of their problems.

***Teacher as the promoter of positive relationship:*** This refers to a teacher who strongly emphasises establishing a positive relationship with students.

***Student as a potential learner:*** This refers to a student who has great motivation for learning and an authentic ability to learn, regardless of what academic achievement s/he will acquire at the end.

***Student as a human being:*** This refers to a student who is seen as an individual being and to whom teachers feel responsible for showing love, empathy, respect, and acceptance.

*Student as a changeable person:* This refers to a student who is viewed as a continuously growing person.

## Appendix 4

### Profiles of teachers' definitions of teachers' and student's roles in the classroom setting

Teacher respondents	Definition of situation: The fragmented orientation	Definition of situation: the orthodox view	Definition of situation: the integrated orientation
<b>AG</b>	Teacher as a disciplinarian	Student as a learner	Teacher as a self-esteem promoter
<b>AD</b>	Teacher as a disciplinarian Student as a conformist	Teacher as an instructor Teacher as an administrator	
<b>BG</b>	Teacher as a disciplinarian Teacher as a role defender Student as a passive learner Student as 'An ignorant of schooling'	Teacher as an instructor	Teacher as a pastoral carer
<b>BD</b>	Teacher as a disciplinarian Student as a conformist Student as 'an ignorant of schooling'	Teacher as an instructor Student as a learner	
<b>CG</b>	Student as a conformist	Teacher as an instructor Student as a learner	Teacher as a pastoral carer
<b>CD</b>		Teacher as an instructor Teacher as an administrator	Teacher as a pastoral carer
<b>DG</b>	Teacher as a school rules reminder	Teacher as an instructor	Teacher as a pastoral carer Student as a changeable person
<b>DD</b>		Teacher as an instructor Student as a learner	Teacher as a pastoral carer Student as a potential learner

<b>EG</b>		Teacher as an instructor Teacher as an administrator Student as a learner	Teacher as the promoter of positive relationship
<b>ED</b>	Student as a conformist	Teacher as an instructor Student as a learner	Teacher as a pastoral carer

## Appendix 5

### Profiles of students' definitions of teachers' and students' roles in the classroom setting

<b>Student respondents</b>	<b>Definition of situation: the fragmented orientation</b>	<b>Definition of situation: The orthodox view</b>	<b>Definition of situation: the integrated orientation</b>
<b>A1</b>	Teacher as a disciplinarian	Student as a learner	Teacher as a pastoral carer
<b>A2</b>	Teacher as a disciplinarian	Teacher as an instructor Student as a learner	Teacher as a pastoral carer
<b>B1</b>	Student as a conformist Teacher as a disciplinarian		
<b>B2</b>	Student as a conformist Teacher as a disciplinarian		
<b>C1</b>	Teacher as a disciplinarian	Student as a learner Teacher as an instructor	
<b>C2</b>	Student as a passive learner Teacher as a disciplinarian	Teacher as an instructor	Teacher as a pastoral carer
<b>D1</b>	Student as a conformist Teacher as a traditional person Teacher as a disciplinarian	Student as a learner	
<b>D2</b>	Teacher as a disciplinarian Teacher as a traditional person	Student as a learner	

<b>E1</b>	Student as a passive learner	Student as a learner	Teacher as a pastoral carer Teacher as a self-esteem promoter
<b>E2</b>	Student as a passive learner	Student as a learner	Teacher as a pastoral carer

## Appendix 6

### Profiles of teachers' definitions of teachers' and students' roles in the guidance and discipline settings

Teacher respondents	Definition of situation: the fragmented orientation	Definition of situation: the orthodox view	Definition of situation: the integrated orientation
AG		Counselling teacher as an administrator	Counselling teacher as a counsellor Counselling teacher as a promoter of positive relationship Counselling teacher as a self-esteem promoter Student as a human being
AD	Student as a conformist Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian	Discipline teacher as an administrator	
BG	Student as 'an ignorant of schooling'	Counselling teacher as an administrator	Counselling teacher as a counsellor
BD	Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian Student as a conformist	Discipline teacher as an administrator	
CG	Counselling teacher as a label giver		Counselling teacher as a problem solver Counselling teacher as the promoter of positive relationship Counselling teacher as a self-esteem promoter Student as a human being
CD	Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian Student as a conformist		
DG	Student as a conformist	Counselling teacher as an administrator	Counselling teacher as a counsellor

<b>DD</b>	Student as a conformist	Discipline teacher as an administrator	
<b>EG</b>			Counselling teacher as a counsellor Counselling teacher as a self-esteem promoter Student as a human being
<b>ED</b>		Discipline teacher as an administrator	Discipline teacher as a pastoral carer Student as a human being

## Appendix 7

### Profiles of students' definitions of teachers' and students' roles in the guidance and discipline settings

Student respondents	Definition of situation: the fragmented orientation	Definition of situation: the orthodox view	Definition of situation: the integrated orientation
A1	Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian Student as a conformist	Discipline teacher as an administrator	Counselling teacher as a counsellor
A2	Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian Student as a sufferer		Counselling teacher as a counsellor
B1	Student as a conformist Student as a sufferer Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian	Discipline teacher as an administrator	
B2	Student as a conformist Student as a sufferer Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian	Discipline teacher as an administrator	
C1	Student as a conformist Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian	Discipline teacher as an administrator	Counselling teacher as a counsellor
C2	Student as a conformist Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian		Counselling teacher as a counsellor
D1	Student as a sufferer Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian		Counselling teacher as a counsellor

<b>D2</b>	Counselling teacher as a label giver Student as a conformist	Discipline teacher as an administrator	Counselling teacher as a counsellor
<b>E1</b>	Discipline teacher as a Disciplinarian Student as a conformist		Counselling teacher as a counsellor
<b>E2</b>	Student as a sufferer Discipline teacher as a disciplinarian		Counselling teacher as a counsellor

## Appendix 8

### Briefing notes for data collection in Schools B and E

- 1) **Aim of the research:**  
I would like to understand how teachers and students interact with each other in the processes of school guidance and discipline, and the relationship between the guidance and discipline teams.
- 2) **Research Activities:**
  - (a) Observation- for example classroom teaching and learning activities, uniform inspection, detention class, form assembly and staff meetings.
  - (b) Participant observation- for example teaching Geography in any one secondary-three class for one month, and involving myself in any guidance and discipline programmes.
  - (c) Collection of school documents- for example, teachers' and students' handbooks, school prospectus, handbook for the guidance and discipline teachers, school circulars, annual guidance and discipline programmes, and students' files (if possible).
  - (d) Individual interviews- with teachers and students (may be tape-recorded if consent given by the interviewees).
  - (e) Focus groups- Two groups to be formed and six students from secondary-three are recruited in each of the groups.
- 3) **Right of teachers and students:**
  - (a) Participation: They have the right to object to any of my research activities and end their participation at any time.
  - (b) Privacy: They are encouraged to tell me what they do not want me to ask, what they do not want to answer or what they do not want other school practitioners to know.
  - (c) Confidentiality: I guarantee that no one, except my supervisor, will listen to the tapes without their consent. They are kept anonymous in this study.
  - (d) They can have a copy of the tape if they want. They can listen to others' tapes if the parties concerned agree.
- 4) **My responsibilities:**  
Throughout the time when I participate in the school, I would like to respect the school culture and all school practitioners. Also, I am open to hear any comments from them. Specifically, I have to clarify them the possible consequences or potential risks of participating in such research. Something unforeseeable may happen, such as some bad feelings may be aroused or some secrets revealed. I would like to reassure them that they can reach me during the research if they, especially student respondents, want to talk to me. If it is not within my ability to solve their problems, I will make necessary referrals. I also tell my respondents that I shall leave both my Hong Kong and UK telephone number and address with the principal, and the heads of school guidance and discipline. They are welcome to contact me during or after the research.

## Appendix 9

### An example of field notes in School B

#### Field Notes: School B-990908 (Wednesday)

At 7:50am I met a student, Bing-Chi, in the underground station. I told him that the stories about his form tutor which he had told me in another day was very amusing. He seemed very excited and promised me that he would tell me more if any. I then asked him to tell me what he thought of his class since the new school term began. He responded that the class was getting worse, but this was not as bad as the class in the previous year. (What do you mean by 'bad'?) Most students in the class just liked chatting and doing what they liked. Also they were highly inattentive. When teachers asked questioned in lesson, they liked to give ridiculous answers. Teachers could not punish these students because of this, since mostly their answers were not totally wrong.

At 8:00, I got back to the school and settled in the teachers' common room. I decided to go to the main entrance of the school in order to observe how the prefects inspected students' uniform. Two prefects there greeted me when seeing that I was approaching them. I recognised one of the prefects, a secondary-four boy, whom I taught before. He said that he felt happy to see me again, and hoped that I could be there with him whenever he carried out his duty. I felt that these two prefects were very friendly to me. (Would you tell me what is your duty here?) They told me that they were responsible for inspecting students' uniform; specifically if students were found gelling or dyeing their hair, they needed to record their name and what offence they committed. (Do you only inspect their hair?) Apart from this, they inspected the length of dress and style of shirt. (How do students normally react to you when you inspect them?) They admitted that if students did nothing wrong and dressed in the proper uniform, they were very fine. However those students who broke the code of uniform were very uncooperative, and liked to use their body language to tell the prefects that they were very unwilling to be inspected and write down their name as they were instructed. (Have you met any difficult students who did not do as you had instructed?) They said that they rarely encountered such difficult students. If they did, they would inform the discipline teachers. In the course of our conversation, a secondary-five boy, whom I taught previously, came to be inspected by the prefect as he was instructed by the prefect. This student firstly greeted me in a polite way and then said to the prefect in a normal tone, 'You can check now'. Instantly, the prefect inspected his hair with care and said, 'Fine!' After that, this prefect deleted this student's name written on a form holding in his hand. After that, this student smiled to me and left. I asked the prefect, 'What's wrong with him?' He said that this student did gel his hair the day before, but he gave him a one day allowance to correct it and to come for re-inspection on the following day.

After the morning bell at 8:10am, the two prefects said Goodbye to me and left. At 8:15am, Mr Mong came out to deal with the late students. We greeted each other and

he was happy to see me there, because as he said, I could give him some help. At this time, a secondary-one student rushed to show us a pile of forms, recording a list of students' name who did not submit homework, and asked where he should hand these forms in. 'The general office', Mr Mong said, pointing him the way. This student ran to the office without pausing for a second. (What do you think about the new policy of submitting homework?) Mr Mong perceived that this policy is a way of getting students to complete their homework. If students fail to submit homework, teachers will keep a record and then do something later. (How can teachers ensure that students do all their homework?) To implement this policy, students should keep a diary about what homework they have to do in their handbook; the morning and afternoon roll call has been lengthened by 10 minutes so as to allow form tutors to check whether students keep their diary well. In every morning, any students who fail to hand in their homework, their names are recorded on a form which will then be handled by the staff in the general office. These students' names and the subject of their homework are then shown on a table which is now displayed in the staff room. Mr Mong admitted that keeping a diary of their homework in students' handbook has apparently become one of the school rules. He described such a policy as a sign indicating that the school has changed into a primary school. (How do you perceive the rationale underlying this policy?) Despite this, he perceived that this is a good policy, because students cannot make an excuse that they forgot to complete certain homework.

At 8:30am, in total two students were late. Mr Mong felt very content with this number because, as he claimed, most students have got used to getting back to school before 8:10am. (for the late students, do you keep their record and give them a bad point or demerit because of this?) Mr Mong explained that the school should exercise punishment upon the late students; students won't get any demerits or bad points because of being late for school, but they will be sent to the detention class where they are punished by standing for 35 minutes after school. If they leave this, they will be punished by standing for 35 minutes on the following morning, plus being sent to the detention class.

In the course of our conversation, a secondary-five girl came to see Mr Mong.

'Why were you absent from the detention class yesterday?', he asked this girl strictly.

'Because I was sick, that 's why', this girl explained in a very low and scared voice.

'Why didn't you inform me in advance before you left the school yesterday?', Mr. Leung said toughly.

'I had no parents' letter and I was afraid that you would not allow me to leave', this girl replied.

'You have to stand over there (outside the staff room) for a lesson (that is, 35 minutes) anyway. Also don't forget that you have to attend the detention class at 1E after school', Mr Mong ordered.

Then this girl moved unwillingly toward the appointed place to stand precociously against the wall.

When I finished my conversation with Mr Mong, I approached this girl, leaning against the wall and looking very grave. I asked her with care, 'What wrong with you yesterday?' She insisted that she was very sick and it was impossible for her to stand for 35 minutes after school, that's why she did not attend the detention class.

'But you did not inform Mr. Lau before you left, did you?', I said empathetically.

'No, I didn't. Because it's just useless to tell him. I am sure that he would never trust me and allow me to go back home', she sounded, making a complaint of this.

'Do you know that there is a new policy in this year. Your record of being late won't cause you to get a bad point. However, it will do if you miss detention class?', I explained.

'Oh. What? I didn't know about this change', she said regretfully, 'but I won't study long in this school anyhow, because I must leave next year.'

'Why do you say so?', I asked curiously.

'I really don't think that my HKCEE results will be good enough to take secondary-six in this school', she said, 'everyone says that it is very difficult to be promoted to secondary-six in this school. Would you tell me the requirement for this?'

'The school did say that students should have at least 12 marks. But don't worry. Things are not so strict', I explained. This girl insisted disappointedly that it is unlikely for her to do secondary-six in this school.

Having finished my conversation with this girl, I began another conversation with Mr Mong. I asked him, 'Who do you think of the current policy for dealing with students being late for schools?' He agreed that the policy is good, as students need rules as a 'guideline' for their behaviour. Also, strict rules can prevent students from being late. If there is no such a rule, as he said strongly, most students may be very late and go to school whenever they wish. More than that, once they leave school and work in the society, they will find that punctuality is very important to them and the school's intention was kind to them.

In the course of our conversation, I saw another student, Chi-Kin, whose I was three years ago. His hair and whole body sweated thoroughly. He looked as if he had just got out of bath. I asked him in a caring tone, 'Are you alright?'

'I have just played basketball for a while before the morning bell', Chi-Kin explained with strong sense of embarrassment, 'and now I am looking for Mr Huang (Vice Master of Discipline Department)'

'Do you live close to the school?', I asked.

'Yes, very close indeed', he replied with a surprise.

'Do you want me to phone to your mum to get you another shirt?'

'There is no one at home, I'm afraid', he replied.

Then, Miss Liang passed by and tried to figure out what was going on with Chin-Kin. She then gave him a towel to dry his body. After Miss Liang had left, a discipline teacher, Miss X, passed the main entrance and appeared angrily surprised to see Chin-Kin's 'wet-through' look.

‘What are you doing? I have never seen such a secondary-five student as you’, Miss X said loudly with a strong tone of anger. Chi-Kin did not respond but tried to tidy up his shirt and comb his hair with his fingers.

‘...You look what you look like. It makes you really uncomfortable, doesn’t it? The smell is terribly disgusting too. It is so awful not only to yourself but also to others’, Miss X raised her tone and then ordered sternly, ‘you have to dry your shirt by sitting under the sun before returning to your classroom’.

She then led Chi-Kin to stand in front of the mirror, and pointed out what was wrong with him from his reflection of the mirror.

Throughout this process, I noticed that Chi-Kin attempted to explain his situation to Miss X by saying, ‘I only played basketball in the playground for a while. I never expected that I would get like this...’.

Then, I noticed that Chi-Kin sat on a bench under the sunshine as he was instructed. Five minutes later after I finished my conversation with Mr Mong, I approached Chi-Kin and asked him in a caring tone, ‘Why do you sit here?’ He merely showed me a notice given him by the discipline teacher, but said nothing. In the notice, it was written: ‘This student, Cheng Chi-Kin, should sit here for sun-drying his shirt before he is allowed to return to the classroom’.

I told Chi-Kin that this was not the proper way to dry his shirt; and sitting under the sun would make him sweat even more (because the sunshine was unbearably strong that morning). I suggested that he should sit on the other bench where then sunshine did not reach. But he looked very hesitant and said, ‘Are you sure it’s alright? I am worried that I will be badly scolded by Miss X if she finds that I fail to follow her instruction’.

Eventually, he moved to another bench. I then asked him what he thought about this event. ‘Miss X is right. It is my fault. Now I am a secondary-five student and supposed to study hard rather than making myself look like this’, he sighed deeply. Apart from this, he did explain to me again why he made himself like this. I perceived that he expected me to empathise with his situation and understand that he did not make himself like this intentionally.

At few minutes later, I found that the ventilation of the place where we sat was really bad. Therefore, I suggested again, ‘Shall we sit near the main entrance? It’s more windy there’. In relation to my request, he looked very hesitant and said with a worrying face, ‘Are you sure it’s allowed? If Miss X gets out from the staff room and sees me sitting near there, I am sure that I will be badly scolded’.

‘Don’t worry. If it really happens, I will explain it to her. I guarantee that it will be fine’, I said. Then we moved there.

The light wind did really make both of us feel better. Then our conversation concentrated on how he perceived the changes within the last three years. In short, key points of our conversation were listed as follows:

- 1) coping with his learning difficulty;

- 2) understanding his concern with his mum's health;
- 3) helping him to choose his favorite subjects;
- 4) helping him to avoid gang activities that he participated in a lot, two years ago.
- 5) understanding his concern for his brother's disruptive behaviour.

When the bell rang, I suggested that it was time for Chi-Kin to return the classroom. I informed the discipline teacher that the boy's shirt was nearly dry. Miss X smiled to me and said she would see Chin-Kin in a minute.

At 9:35, I made notes in the common room. At 10:05am, the principal made a very serious announcement, that the school disliked seeing the gangs with dyed hair hanging around outside the school's main entrance. In the principal's words, these gangs were 'unkind outsiders'. Students were warned not to go along with any one of them, or have any forms of contact with them, otherwise they would be punished.

After this announcement, Mr King, Head of Counselling, asked me whether I would like to have a 'short' interview him after the break. At 10:30am, I got to Mr King desk. He looked very busy and asked me straightforwardly what I wanted to ask him. Then I asked him what he thought about the secondary-one and secondary-six students' orientation, which were organised by his department at the beginning of the new academic term. He remarked briefly that they were fine; all students were benefited. (What are the purposes of these two orientations?) The orientation aimed to let junior and senior students know each other in a pleasant and relaxing atmosphere, to establish some positive relationships among students involved and to get them know the school environment. (Why are the activities only organised by the Counselling Department?) He maintained that the department has the duty to serve all students, and added that the Discipline Department organised their own program for these newcomers. Before I left, I asked whether or not I could make an appointment with him in next week so I would interview him again, which would last approximately 30 minutes. But he responded quickly without waiting to let me finish what I wanted to request, that he disliked having an interview. Rather, he preferred to have a short conversation with me because he was very busy, and found it absolutely hard to tell when he was available to talk with me. I expressed my understanding of his difficulty and left.

At 10:45am, I interviewed Miss Nang.

At 2:10pm, I wrote field notes and chatted with three teachers.

At 3:45pm, a discipline teacher, Mr Kam, told me that an old student, Chan ho-yin [Yin], aged 14, whom I taught previously, visited and expected to have a chat with me; and now he was waiting at the school's main entrance. When I reach there, I saw Yin, accompanied with another old student, Chou An-Ming [Chou], aged 14, dressed like a gang member, whose hair was obviously dyed in four colours. (Both Yin and Chou were requested to leave the school in the previous year because of their

disruptive behaviour.) Chou, standing outside the school entrance, looked very excited to see me. At the same time, most students surrounding me warned me, saying loudly, 'Mr Hue, don't speak to him. Don't get close to him. Beware of him'. At this moment, most students there got very excited to see how I would interact with Chou; and specifically to see whether I would do what the principal had announced. I intended to ignore Chou, though I really wanted to chat with him. I decided to do this because I deeply felt responsible for conforming to the principal's instruction. Throughout the time when I chatted with Yin, Chou was constantly swinging towards me as a way of getting my attention, and on occasion exaggerated his gesture by jumping and shouting. Students got extremely excited when they found that Mrs Liao, Head of Discipline, was going to leave the school through the school's main entrance. Students shouted loudly, 'Mrs Liao is coming'. Seemingly every student there was waiting to see how Mrs Liao would react to Chou. Approaching the school's main entrance and noticing that Chou, a gang member with dyed hair in four colours, was standing there, Mrs Liao totally ignored him. Reciprocally, Chou got excited to exaggerate his gesture by waving his hand and jumping up and down as a way of getting Mrs Liao's attention.

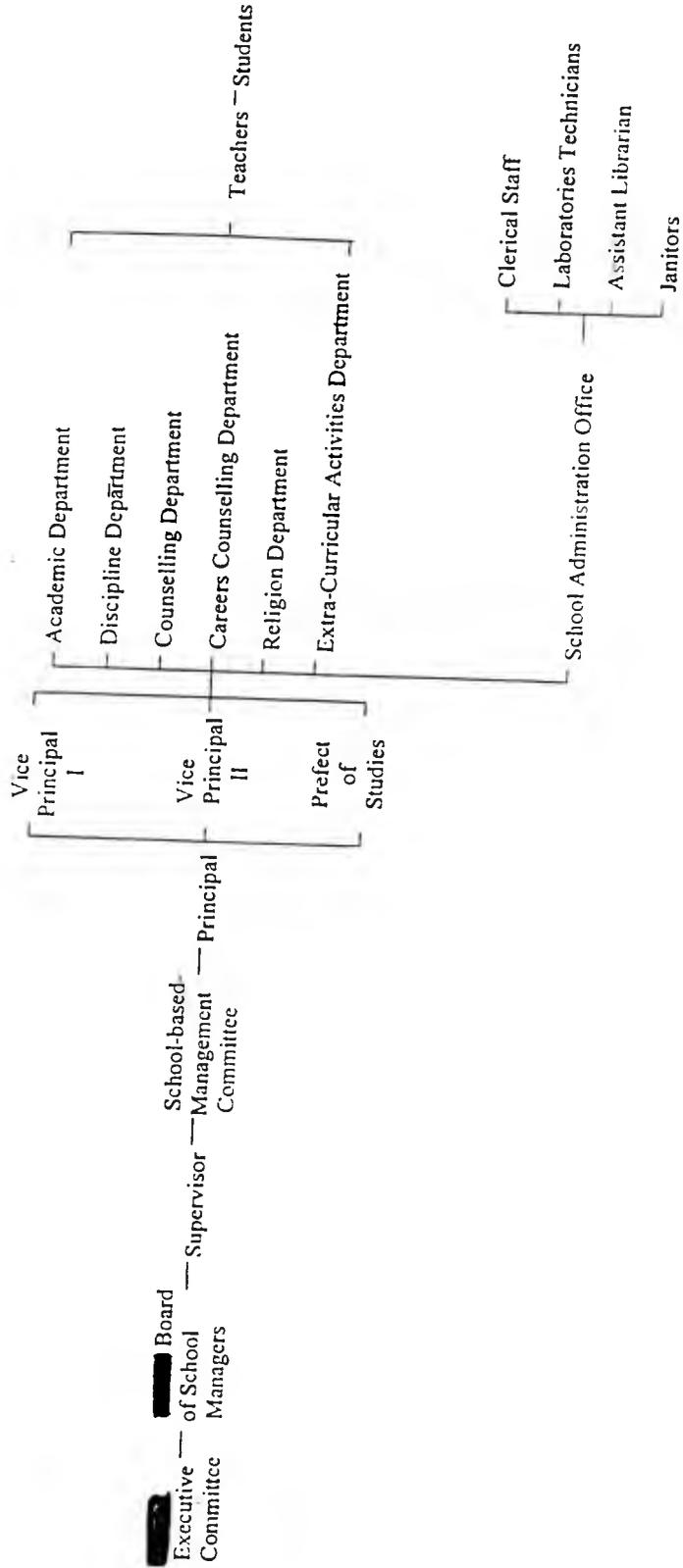
At few minutes later, after Mrs Liao had left, the cleaning lady closed the school gate in half and urged Chou to leave. At the same time, Chou embraced a student without getting his consent when this student passed by Chou. Most students there shouted, 'Oh, you see, he is a student getting along with an "unkind outsider"'. When it happened, a discipline teacher Mr Kam appeared and arrested the student embraced by Chou. A few minutes later, I finished my conversation with Yin and found that Chou disappeared. I said goodbye to Yin. Getting back to the staff room, I saw Mr Kam disciplining the student who was embraced by Chou. I told Mr Kam that this student was really innocent and proved that it was true that Chou had embraced him without getting his consent. Finally Mr Kam released this student and revealed to me that in fact he had no intention to punish this student.

At 4:15pm I left the school.

# Appendix 10

## 'School Structure' of School B

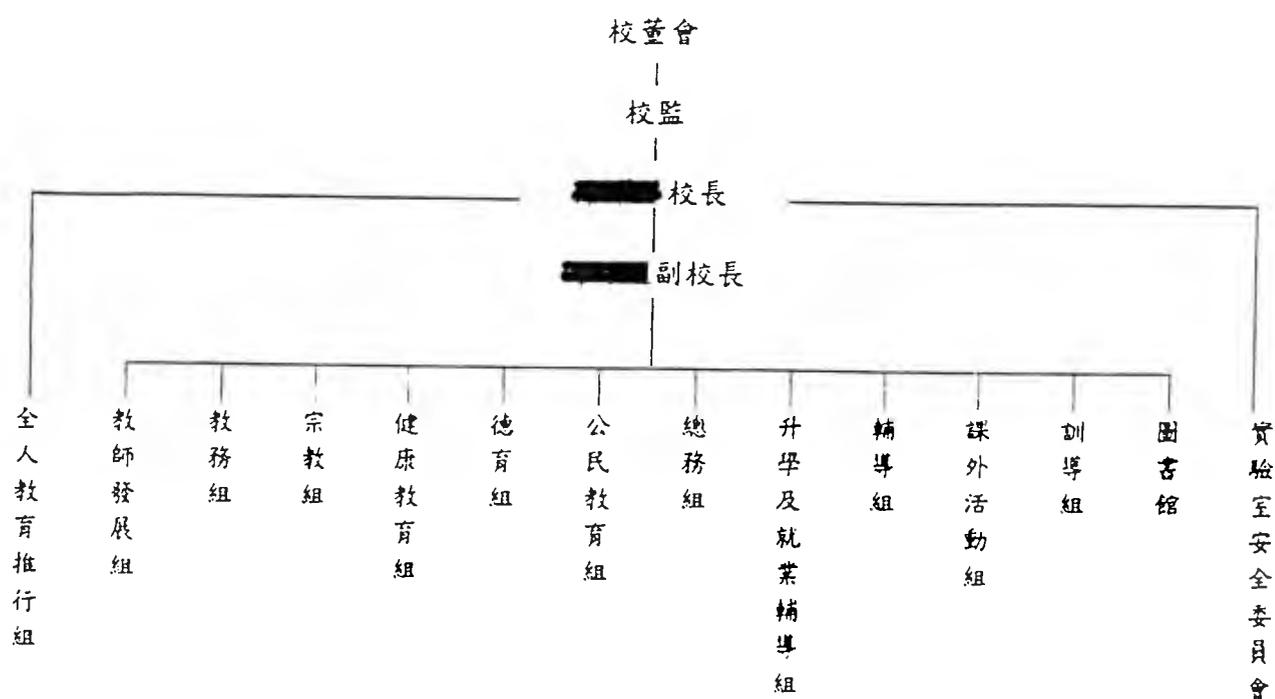
### School Structure



## Appendix 11

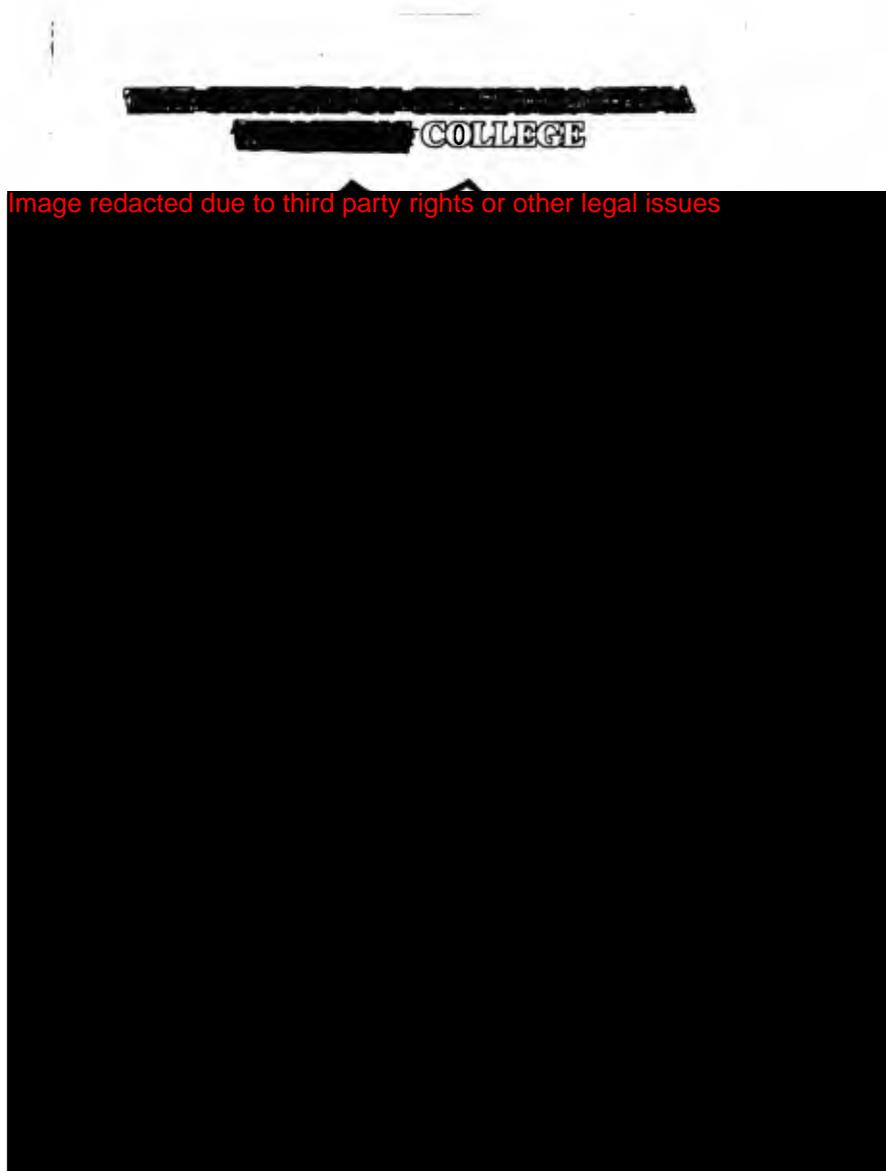
## 'Administrative Structure' of School E

## 學校行政架構圖



## Appendix 12

### Prospectus of Schools B

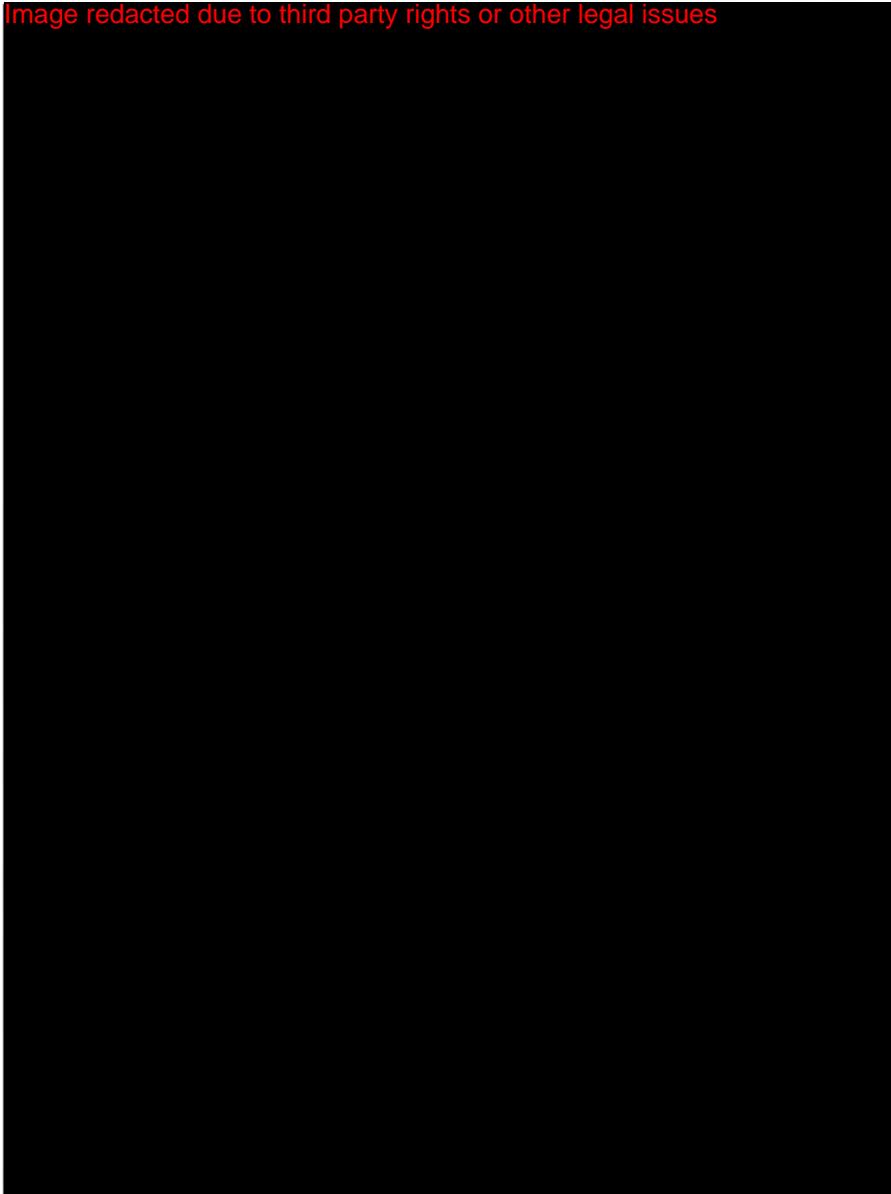


The school prospectus is in colour; its size is 11 × 21 cm.  
A concertina of four folds, printed on both sides.  
Size of pamphlet is 44 × 21cm.

## Appendix 13

### Prospectus of School E

Image redacted due to third party rights or other legal issues



The school prospectus is in colour on four pages.  
The pages are A4 size.

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