

Values and attitudes as generic elements in the school curriculum

1. "Learning for Life, Learning through Life - Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong" by the Education Commission (September 2000) puts forth the following, amongst others, as the Vision of the Education Reform:

- To raise the overall quality of students: to improve the overall quality of our society through upgrading the knowledge, ability and **attitudes** of all students
- To acknowledge the importance of **moral education**: to provide students with structured learning experiences in the areas of moral, emotional and spiritual education

2. To realise the above vision, the development of values and attitudes should become essential elements of the school curriculum. In fact, these values and their associated attitudes permeate the curricula of the eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and are reflected in the learning targets as well as curriculum objectives at different educational levels.

Core Values, Sustainable Values and Attitudes

3. **Values** may be defined as those qualities that an individual or society considers important as principles for conduct and that are intrinsically worthwhile. Values may be broadly categorised as **core and sustaining values**. They are fundamental to the formation of **attitudes**, which in turn affect the acquisition and application of values. An elaboration of these terms is provided below:

"Values constitute the foundation of one's attitudes and beliefs, which subsequently influence one's behaviour and way of life. Values can vary across societies, as different social and economic conditions in different geographical locations may lead to different value emphases. However, across societies, we can also identify certain values that are commonly or universally emphasised. The emergence of these universal values illustrates the common concerns of human societies, the basic qualities for human existence, the common elements in human civilisation, and also the common characteristics of human nature...we call these universal values **core values**." And sustaining values are "other values that are also important at an instrumental level, being regarded as important or helpful for **sustaining the core values**." (extracted from the Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools (1996), pp. 12 and 14)

4. The following set of core and sustaining values and attitudes are proposed for incorporation in the school curriculum:

A Proposed Set of Values and Attitudes for Incorporation in the School Curriculum

Core Values: Personal	Sustaining Values: Personal	Core Values: Social	Sustaining Values: Social	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sanctity of life - truth - aesthetics - honesty - human dignity - rationality - creativity - courage - liberty - affectivity - individuality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-esteem - self-reflection - self-discipline - self-cultivation - principled morality - self-determination - openness - independence - enterprise - integrity - simplicity - sensitivity - modesty - perseverance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - equality - kindness - benevolence - love - freedom - common good - mutuality - justice - trust - interdependence - sustainability - betterment of human kind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plurality - due process of law - democracy - freedom and liberty - common will - patriotism - tolerance - equal opportunities - culture and civilisation heritage - human rights and responsibilities - rationality - sense of belonging - solidarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - optimistic - participatory - critical - creative - appreciative - empathetic - caring and concerned - positive - confident - cooperative - responsible - adaptable to changes - open-minded - with a respect for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •self •life •quality and excellence •evidence •fair play •rule of law •different ways of life, beliefs and opinions •the environment - with a desire to learn - diligent - committed to core and sustaining values

It is believed that the development of the above values and attitudes, together with the strengthening of students' self-management and interpersonal skills, should enable them to make wise decisions on emerging issues in society and cope with stress and negative influences from various sources. Different KLAs have, in their contexts, included a range of learning objectives contributing to the development of these values and attitudes at different key stages of learning. These learning objectives, however, are by no means implying that values and attitudinal development should progress in the order of key stages. They are proposed to facilitate the planning of relevant learning experiences in or across the KLAs