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DRAMA AS METHOD
RECONTEXTUALIZING PROJECT LEARNING
FOR HK SECONDARY SCHOOLS

LAW YUEN FUN MURIEL

PHD

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

2012

DRAMA AS METHOD
RECONTEXTUALIZING PROJECT LEARNING
FOR HK SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by
LAW Yuen-fun Muriel

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Studies

Lingnan University

2012

ABSTRACT

Drama as Method Recontextualizing Project Learning For HK Secondary Schools

by

LAW Yuen-fun Muriel

Doctor of Philosophy

This doctoral study is grounded in the work of cultural studies and its concern for pedagogy and education. The study investigated a local pedagogical issue—Independent Enquiry Study (IES)—a specific form of social inquiry in the core subject Liberal Studies (LS) in Hong Kong senior secondary schools. It took a designated IES classroom as the point of intervention and as the basis for exploring transformed pedagogical practices in Hong Kong secondary school education. My vantage point of the intervention rested on participant-observation through action research and critical contextual analysis of the action-research site and its relations to the wider social contexts. With a conceptual-analytical framework of drama and the performative, developed from William's notion of drama and Schechner's notion of make-belief and make-believe performances, this study examined how the method of drama could mediate a group of senior secondary students' extended process of inquiry into social issues in contemporary Hong Kong society.

Findings reveal that IES in Hong Kong senior secondary schools is almost already performative in nature and IES students were almost already performers eager to present themselves to their teacher-assessors as knowledge builders capable of reflective thinking. In fact, these students subscribed to the positivistic and cynical practices of reproducing existing curricular (and media) discourses and applying them to understanding the social. In performing seeming acts of inquiry, these IES students would re-enact the prescribed curricular (and media) discourses of understanding and reproducing the existing social order.

Research findings indicate that drama can be a method of work that supports student inquirers socially as a group. Liminal dramatic spaces and the use of dramatic role and real-life image afforded the participant-students the opportunity to create, experience, and interpret an imaginary world, promoting social inquiry. The spaces helped give shape to students' diverse roles including those of IES co-informant, member of society, and peer IES learner-assessor. By activating these roles, students momentarily suspended self-other relations and the mechanically induced perceptions of social realities typified by conventional IES method. Drama also functions as a lens. It reflects how the method of IES typifies students' roles as performers and sustains their dependence on templates of work and on the teachers' assessment guides. Research findings further show that the performative make-belief schooling practices encompassed the everyday school life of the participating students and their teachers, and indeed subsumed and contained the effects of my dramatic interventions *within* the action-research context. The IES students at this specific research site were subjected to a process of cynical subject formation. When it comes to social inquiry, these students' cynical IES practices, including cynical IES reasoning, is partly the result of the teachers' instructional needs. Hence, dramatic and academic interventions in IES processes will be ineffective if wider school and social contextual elements are not reworked. The study calls for collective efforts from academics and scholars to intervene in all levels of educational practices, with the aim of remaking the vast contextual sweep of teaching and learning in Hong Kong as a way out of these cynical and positivistic inquiry-learning practices.

DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research, and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged.

(Muriel Yuen-fun LAW)

Date: 20 September, 2012

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF THESIS

DRAMA AS METHOD
RECONTEXTUALIZING PROJECT LEARNING
FOR HONG KONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by

LAW Yuen-fun Muriel

Doctor of Philosophy

Panel of Examiners:

(Chairman)

(Dr INGHAM Michael Anthony)

(External Member)

(Dr LAW Kam-yee)

(Internal Member)

(Dr LAW Suk-mun Sophia)

(Internal Member)

(Dr HUI Po-keung)

Chief Supervisor:

Prof CHAN Ching-kiu Stephen

Co-supervisor:

Dr HUI Po-keung

Approved for the Senate:

(Prof Jesús SEADE)

Chairman, Postgraduate Studies Committee

Date

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List of Abbreviations

In this thesis the following abbreviations are commonly used.

ASL	Advanced Supplementary Level
BIE	Buck Institute for Education
CDC	Curriculum Development Council
EDB	Education Bureau
EPA	Economic and Public Affairs
HKADC	Hong Kong Arts Development Council
HKALE	Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination
HKDSE	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
HKEAA	Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IES	Independent Enquiry Study
IH	Integrated Humanities
KC	Knowledge Community
KLA	Key Learning Area
LS	Liberal Studies
PBL	Project-based learning
PL	Project learning
PSHE	Personal, Social and Humanities Education
S1/2/3/4/5/6/7	Secondary 1/2/3/4/5/6/7
SBA	School-based Assessment
SFGI	Student Focus Group Interview
TE	Technology Education

For my father

My first teacher of creativity and imaginations

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I dedicate this thesis to my family, especially...

to my mother, for instilling the beauty of craftsmanship and the importance of higher education;

to my late father, for showing me the wonders of treading into uncharted waters;

to my husband, Shu-man, for keeping me afloat, as always;

to Norman and family, for staying in touch with the child in me;

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~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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<http://conference.nie.edu.sg/2011/search/frame.php?id=PAP679&isexitpaper=1>

Chapter 1: Contextualizing Pedagogy, Drama, and Inquiry for Project Learning

Introduction

This doctoral study is grounded in the work of cultural studies as a committed body of knowledge and in its concern for pedagogy originating from Raymond Williams' adult education in the United Kingdom. The present study concerns the pedagogical issue of social inquiry in the specific form of project learning called Independent Enquiry Study (IES) at the Hong Kong senior secondary level under the core subject Liberal Studies (LS). It examines how the method of drama could mediate a group of senior secondary students' extended process of inquiry into a social issue in contemporary Hong Kong society. The study takes school as both an institution of contemporary power relations and a complex cultural environment that provides both delimiting and enabling conditions for educational practices. Thus, this doctoral research engages in producing contextually defined knowledge of the pedagogical issue at stake within its specific school context—an approach commonly adopted in cultural studies projects. My vantage point of the current intervention rests on participant-observation through action research, though my participation in the research site was temporary within the research timeframe.

The study has grown out of a series of studies and research projects I conducted alone or with others in recent years that examined the social studies curricula at secondary school levels and the uses of drama as a form of pedagogy from cultural studies perspectives. As both a practicing drama educator and a former school teacher, I have come to understand dramatic art as a learning medium through which learners, on the basis of the “dramatic,” can access and understand the real social world. My understanding of this nature and function of drama has enabled me to conceive of dramatic art not only as a set of performances or a set of works amenable to classroom

pedagogy, but also as a liminal space whose occupants, by interacting with one another and by engaging in meaning-making, can acquire new knowledge and new understandings of the self and of others. Like other projects in “drama in education”, as they are commonly known to practitioners in Continental Europe, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, the present thesis study began with the genuine question of how drama, as an art form, can serve purposes beyond its form. In the case of this thesis, I have examined social inquiry that takes the particular form of IES in the senior secondary core subject LS in Hong Kong. The basic concern here is students’ engagement in social-inquiry learning. This project treats school not merely as “a background to the aesthetic” (O’Toole, 1992, p. 3) but also as an important part of the context in which drama in education usually happens. For this thesis, I set out to experiment with the potentially critical edges of drama-in-education, and my emphasis was on education rather than on the art form of drama. The main line of argument in this thesis is that drama is not only an analytical art form but also a method of work and a way of seeing; I further argue that learning about the social in the form of IES in local schools would benefit from the method of drama. In order to examine the complex and unfolding nature of the pedagogic processes in the action-research site, I have combined the action-research method with contextual analysis.

In the sections below, I will elaborate on the notions of culture, experience, and pedagogy, all three of which are crucial for this study’s intervention in the pedagogical issues pertaining to Hong Kong’s specific educational scene. I will discuss the relations among these key notions by drawing on my own encounters with and reflections on cultural studies, critical pedagogy, and drama in education across the years. I will also offer a brief overview of drama in education, concentrating on its forms, practices, and research concerns in Hong Kong. In so doing, I will weave

a personal narrative into the larger social and historical contexts, and set the scene for my contextual review of project learning and the related problematics in the Hong Kong educational system (chapter 2) and my search for conceptual and theoretical frameworks (chapter 3).

Culture, Experience, and School

Coming to cultural studies as a school teacher in the early 2000s, I found this field of inquiry intellectually enlightening in terms of three of its most important features: (1) its emphasis on issues of representation, identity formation, and ideological critique of discourses and practices that are reductive, binary oppositional, or naturalizing; (2) its conception of power as decentered web-like relations that circulate rather than as relations that are chained to a ruler-and-ruled hierarchy; and (3) its commitment to practice and knowledge production in a historically and culturally engaged manner (Couldry, 2000; Wright, 2000; Wright & Maton, 2004; Gilbert, 2008; Grossberg, 1996, 1997; Williams, 2007; Grossberg, 2010; Chan & Hui, 2011).

Being a long-time schoolteacher, my enduring concern has been students' engagement with their learning and the world around them, and the pedagogic effects of those learning processes on the students. Among the set of questions and assumptions put forth in cultural studies, the notion of culture as a process has been particularly relevant to conceptualizing the Hong Kong educational context. Raymond Williams' conception of culture as "whole ways of life" (Williams, 1977, p.17) is a distinctive approach to conceptualizing culture as a process that values each person's voice, experiences, and reflections about culture (Williams, 1977, 1983a; Couldry, 2000). Culture refers not to any particular valued texts but to a material process with which particular people are involved in cultural production at "particular times and places, and under particular constraints and limitations" (Couldry, 2000, p. 11). Williams'

notion of culture as process has implied that it is possible to investigate an expanded range of cultural experiences (Couldry, 2000); and one can understand those experiences only by locating them within a particular structured set of relations of power (Grossberg, 1997, 2010; Bennett, 1998).

Critical educational scholars and researchers in the emancipatory and the transformative traditions agree that culture and experience play important roles in education and learning. Paulo Freire, for instance, treats education as a form of action for freedom, an act of knowing rather than memorization (Freire, 1975, 1985, 2000). He contends that “studying is above all thinking about experience, and thinking about experience is the best way to think accurately” (1985, p. 3). Education in the Freirean sense, Henry Giroux (1985) maintains, is a process of production rather than of reproduction, and thus requires the participants to “construct their own voices and validate their contradictory experiences within specific historical settings and constraints” (p. xvi). In short, education is a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations. Clar Doyle (1993), a critical drama educator, analyzes drama as a process of producing cultural forms out of lived experiences and contrasts it with the process of cultural reproduction within schooling culture. Doyle maintains that critical educators should conceptualize schools as “living places for the tangled web of humanity” (p. 5) and argues against curriculum and methodology designed from a distance, as they tend to remove both teachers and students from their historical and cultural contexts. Deborah Britzman (2003), an educational scholar, proposes that the gap between theory and practice be bridged through “educational theorizing” that is situated within “the lived lives of teachers, in the values, beliefs, and deep convictions enacted in practice, in the social context that encloses such practice, and in the social relationships that enliven the teaching and learning encounter” (p. 64).

These critical educators and cultural studies scholars have in common the belief that the notion of “context” refers not simply to a “background” where intellectual interventions take place, but to sets of relations of power, cultural practices, or conjunctures that are socially and historically specific. In this sense, schools and classrooms are contexts where complex sets of power relations are always already present and where teachers and students may (or may not) be involved in the cultural production of meaning and in the exercise of their agency in defining power relations. Critical educational and intellectual work, be it liberatory cultural actions (Freire, 1975, 1985, 2000), critical pedagogical dramatic intervention (Doyle, 1993), or educational theorizing (Britzman, 2003), would demand serious analysis of specific historical contexts in which teachers and students are situated.

Pedagogy as Cultural Practice

Education is by no means limited to schools or to pedagogy narrowly conceived as describing what should be taught, who should teach it, and how it should be taught (Freire, 1985; Grossberg, 1994; Bruner, 1996; Giroux & Shannon, 1997). Indeed, to scrutinize pedagogy is to scrutinize only a small part of education. Yet this small part of education can reflect broader issues concerning the very concept of education, institutional contexts, and the articulation and specificity of educational practices in such institutional contexts (Grossberg, 1994). Critical pedagogy has offered a perspective of conceiving pedagogy that is different from the conventional way of conceiving pedagogy as a generalized approach to teaching and learning, and as the design and delivery of learning experiences instrumental to the existing society (Morris & Adamson, 2010). Critical educational scholars in the Freirean traditions conceive of pedagogy as (1) an instrument for the “critical discovery” of dehumanization and for the pursuit of a liberated humanity, and (2) a form of cultural

production that aims at “challenging canonicity and interrogating the forms of exclusion and inclusion in the production, distribution, and circulation of knowledge” (Freire, 1985, 2000; Giroux & Shannon, 1997).

While critical pedagogy has offered insights for ideological critique, the cultural studies perspective of pedagogy as a cultural and contextual practice has invited me—as it has with other educators and intellectual—to engage in reflective practices within and beyond the classroom, and to rearticulate teaching-learning relationships in terms of specific historical conjunctures and institutional contexts that are both enabling and limiting (Grossberg, 1994). As a committed body of knowledge, cultural studies has called for a transformed pedagogy that redefines learning as collaborative efforts between teachers and learners with attention paid to experimental and self-reflexive questioning (Hall, 2002; Williams, 2007). For Williams (2007), pedagogy is where the future of cultural studies lies. Grossberg (1994), too, discusses the aims of pedagogy and the question of teachers’ political intervention:

If political struggles are won and lost in the space between people’s everyday lives and the material production and distribution of values and power, in the space where people and groups are articulated, both ideologically and affectively, to social identities, cultural practices, and political projects, then it is here that pedagogy must operate. *The task of politically engaged pedagogy is, after all, never to convince a predefined subject—whether empty or full, whether essential or fragmented—to adopt a new position. Rather, the task is to win an already positioned, already invested individual or group to a different set of places, a different organization of the space of possibilities.* (emphasis added, p. 19)

Pedagogy, for Grossberg, is a cultural practice, since pedagogies and pedagogical strategies “are themselves always institutionalized, placed” (p. 17). As a practice, the questions of pedagogy would be about constructing “positions of authority” for cultural studies scholars as teachers, about “refusing the traditional forms of intellectual authority, [without] abandon[ing] claims to authority” (p. 18), and about “look[ing] into the social relations of discourse, into the ethics of enunciation and of

the different possible enunciative positions, the places of authority we [cultural studies scholars] construct for ourselves and our students” (p. 17). For this task, Grossberg proposes the possibility of “a pedagogy of articulation and risk,” a contextual practice in itself.

A Contextual Review of Pedagogical Practices in Hong Kong

I was born and raised in Hong Kong, and was schooled here in the 1970s, at a time when the colony’s economy had experienced seemingly accelerated growth. In the early 1980s, I received teacher training at the then Northcote College of Education (which was later integrated with the other colleges of education into the present Hong Kong Institute of Education). As a trained school teacher, I was well-equipped methodologically to teach the English language and Economic and Public Affairs (EPA), a social studies subject, at the junior secondary level.

Schools have always been instructional sites where teachers and students are receivers of the school culture and are often expected to work to strengthen it. Critical analysis of forms of education in Hong Kong has shown that education has functioned to reproduce and legitimate capitalistic and neo-liberal ideologies, emphasizing vocational training and reinforcing students’ behavioral and institutional values. The current Hong Kong educational reforms began in the late 1990s and is characterized by market-oriented managerialism (Tse, 2005; Ngan & Lee, 2010). Tse (2005) traces the influence of managerialism in Hong Kong educational reforms to the international trend of New Public Managerialism, which has presented ways of reforming the public sector, including public education, since the late 1970s. Tse explains,

Managerialism means a change in the approach to the provision of public services. It is an orientation or a philosophy of a management approach to the public sector, characterized by economic rationality, strategic management, controlling performance and continuous evaluation, an emphasis on

competition and control, a recognition and encouragement of consumerism, and a reduction of government involvement in public services. (p. 101)

Tse has criticized Hong Kong educational reforms' orientation toward managerialism and marketization as a pursuit of narrowly defined quality, competition, control, and standards at the expense of equality, cooperation, autonomy, and diversity. Ngan and Lee (2010) criticize Hong Kong's past and present educational reforms as management-based efforts, where school systems trump faculty, effectively muting teachers' voices.

As a former school teacher, I have gained insights from critical pedagogy regarding ideological critiques of Hong Kong educational practices and from cultural studies the notions that culture is a material process and pedagogy is a set of cultural practices. These insights have proved useful in my efforts to rethink school and schooling in Hong Kong education. The typical Hong Kong school is often thought of as "a social unit in itself, with its own rules, power structures and values system" (Morris & Adamson, 2010, p. 109). The conception of schools as social units tends to subscribe to the view that teachers and students are receivers of both the culture and the experiences characteristic of a given school as a social unit. Basing school improvements on the perspective of school culture as an entity leaves out the question of power and runs the risk of sustaining schools as sites of reproduction.

The reproductive nature of dominant cultures functions to produce, reproduce, and maintain a weak form of otherness through specific discursive and pedagogical practices and curricular discourses (Law, 2006). Pedagogy and pedagogical practices have exhibited features similar to those characterizing the positivist discourse of traditional educational theory, which gave rise to the new sociology of education in the United States in the early 1970s (Giroux, 1981, 1985). Such a positivist discourse, Giroux (1985) concludes, "took as its most important concern the

mastery of pedagogical techniques and the transmission of knowledge instrumental to the existing society” (p. xiv). In the United States context, Giroux argues that schools became mere instructional sites, as both scholars and educators ignored the contextual fact that schools were economic, cultural, and political sites of contestation.

LS in the Hong Kong context, the new senior secondary school subject, in place since September 2009, apparently stands a good chance of becoming a critical pedagogy, nurturing students’ critical thinking and literacy. Yet research on the earlier junior versions of the subject has shown that LS may end up emphasizing the banking approach to education—an approach that has come under heavy criticism from Freire (2000). The junior versions of LS suffer from “narrative sickness,” where lived realities are treated as “motionless, static, compartmentalized and predictable,” in Freire’s words (2000, p. 71). At the same time, the official curricular discourses of such citizenship education in Hong Kong embrace economic developmentalism and teachers’ and students’ added values for their schools. EPA, as an instance of those junior versions of LS curricula, organizes discussions of social issues mainly around a conflict-of-interest model and effects a reproduction of simple binary oppositional self-other relations (Law, 2006).

Among the many important questions concerning this above-mentioned approach to education are the following two: How can schools be transformed into a site of production, rather than remaining a site of reproduction? How would pedagogy and pedagogical practices facilitate such a transformation, if possible? For those who have concluded that schools can do better than simply serve as sites of reproduction, the challenge is to allow both a view of schools beyond their reproductive nature and a practice where school cultures would function neither “to confirm and privilege

students from the dominant classes” nor “to discredit the histories, experiences and dreams of subordinate groups” (Giroux, 1985, p. xv).

Drama and Its Potential as a Transformative Pedagogy

Critical educators and cultural studies scholars have already noted the significance of conceiving pedagogy as cultural practices where experiences of learners and teachers are valuable (Freire, 1975, 1985; Giroux & Shannon, 1997; Williams, 2007; Couldry, 2000; Grossberg, 1994) and where schools function as living places (Doyle, 1993; Britzman, 2003) and as machinery of contemporary power relations that could both enable and limit cultural practices within the school contexts (Grossberg, 1994; Britzman, 2003). The need to search for a pedagogy that transforms educational practices is immense. In this respect, drama is a potential candidate.

The transformative potential of drama as a pedagogy lies in its “as-if” space and teachers’ and students’ use of this space. In the field of drama-in-education, scholarly work by Brian Edmiston (2008) has theorized that pedagogic drama’s as-if space as dialogic space “when a person imaginatively enters into another consciousness, takes up a different perspective, and uses it to change their understanding” (p. 9). In pedagogic drama, Richard Courtney (1990) maintains that such “as-if” space is “a total process, internal and external, that occurs when we transform our creative imagination into acts, where we create mental fictions and express them in spontaneous play, creative drama, improvisation, role play, and theatre” (p. ix). According to Cecily O’Neill (1995), who echoes Peter McLaren (1988), the “as-if” space of drama is also a liminal space where the space of the classroom and its usual power and social relations are suspended, and teachers serve as “liminal servants” taking students across “the threshold,” the limen, where they could defamiliarize the familiar and see things anew (1995, p. 66). Drama and its

dialogic space can tap into and release students' various resources including novel ways of feeling, thinking, exploring, and expressing. In this sense, the present study starts off by addressing the following two questions: Can drama be useful for social inquiry in the form of individual project learning in the Hong Kong context? What roles would and could drama play in culturally producing power relations and social order rather than simply reproduce the existing relations and order for local educational practices?

Before proceeding, I will present an overview of drama-in-education in Hong Kong educational settings. The section below reviews conceptions and uses of drama as an art form and as a pedagogy in the Hong Kong context.

Pedagogical Drama in the Hong Kong Context

In Hong Kong secondary schools, a typical school child experiences pedagogical drama in certain ways: as activities that enliven learning in Chinese- and English-language classes, as a form of literature studied in Literature classes, as extra-curricular activities organized for student groups, and as cultural events performed by students or external theater companies. In general, dramatic activities of these sorts are well received and they take advantage of drama's intrinsic contributions to learning. The dramatic approach to literature draws on actors' and audiences' ability to conjure up imaginary worlds. It integrates both verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication to enhance language skills and improve literacy. Student actors who participate in school productions can gain confidence from the experience while inspiring audience members to acquire new knowledge as they observe the actors, who are essentially "standing in" for the audience members and "embody[ing] a type of humanity" on stage (O'Neill, 1995, p. 76).

In recent years, students in Hong Kong schools have experienced drama as a learning medium. A workshop facilitator may present a drama class with a “pre-text” (O’Neill, 1995, p. 19), like a folktale, a poem, a game, or a material object. The pre-text launches a non-scripted dramatic exploration of a given theme by engaging all the participants in an imagined world where they “discover, articulate, and sustain fictional roles and situations” (O’Neill, 1995, p. xvi). In drama classes, students may, for instance, explore a novel version of the tale “Cry Wolf” taking multiple roles of the sheep, the wolf and a neighboring shepherd without a predetermined play-script. The facilitator may also play a role in the dramatic world, say the shepherd boy tending the herd of sheep and meeting the wolf (a role collectively played by the students) in an improvisational manner. Students may then step outside of their multiple roles from time to time to reflect upon and make meaning of the dramatic experiences. Drama lessons like the above many times take place after school in the drama club, or during special hours identified on the school timetable for purposes of moral and civic education. This improvisational form of drama commonly known as “drama in education” to practitioners in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia, arose out of these practitioners’ search for a new pedagogy in the progressive education movement almost a century ago. The use of drama in the field of drama-in-education emphasizes participants’ spontaneity and reflective exploration of the dramatic event. The entire group of drama participants, both facilitator and students alike, function within the dramatic world as a playwright and participant as well as an audience to their own acts. In the late 1990s, drama in education was introduced to Hong Kong by pioneering Hong Kong drama and theater practitioners who were—and still are—interested in using drama to effect social change. They took advantage of the local educational reform initiatives that had identified “arts education” as one of the eight key learning areas for students in contemporary Hong

Kong primary and secondary schools. In a previous research, I have delineated how the wider educational and social contexts in Hong Kong have given rise to a different path along which drama in education has developed characteristics different from the characteristics of drama-in-education efforts outside Hong Kong (Law, 2010). Such pioneering initiatives have helped establish the notion of drama as a pedagogy that fully profits from the dramatic elements of time, space, tension, language, symbol, role, and metaphor to help participants explore and understand issues concerning the human condition. In this regard, drama can be considered “fictional models of real life human behavior” (Haseman & O’Toole, 1986, p. viii). Dramatic actions are launched by pre-texts, and dramatic activities are non-scripted, processual, and exploratory, involving all those who participate in the drama—teachers and students alike. Engagement, connection, and reflection are the keys to learning through drama.

I myself have experienced drama both as a performing art and as a pedagogy respectively in my secondary school days and in my teaching career. The different conceptions and uses of drama place different emphases on the processes and the methods of drama. With an interest in drama and drama performances since my secondary school years, I enrolled in a two-year extra-mural drama-certificate program in the mid-1980s locally for systematic training to be an amateur in acting and drama production. The training program ran in parallel to the professional theater-arts education and training programs offered by the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts established in 1984. My training program comprised a number of short courses on acting, targeting numerous areas: techniques like voice projection, articulation, and enunciation; ways to sustain roles; and some hands-on experience with drama production. The program coordinator cum instructor, Wai-lung Ho, was an actor by profession who had received his actor training in the United States and

was running an amateur theater company in Hong Kong at that time. From Ho, I had the opportunity to experience drama production as a highly disciplined business with power centered exclusively on him—the director, the playwright, and the producer. The program taught actors and the backstage crew the importance of being obedient and disciplined. With these experiences under my belt, I started a drama club at my serving school. The purpose of the club was to help students be confident individuals both on and off stage while preparing for and participating in public drama competitions. In this sense, the pedagogy of such school drama clubs is production- and performance-oriented, requiring the presence of an audience.

During the late 1990s, the performances I attended exhibited observable changes in playwriting strategies, actor-audience interactions, the functions of drama, and the functions of audiences. On several occasions, I invited theater artists to help train my serving school's drama-club members, and during these sessions, I noted that the drama skills being taught differed significantly from the drama skills that I had been taught back in the late 1980s. Drama activities conducted by those theater artists were more improvisatory and exploratory than the training I received from Ho. Those theater artists drew on students' stories and lived experiences to devise scenes that formed my students' annual performance texts. This processual and collaborative approach to drama production was unfamiliar to my experiences in Ho's acting program and, I realized, much later, that those artists were working in a devising-theater mode of production, aiming "to give a voice to young people to express their interests and concerns through this medium [of theatre]" (Oddey, 1994, p.28). I welcomed these changes with delight, thinking that they quite masterfully engaged students while endowing in them a wonder at the diversity and richness of drama as a performing art. Soon after that, my conception of drama as production and performance was further challenged and expanded when I began to develop a

drama elective in Integrated Arts for Secondary 3 (S3) using teaching materials prepared by two teaching artists under a pilot project developed by the Education Bureau (EDB) (previously known as the Education and Manpower Bureau). It was in these latter challenges that I came in touch with the true potential of drama-in-education.

The purposes of the drama club at school seemed to be very clear in light of drama-in-education. The drama club was performance-oriented and functioned to develop students' drama skills, cooperation, and communication skills, as well as drama productions. Everything about a drama production at my serving school, as in many other local schools, was to be highly organized and exceptionally predetermined. The challenges lay in helping students to take on characters, to understand subtexts, to sustain roles both personally and interactively, and to project their voices for audiences. In contrast to production-oriented drama work, drama-in-education is process-oriented. Rather than perform for an external audience, students form, present, and perform their real or imagined roles within the drama work, and then reflect on their own performance to acquire new insights into the issue under discussion. By stepping in and out of the dramatic world, students manage to reflect on human issues from a distance made possible by the "dramatic elsewhere". Oftentimes, students participating in the drama work gained insights into the world of others and of themselves through reflections outside the dramatic context. On the whole, my experiences of organizing and facilitating lessons in drama class have opened up a whole new horizon for me as an educator in general and as a drama teacher in particular. I am now more likely to rethink process-related and product-related issues and the relationship between spontaneity and structure in pedagogic processes.

Drama and Social Inquiry

My experiences as a drama educator have opened my eyes to the value of drama for inquiry. Inquiry, in its most general sense, is about problem-solving and is an attempt to make sense of things or situations that are “obscure” or “indeterminate” (Dewey, 1938, p. 105) and that, as such, leads us to new understandings and to changes in the world around us (Dewey, 1938; Courtney, 1997). The processes of inquiry are mental processes where the inquirers anticipate the consequences of their inquiries, while selecting and ordering “responsive” activities that make reference to imagined final situations (Dewey, 1938, p. 107). These mental processes of imagining possibilities, fleshing them out, and then expressing them in action are the focus of, among others, drama and theatre artists who try to discover new ways of knowing and of making meaning, be it in the drama classroom or in theatres (Courtney, 1997; Oddey, 1994). Participants in drama-in-education or devising theater events embark on “experiential” inquiries (Courtney, 1997) into their own “fragmentary experience” and into understanding themselves and the world they inhabit (Oddey, 1994, p. 1). These participants then reflect on, interpret, and define their “perceptions of that world received in a series of images” (Oddey, 1994, p. 1).

In some US social studies classes, dramatic pedagogy links imagination, observation, and embodied learning for social inquiry (Wilhelm & Edmiston, 1998). Edmiston (1998a) argues that in drama, students can “revisit questions and reposition themselves to reconsider ideas and understandings as they re-look in different ways at the world they are studying together” (p. 106). Elsewhere, Edmiston (2003) describes this use of drama as follows:

We may take on an imagined role, but we actually don’t need fictional roles to create drama; what we must imagine is that we are elsewhere, in an imagined world. We can begin to use drama when we start to create, experience, and

interpret an imaginary world in addition to the everyday world of the classroom.
(p. 222)

In his drama work with some seventh-grade US students working on their final inquiry projects on the theme of “civil rights and social issues,” Edmiston (1998b) witnessed changes in the inquiry processes employed by the students. Through drama work, they went beyond the decontextualized information of texts and problematized the previous inquiry findings. In Edmiston’s words, the students “constructed complex understandings of the lives and worlds of the people they had researched, of the sociocultural contexts in which they lived, and of their possibilities for action in those contexts” (p. 129).

As a practicing drama educator, my involvement in facilitating and researching drama projects has allowed me to see the considerable potential of drama as a pedagogy for social-inquiry learning. One research project in which I participated involved the use of drama in critical writing at two sites: a local S6 LS classroom and an undergraduate critical writing course (Chan & Law, 2012a, 2012b). The research at the S6 LS classroom is particularly relevant for understanding how drama can facilitate social inquiry. In the S6 LS writing classroom, students were to explore the issue of school bullying using drama. The drama intervention juxtaposed a fictional world of bullying with the S6 students’ first-hand or media-filtered experiences of bullying. The dramatic intervention revealed a great deal of complexity in the otherwise simplistic media representations and moralistic handling of the bullies and victims, providing a “catalyst” by which the students could “contextualize” their own writings on the topic (Chan & Law, 2012a, p. 14).

Drama as Method and Critique

John O’Toole (1992), a pioneering drama educator and scholar in the field of drama- and theater-in-education, contends that polemical theater movements as a whole and

the drama-in-education movement in particular are “predicated on the belief that some change in the real context [where the dramatic event arises], however minute, is possible as a result of the drama” (p. 53). However, he also writes that drama in education “is very dependent both on the specific group of people taking part, and on external conditions over which they have little control, so they must continually renegotiate the way in which they can manage and manifest the basic elements of dramatic form” (p. 4). Without drastic action, O’Toole further maintains that “the real context [where participants in the dramatic events experience the real pattern of relations and situations] cannot be renegotiated within the active life of a drama” (p. 53).

Discussions and studies about the interplay between drama and society remain sparse in the drama-in-education field, both in Hong Kong and elsewhere. Systematic studies on the use of drama in Hong Kong schools are equally sparse, and postgraduate research studies on the use of drama in education are actually sparser, despite the long tradition of drama in language classrooms and the extended use of drama as a teaching tool across curricula in the previous decade. Apart from Leung’s research (2000), which is a postgraduate dissertation, the studies in this field are primarily evaluative reports commissioned and funded mainly by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council or by institutions dedicated to education through the arts. These empirical studies and reports have pointed to a few important factors in the relationship between drama and education: the role of the arts in education allows local primary and secondary students to experience new forms of learning and to encounter different perspectives, all through the aesthetic power of the arts (HKADC, 2005); the use of drama fosters students’ personal growth, development of generic “thinking skills,” and expressiveness across the curricula (Lau, Wong, Hui, et al., 2007); and drama relative to language learning can expand students’ vocabulary and

generate language use through dramatic scenarios (Hui & Shu, 2010). Ho and Choi (2010) reveal that art and its attendant processes of observing, imagining, and representing can help students better grasp their relationships with and perceptions of community. Leung (2000) studied the Black Box Exercise Art-in-Education Association for a decade beginning in 1995 and has found that drama and theater work in education offers students and educators a pedagogy for resistance to and subversion of Hong Kong's existing education system.

The aforementioned studies have denoted Hong Kong educators' growing use of drama beyond the usual aim of developing students' cooperation and communication skills (Leung, 2000; HKADC, 2005; Hui & Shu, 2010; Ho & Choi, 2010). Some of the above-mentioned studies have advocated that the Hong Kong educational system devote more resources to teacher training and assessment methods based on learning-through-drama methods (Lau, Wong, Hui, et al, 2007; Hui & Shu, 2010). Hui and Shu (2010) called for further studies on the contributions that dramatic forms and skills can make to educational goals. Whether or not a more diversified dramatic practice can transform education rather than operate parallel to it, as mentioned in the research by Leung (2000), has yet to be studied rigorously. Drama as an art form has almost always been conceived of as occupying only the realm of artistic production; in other words, researchers have under-explored the beneficial effects that events and themes in fictional worlds might have on wider social or institutional contexts. In this respect, this doctoral thesis should help fill some important gaps.

Raymond Williams' discussion about the relationships between drama and society can shed light on this topic as it stands in Hong Kong. In his professorial inaugural lecture entitled "Drama in a Dramatized Society," Williams (1983b) delineates how

drama in society once comprised festive theatrical events that offered a break from accepted signs, thus helping forge “a more complex, more active, and more questioning world” (p. 16). What is more, he sees drama—with its dramatic presentations, attention-grabbing images, and role typifications—as a constructed component of everyday life. Having trained in literature and drama and taught dramatic history and analysis, Williams states,

I learned something from analysing drama which seemed to me effective not only as a way of seeing certain aspects of society but as a way of getting through to some of the fundamental conventions which we group as society itself. (p. 20)

He concludes by stating that his analysis of drama and society has revealed to him the roles played by drama’s “modes of perceiving, of relating, of composing and of finding our way” in society (p. 20).

Most significant for the current study is Williams’ analysis showing that drama and society are mutually constituting and illuminating. If we consider schools in the Hong Kong context from this light, we can see that they prescribe roles for teachers and students that are typified and ahistorical, and that the scripts of schools are pre-determined, organizing realities that reproduce themselves and sustain established social order. Simultaneously, drama has helped create a more open, questioning world. Williams’ comments in this latter sense reveal that the method of drama is a critique.

Drama and Its Double Meaning and Function

Drama carries a double meaning, and this premise underlies the current thesis. Drama is an art form that is about roles and role-playing, both imagined and real, in an as-if world (Edmiston, 1998a, 1998b, 2003, 2008; Courtney, 1990; O’Neill, 1995; Williams, 1983b). When used as pedagogy in the school context, learners and facilitators are engaged in cultural practice, experiencing relations differently than

would be the case in ordinary classroom settings. Drama is a lens, a conceptual tool that gets us through to some of the fundamental conventions that organize students and their learning experiences in the schooling context (Williams, 1983b). Drama, hence, is about conventions, and the structuring of the conventions to frame and reframe social realities.

In chapter 3, I will further discuss how the methods of drama function both as pedagogy and as a cultural critique in Hong Kong's secondary schools. I will draw on interview findings that stem from two groups of students in two local secondary schools where I conducted those interviews prior to the action research at a third school. My main arguments are that drama as an art form would benefit students' IES learning in local Hong Kong schools, and that drama a lens would reveal to concerned scholars how school is organized and what role students and teachers are prescribed and could then be re-scribed.

This thesis study represents my modest attempt to conduct intellectual work in a Hong Kong educational setting. In undertaking this task, I have relied on intellectual input from notable thinkers and scholars in the fields of cultural studies, critical pedagogy, and drama in education. I argue that for drama in education to effect its critical pedagogical function for social inquiry, drama educators must treat schools as an important part of the context in which drama in education usually happens, examining relations of power that are always already present in the school contexts. By adopting the action research method, the project sets out to experiment with the potential critical edges of drama in education as both a critical pedagogy and a cultural critique, where the emphasis rests more heavily on drama's roles in education than on drama's status as strictly a form of art.

Summary and Chapter Highlights

Chapter 1 has introduced and contextualized the concepts of culture, experience, and pedagogy, which are key to the proposition that drama can be a pedagogy and a method of critique for the educational practices in Hong Kong schools.

Chapter 2 identifies the problematics underlying this doctoral thesis. It first offers a contextual review of project learning as a mode of social inquiry in the Hong Kong secondary schools and examines IES, the object of analysis in the present study, and the new context to which Hong Kong's curriculum reforms have given rise. The chapter discusses data from interviews that I conducted with some senior secondary students from the first cohort from two schools, and reveals some problems that these students experienced in social-inquiry learning. The chapter argues that the complexity of the pedagogical issue of IES requires an inter-disciplinary approach for effective investigations.

Chapter 3 delineates the conceptual and methodological considerations of combining action research with contextual analysis to solve the practical IES pedagogical problems. It begins with a discussion about the performative lens and drama method, which are critical to constructing a conceptual and analytical framework for this study. Drawing on data from the group of senior secondary students introduced in chapter 2, the chapter argues that social inquiry learning in Hong Kong senior secondary schools is a "make-belief" process that shapes audiences' social realities, reproducing preconceived social relations. The chapter ends by delineating an action-research design that can put the pedagogical action-research plan to test in a selected IES classroom.

Chapters 4 and 5 analyze the action research I undertook in the designated site. Chapter 4 discusses the pedagogical experiment with drama to examine how the use

of drama could benefit IES learning in the action-research site. Chapter 5 offers a critical analysis of the research context in the light of the performative lens to examine (1) how and what students have learned in the constructivist mode of learning IES and (2) the potential points of intervention that stemmed from the drama-informed pedagogical action research.

Chapter 6 presents the action-research intervention from the perspective of a cultural studies researcher, and discusses tensions I experienced within the action-research context. This chapter also explores the major questions arising from my research interventions, and clarifies the kind of interventions that could best help transform IES make-belief practice into meaningful knowledge-production endeavors.

Chapter 2: Project Learning: Social Inquiry in the Local Context

Project Learning: What's in the Name?

In the field of education, the concept of “project” is often associated with progressive education movements, and has been said to stem from the paper entitled “The Project Method” (1918), by the American education professor William Kilpatrick (Hayes, 2006; Gutek, 2009). Current research by Michael Knoll (1997, 2010, 2012), however, refutes the aforementioned history, telling a different story: the concept of project first surfaced in Europe in the early eighteenth century and reached the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, considerably earlier than Kilpatrick’s 1918 paper (Knoll, 1997). Projects began as professional experiments with advanced students in Italy and France in faculties like architecture and then shifted from universities to high schools and elementary schools after establishing a foothold in the United States. There, projects functioned “to arouse the highest degree of *purposeful* self-activity through a direct appeal to the life and healthy interest of the pupil” and to foster “creative power and insight into the social aspects of culture and technology” (emphasis original, Knoll, 2012, p. 5). Knoll’s research stated that between 1913 and 1915, the conceptual reach of projects expanded into “life problems” of a more theoretical and analytical nature, when a movement got underway to merge physics, chemistry, and biology into an integrated subject, general science, eventually leading to the “project movement” in the United States (p. 5). While Knoll’s historical review traces the history of the concept of project back to its earliest moment as a teaching method concerned with “practical, constructive activity” (p. 2), Kilpatrick (1918) interpreted this same concept philosophically to mean “heartly purposeful acts” by either individuals or groups (p. 2). Knoll, in his 2012 paper entitled “I had made

a mistake': William H. Kilpatrick and the Project Method," discusses how Kilpatrick's conceptualization of project reduced education to "the psychological" (the interest of the child-student) while disregarding "the 'sociological' (demands of the society) and the 'logical' (systemic arrangement of subject matter) as indispensable elements of successful teaching" (p. 37). Kilpatrick's formulation of project accounted for the general rejection of his ideas and the failure of those ideas to manifest themselves in practice, Knoll contends. Nonetheless, Kilpatrick's broad project approach popularized and induced "the flood of books and articles" by numerous authors, each of whom presented their own version of "project method" (p. 32). With Kilpatrick's largely understudied diaries, scrapbooks, and manuscripts written between 1904 and 1961, Knoll revealed Kilpatrick's confession that "in taking over the project notion in his conception of education he had committed an error" (p. 36). Knoll's research has painted a new picture of Kilpatrick, who broke with previous practice "from a sheer wish for innovation and self-aggrandizement" by replacing "the precise definition of the project as 'independent constructive activity' with the vague phrase 'whole-hearted purposeful activity'" (p. 36). Knoll's paper (2012) concludes that "Historians worldwide have fallen victim to an error. They have taken propaganda as reality, and discussion as outcome" (p. 3).

Knoll's (2012) historical review of the origin and concept of project is significant in a number of ways, two of which have been particularly useful for this thesis. Knoll plots the spatio-temporal trajectory across which both the "project concept" and the "project method" traveled, beginning in eighteenth-century Europe and continuing through to the subsequent "project movement" in the 1910s in the United States. Knoll has clearly revealed the specific historical, political contexts that gave the project its nature: from experimental science during the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason, science, and technology to the arts and crafts in the "project movement" in the

United States to the more theoretical and analytical kinds of inquiry in modern school systems. Knoll's historical investigation of the concept of project and the approach to project work has revealed the multiplicity and diversity of the two in histories and in practices. Moreover, Knoll's research bears witness to two important patterns: how the concept of project has become woefully substanceless since Kilpatrick propagated the broad project approach, and how historians have mistakenly adopted the concept and its attendant propaganda without first submitting them to thorough examinations and interpretations. As I have conducted this modest thesis, Knoll's research has been a constant reminder to me that *contextual analysis* needs to be taken seriously, though my present study is not a historical investigation of Knoll's kind. I take the present study to be part of a body of literature presenting the *specific contemporary history* of Hong Kong education and cultural studies (Chan, Choi, & Hui, 2006-08; Law, 2006; Chan & Hui, 2007; Chan, Hui, Choi, et al., 2009; Chan & Hui, 2011; Chan & Law, 2011; Hui & Pang, 2011; Chan & Law, 2012a, 2012b), particularly regarding the educational issues of project learning and inquiry learning in Hong Kong secondary schools.

In the sections below, I will offer a contextual review of social inquiry in the form of project learning and its relations to social education in Hong Kong secondary schools, and I will review the related problems that have arisen from the current educational reforms here in Hong Kong. I will then identify the problematics underlying social inquiry learning in the specific historical context of contemporary Hong Kong.

Project Learning in Hong Kong and its Global Character

Project learning in Hong Kong forms one of the four key curriculum tasksⁱ in the curriculum-reform initiatives undertaken since 2001 by the Education Bureau (EDB) (the then-Education and Manpower Bureau), and has seemingly occupied a central

position in Hong Kong's social educationⁱⁱ since then. It is considered "a powerful learning and teaching strategy to promote self-directed, self-regulated and self-reflecting learning" (Curriculum Development Council [CDC], 2001, p. 87). The official aims of project learning are to strengthen students' social and cognitive skills, and to enable them to construct knowledge through various learning experiences. Apparently, project learning as a major curriculum task carries a constructivist view of learning and suggests that experience and reflection play significant roles in the social-inquiry process.

The current curriculum-reform initiatives have given project learning a central position in PSHE KLA. However, project learning has been a part of the history of the Hong Kong secondary school curriculum for about eight decades (if not longer) in one form or another in both the junior and senior secondary syllabuses. Its history has been associated primarily with technical subjects: with cabinet making, tailoring, and shoe making in the 1920s (Siu, 2008), and later in the 1970s, with metalwork, woodwork, design and technology (D&T), and arts and design (A&D) (Volk, Yeung, & Siu, 1997; Siu, 2008; Curriculum Development Committee [CDC]ⁱⁱⁱ, 1982, 1983, 1991a, 1997), as well as biology, chemistry, and physics (CDC, 1991b, 1991c, 1993). This shift in the 1970s took place when, specifically in 1978, free compulsory education expanded from six years (primary education) to nine years (with the addition of three years of secondary education) for children up to 15-years-old. In the 1980s, project approach was introduced into social studies and EPA whose teaching syllabuses have given shape to Hong Kong's present-day LS and LS-related subjects (Law, 2006).

The history of the Hong Kong school curriculum, as illustrated in the above broad strokes, shows that the project approach in local school subjects has ranged from

practical problem-solving design activities and handiwork (for example in metalwork, D&T, and A&D), to hypothesis-testing laboratory experiments (in biology, chemistry, and physics), to individuals' participation in community volunteer services and individuals' use of leisure time (in social studies & EPA). Among these different project forms, the problem-solving project approach in the D&T syllabus is most worthy of attention as far as social inquiry is concerned. According to the year 1983 version of the D&T teaching syllabus, students had to finish a design project at the end of the three-year junior secondary curriculum, solving a problem they encountered in their daily life (e.g., producing an artifact or conceptualizing a design process useful in approaching a problem). The essence of the design project was to have students associate their daily-life experiences and "inventiveness" with solutions to the problems posed (CDC, 1983, p. 12). The teaching syllabus also placed the teacher in the role of the "eye-opener" and "brain-opener," who must help students explore knowledge while tolerating errors and ambiguity in the students' fledgling efforts (CDC, 1983, p. 14). Currently, local design educators like Michael Siu have advocated a "problem-finding" design curriculum for local secondary and tertiary students to prepare them for changing social needs in Hong Kong and around the world (Siu, 2008). The Hong Kong school curriculum has undergone a number of major structural changes in the past five decades or more, and each of these changes was instigated largely by local political changes and globalizing forces from outside of Hong Kong (Law, 2006; Siu, 2008). Structural changes in the school curriculum as a whole brought along changes in learning objectives, curriculum orientations, and assessment orientations, and led to the phasing out of school subjects like metalwork and woodwork that once served the industrial needs of Hong Kong in the 1970s and 1980s (Volk, Yeung, & Siu, 1997; Siu, 2008). At the same time, these structural changes privileged other forms of curriculum organization and content. The latest

curriculum reforms in Hong Kong since the turn of the millennium have placed the aforementioned subjects under their respective KLAs,^{iv} and have emphasized the use of ICT in project work (Volk, Yip, & Lo, 2003).

Nonetheless, Hong Kong's current curriculum reform has given project learning a new context by requiring that all senior secondary students whose core subject is LS participate in IES, which is a form of self-directed individual project learning. The human world and the human condition have become the focus of social education. The call for students to be observers and participants in the process of social inquiry appears to have grown louder than ever before. Consequently, a number of important questions have been posed, including how IES can help students study and inquire into lived social realities, and what kinds of knowledge and meaning students have created out of the inquiry process.

What is worthy of attention is that project learning, as one of the four key tasks of educational reforms in Hong Kong, has a global character when it is mediated and supported by information technology, another of the four major curriculum tasks in the reform initiatives. In the 2006-07 school year, the Education Convergence Education Foundation (教育評議會教育基金), a local educational institution, with funding from the Quality Education Fund in Hong Kong developed in collaboration with educational institutes in three mainland Chinese provinces of Qingdao, Shunde, and Suzhou a cross-border collaboration project program entitled, 3I Project Learning (Ou, 2006). The 3I Project Learning program was facilitated by a computer-supported system called Knowledge Community (KC), "a web-based, structured framework that allows cross-cultural comparisons and collaboration" (Tan & Chan, 2008, p. 1049). The program lined up primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong with those in Singapore and Mainland Chinese cities. Its motto is

“Building projects through global collaboration” with the three I’s standing for “Interdisciplinary,” “Inter-school,” and “International.” The program made one-on-one matches of schools across territories, and students from the matching schools exchanged ideas on KC forums and constructed knowledge through “scaffolding” built in the KC (Ou, 2006). In addition to using computer-mediated communications, participating schools organized fieldtrips and visits to their matching schools. The webpage that once hosted the activities in the 3I global program is no longer available, and one of the video clips that showcased a 3I school was available at another website hosted by Buck Institute for Education (BIE), though more video clips produced between 2006 and 2009 have been available on such other websites as YouTube. BIE, the institute that “contributes to Project Based Learning through product development, services, research, and online learning” (Buck Institute for Education [BIE], 2012a), defines “project based learning,” which is another term for project learning, as follows:

In Project Based Learning (PBL), students go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem, or challenge. Rigorous projects help students learn key academic content and practice 21st Century Skills (such as collaboration, communication & critical thinking), and create high-quality, authentic products & presentations. (BIE, 2012b)

So, what have students learned and what knowledge has emerged through the 3I Project Learning program? What forms of inquiry have taken root? To begin answering these questions rigorously, let us consider the comments that teachers and students from two Hong Kong primary schools and one Hong Kong secondary school made about their participation in the 3I Project Learning program. The teachers who discussed their experiences with the program appraised KC as a way to expose students in one location to students in a far-away location, as a way to engage students in project tasks, and hence as a way to broaden students’ horizons (globalkc, 2007a, globalkc, 2009). One of the primary school teachers expressed amazement, as one

of her students had accessed KC forums over a hundred times (globalkc, 2007a). Some of the Hong Kong students were happy about getting to take trips to matching schools in the mainland, and some quoted their counterparts from KC forums regarding ways to reduce the use of plastic bags (globalkc, 2007a, 2007b). Two students who emceed for a video were delighted with the variety of presentation styles and the range of products produced to spread the message of environmental protections. These two students also raved about the fact that fellow students were assessing one another's presentations (globalkc, 2007b). The LS teacher in the secondary school praised KC for the built-in scaffolding function that allowed students to compare and contrast ideas they and their counterparts put across and that, in this way, nurtured self-study skills (globalkc, 2009).

In this regard, KC serves as a boundary-dissolving device, amplifying and mediating the discourse that characterizes students as active knowledge builders. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become a crucial resource that informs inquiry learning. The discourse positing that ICTs can break down barriers to learning has gained currency in Hong Kong's educational scenes, especially during and after the 2003 outbreak of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) when schools, homes, and national borders were sealed off from one another. Knowledge construction in KC's built-in scaffolding comes in a compare-and-contrast form (see Appendix 1), placing information into standardized categories. Hence, educators and scholars are left with the question of how such technology-mediated scaffolding may facilitate cross-categorical analysis and referencing for the benefit of knowledge building.

What Local Surveys and Practices Reveal about Project Learning

Despite the seeming proliferation and success of the 3I Project Learning program's global pedagogical events, local survey findings tell an untold story: project work as a learning method and pedagogy has occupied a marginal position in the junior secondary level. Chan, Choi, and Hui (2006-08) conducted a territory-wide questionnaire in 2007 under the same publicly funded research project that studied the Integrated Humanities (IH) subject, a junior secondary version of LS. The 2007 questionnaire surveyed 80 schools, covering almost 10,000 students. Of all the schools surveyed, a total of 62 offered the Secondary 1 to 3 (S1-3) IH. In general, the surveyed IH teachers stated that they considered project learning to be an ineffective tool for assessing students' learning. For the students surveyed, project work was perceived as the second most commonly used teaching method, yet was perceived simultaneously as the second most disliked teaching method in their S1-3 IH class. In focus-group interviews, most participating students talked about their use of various tactics to dodge engagement in tasks related to project work. Survey findings show that students ranked "multiple perspectives," "beautiful designs," and "innovative ideas" as the top three elements capable of boosting grades in the project work.

In his book entitled *A Complete Manual on Project Learning: Advanced Techniques* (2004), local education professor Kit-tai Hou was highly critical of the type of project work that simply reports the tasks done and that presents data in a "cut and paste" way (pp. 5, 172). Yet Hou's characterization of what constitutes a good project is not unproblematic. Having secondary students and university undergraduates as target readers (p. 5), Hou's book is oriented toward academic and professional research, which tends to require specific formats and details. According to Hou, a good

research topic should be significant in terms of either its impact on a large number of people or its ability to secure significant funding. The topic should be controversial for the general public or academics, original within the related body of literature, capable of eliciting debate, and in possession of currently relevant analyses. Hence, good debate topics can serve as fodder for good project topics (pp. 10-14).

Hou's publication is among a few locally situated academic interventions in the development of pedagogical materials (Tse et al., 2003; Hou, 2004; Hui, Cho, Li, et al., 2010; Lo, Po, Cheng, et al., 2010). In response to the needs of school teachers, Chiu and his colleagues worked with a number of local primary and secondary schools in their university-school professional-support projects (Chiu, 2006; Chiu & Mak, 2006). They observed that "most of the practices [of project learning in those schools] are structured and mechanistic, without a thorough understanding of the objectives of implementing project learning" (Chiu, 2006, abstract). Moreover, the teachers with whom Chiu and his colleagues were working observed that the students' projects were often formalistic and lacked in-depth thinking (Chiu & Mak, 2006, p. 13). Reading to access information proved to be a challenging task for students with poor learning abilities. Students who thought that their own techniques for designing good questionnaires had improved during the course of the project tended to simply bypass required readings that were meant to enrich their understanding of the issue at hand. Oftentimes, these students resorted to making unintelligible claims about their investigations (Chiu & Mak, 2006, p. 13).

Chiu and his colleagues' university-school support projects reveal obstacles to effective project learning at both the primary and secondary school levels. This series of professional support projects also reflects these academics' conception of project learning as a means of developing generic learning skills—a conception that I

found problematic. In his own booklet entitled *Practical experience in implementing project learning: Inquiry and reflection*, Chiu (2006) addressed the issue of assessment, contending that there is no need to bother with assessments in project learning because project learning is “not what learning is all about”: project learning should motivate students to learn, should help them acquire inquiry-learning skills, and should account only for a portion of all the learning undertaken by students (p.14).^v For Chiu (2006), project learning as a pedagogy belongs to the realm of skill, and can be conducted without an emphasis on content, so that the two—skills and contents—can be taught separately. In this regard, Chiu echoes one official objective of project learning in its developing generic skills, which covers “problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration and self-management skills in the learning process, and use[s] communication skills to present the product” (CDC, 2001, p. 87). The problems with separating skills and content in project learning and reducing project learning to developing generic skills render constructive learning ineffective. The reason is: skills are not content-free. Williams (1983b) reminds us that “technical forms are also ways, modes of perceiving, of relating, of composing and of finding our way” (p. 20). All technical forms, be they simple templates of work or sophisticated ICT-mediated learning devices like KC in the 3I Project Learning program, embody ways of seeing, doing and relating the learners to the others. Hence, when learners strive to acquire skills through technical forms, they are, indeed, striving to generate meanings and knowledge out of the interactions with the technical media, themselves, their environment, and the others. Project learning, even when seen only as a means of developing generic skills, serves to produce knowledge out of practices. Reducing project learning to simply generic skill-based practices could be one of the factors contributing to the mechanistic way project

learning has been conducted by schoolteachers in Chiu's professional support projects.

Like students in the 3I Project Learning program, students in the 2007 territory-wide questionnaire survey or those in Chui and his colleagues' support projects were involved in skill-oriented project-learning tasks, including managing good presentation styles and mastering organization and ICT skills. Project products and presentation skills matter, while content does not. Unlike students in the 3I Project Learning program, these surveyed local students did the project work in a detached and poorly informed way, as investigative exploration of the issue at hand was limited, if present at all. Students who engage in a detached and decontextualized approach to studying the social reduce the possibility that they will develop knowledge of a tacit and intuitive nature, and will likely weaken their ability to recognize their own and others' thoughts and feelings. In these regards, an important question is whether this kind of social education and social-inquiry learning should be desired in local primary and secondary school education.

There is no doubt that project-gearred work has changed the rhythms of everyday school life, as it is conceived and practiced in such a manner to promote a form of knowledge that is procedural, practical, and codifiable. What is it, we have to ask, in us and in our contemporaries, that draws us repeatedly to such repetitive performative acts? This is a question that will inevitably invite us to look into the wider context and that I will address through contextual analysis in the subsequent chapters.

IES as Social Inquiry under the New Educational Reform Context

With the inception of LS^{vi} as a core subject in Hong Kong's senior secondary schools under the recent curriculum reform,^{vii} inquiry work in the form of project learning has witnessed both a quantitative change and a qualitative change since the school

system has required all senior secondary students to participate in an IES. The LS subject, which was once an elective for the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE)^{viii} in the arts and the commerce streams in the old academic structure, is a core subject made compulsory for all students taking the new structure's Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination (see Figure 1, Appendix 2). With LS being a new core subject, the imminent challenges for many schools and teachers are numerous, three of those include preparing curriculum materials for the Areas of Study, readjusting teacher training and deployment, and supervising IES (see Figures 1 & 2, Appendix 2).

IES^{ix} is an individual, self-directed, issue-based form of inquiry into the human world and the human condition, and is an integral part of the LS curriculum for all local senior secondary students (see Figure 3, Appendix 2). It takes the form of a research project that comprises three specific stages: inquiry proposal, data collection, and analysis and report writing. Assessment is school-based^x and school teachers assess their own students' work and submit marks at each of the three stages according to the schedules laid down by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) (see Figure 4, Appendix 2).

The first cohort of the senior secondary students recently took the HKDSE examination (in March 2012). Since the 1980s, inquiry-based learning about social topics has been in force in Hong Kong's primary and secondary system in the form of either the aforementioned small-group project-learning program or in the PSHE KLA subjects including EPA, Social Studies, IH, and LS. Earlier studies have criticized social education in the junior secondary levels for sharing Freire's (2000) highly criticized "banking" nature of education (Po & Lo, 2008). An argument is that social education has tended to develop compliant citizens from its earliest incarnation,

Civics, dating from the 1950s (Wong, 1981). Furthermore, the model of issue-based inquiry in the subject-area EPA reduces controversial issues to issues of conflict between “community and individual interests” and constructs the identities of students as critical thinkers and problem-solvers “across difference in a reductive binary oppositional setting” (Law, 2006, p. 41). In effect, the conflict-of-interest mode of issue-based inquiry is continuously reproducing an ahistorical and decontextualized binary understanding of difference and identity in a larger social context (Law, 2006).

The significance of these earlier studies for the current thesis study is that they historicize social education in the Hong Kong context, revealing traces of subject positions that, through interpellation, would be assumed by students, be they the ruling class, the masses, or future intellectuals operating with a weak sense of otherness. We are left with a pressing question: With the across-the-board implementation of IES in the senior LS curriculum, would social education in junior secondary level and its undesirable pedagogic effects carry over into IES inquiry?

What IES Students Say about Data that “Don’t Fit”

In April 2010 (i.e., the second semester of the new senior secondary year), I talked to seventeen students in two schools from the first cohort of the senior secondary level, asking them about their first experiences of the new LS subject and the IES work. Teachers in these schools had decided to have IES begin and end one year earlier than the official schedule. The shared reasons for this decision were that both the subject teachers and the students would be less busy in the first year of senior secondary school and that a project process shorter than the suggested two-year time frame would make the task less tiresome for students. When I visited and spoke with the above-mentioned seventeen students, they had already submitted their project proposals, and were either in the process of devising data-collection methods (School

A) or of preparing for the first school-based assessment (School B). The questionnaire survey was the major, if not the only, data-collection method that these students used, and some of the students whom I interviewed were planning to conduct the survey online using free survey websites (e.g. www.m3q.com). About 80% of these students' IES topics were framed in a similar pattern concerning the identification of causal relations: "How does X affect Y ?" or "What impact does X have on Y ?" (see Appendix 3). This formulation is commonly found in other Hong Kong schools and in the exemplars HKEAA published a few months later (in September and October of the same year), though this formulation's ratio to other formulations of topics has varied (see Appendix 4). The patterns corresponding to the formulation of topic-related questions have generally comprised two elements, each taken from two of the six modules in three Areas of Study structured in the LS Curriculum & Assessment Guide (2007) (see Figure 2, Appendix 1).

Some of the interviewed students talked about (1) their inquiry experiences stemming from their junior-secondary experiences, (2) various difficulties that arose in association with the data collected, and (3) personal approaches to dealing with data collection and analysis in previous projects. Three students made the following comments to me:

Kenny^{xi}: There was a time when we were doing small group work and we expected to collect data and present them in the way we anticipated. But in fact, the data collected were not as we anticipated. We faced this dilemma of whether we should stick to our anticipation or use the data collected. But when we discarded our earlier anticipation and stuck to the data, we found it hard to find arguments to support the findings, because we hadn't learned that there could be exceptions to our anticipation.

Cherry: I had the same experiences. We found that factories are not the sources of pollution as we'd originally expected. So what we did afterward was to try to find ways to explain why the outcome wasn't as

expected. I think that this outcome doesn't count as a failure in the research as long as we can find ways to explain it.

Holly: I had similar experiences, too. With our recent English project on the topic of euthanasia as a social problem, over 60% of the respondents to an item in Internet questionnaires thought that euthanasia was not a social problem. We discarded that item from the findings because the responses to that particular item were inconsistent with the topic of euthanasia. Because we had originally presumed that it is a social problem.

(Translated from oral Chinese, student focus-group interview, (SFGI), April 22, 2012)

The conversation above shows that the detached and decontextualized study of social issues in junior secondary social studies could test these students' inquiry learning. Kenny described the difficulty he had in making sense of the untidy data when he and his groupmates let the set of data speak for itself, and Holly found it difficult to deal with untidy data from the lived social world, and finally ended up trimming the data away from the pool. Cherry dealt with the data by looking for ways to describe and interpret them. The ways in which Cherry and Holly dealt with the untidy and unexpected data raise the issue of how inquirers or researchers deal with their preconceptions, assumptions and biases throughout an inquiry process. The research paradigms in which the two students were situated were apparently different from one another. While Cherry suspended her preconceptions and sought to make sense of the set of data by letting it speak for itself, Holly subscribed to positivism, which treats data as statistics to be presented in charts and graphs. This form of positivistic inquiry does not take into account empirical and observational data and tends to leave little room for ambiguity.

The findings above raise two particular questions for teachers: If the official objectives of IES are to help students "appreciate the complexities of the modern world, and develop critical thinking skills and make informed decisions" (CDC 2007,

p. 12), then what would be effective and useful ways of guiding students to make sense of data that do not fit preconceived understandings of the social? And what research paradigm would allow lived social realities to be spoken through data? These students thought that their current IES inquiry could benefit from teacher supervision and peer sharing in this regard. I should add that support in the form of conceptual tools and research paradigms can enable students, for instance, to describe, interpret, and judge data on the basis of the data's relevance to contexts, not just on the basis of mathematical calculations. Students, therefore, would access their biases during the course of their inquiry into the data. It would stand a good chance that students would be able to understand lived social realities in due course.

What an IES Teacher Says about Experience and Templates

What about the teachers' side of the story? Jane, a graduate from my department, was an LS teacher supervising IES projects in her serving school. We had an informal discussion in the university library about LS teaching and IES supervision where she posed her own rhetorical questions about IES teaching.

- ~ Can we give out a template that is helpful for students amid the heavy teaching load in the context of local schools?
- ~ Right now, books on how to do IES have in mind the academically stronger students who read and write better than many other students. Almost no books are geared toward students who don't read and write properly. My class is composed of students of this kind. What are we to make of this?
- ~ Yes, I did give my students various activities like one where they jotted down ideas about Otaku [a Japanese term literally meaning "hidden youth"]. In this way, the students could tap into their own understandings of a given topic before listening to my lecture on it. I could see that students did very well in those lessons. They enjoyed the activities, and discussed related topics quite well in class during activities. But when it comes to writing, they couldn't write clearly on their own. Besides, we simply couldn't afford activities like that in class all the time. Students had a lot of other things to do during class.

(Translated from oral Chinese, October 22, 2011)

My encounters with other LS teachers have told me that Jane's concerns about both good templates for her students and her reliance on good curriculum are not atypical of school teachers within the Hong Kong school system. Many Hong Kong LS teachers also share the perception that students' experiences play an insignificant role in their learning. Learning activities that draw on students' everyday lived experiences are luxuries, rather than a mainstay, in everyday classroom teaching and learning in Hong Kong educational system.

IES teachers' quest for templates to help students learn and their dismissive attitude toward the role of experience in learning reflect institutional constraints with which teachers must contend. Yet, if we think of templates as technical forms of thinking and working, then we should ask whether existing templates have been useful so far, and if yes, then for whom have they been useful and for what objectives. We should also ask how these templates enable students to examine their inquiry topics. If the ultimate goal of LS is for students "to construct personal knowledge of immediate relevance to themselves in today's world" (CDC, 2007, p. 2), educators in Hong Kong should rethink the role of students' experiences—whether past or present, received or lived—in informing (or misinforming) the students' understanding of the social. Then we can duly ask the question, Can effective IES inquirers access, make sense of, and interpret their own experiences, and if yes, then how do the inquirers proceed in this task and for what ends?

The Problematics and the Research Question Guiding This Thesis

The new curriculum reforms have given rise to the pedagogic problem of IES—as a seeming mode of constructivist learning, IES learning and teaching is rooted deeply in positivism. Students' IES-based inquiries into social issues are subsumed under

ahistorical and decontextualized methods of teaching and learning. If educators devote themselves to “what education is and what conditions have to be satisfied in order that education may be a reality and not a name or a slogan,” as Dewey (1997, p. 91) puts it, then the question “What alternative practice would transform the problematics inherited in social inquiry in the junior secondary level?” becomes one that educators should both ask and strive to answer.

Building on my own knowledge and experience of practicing drama-in-education at various levels in Hong Kong schools, the present thesis concerns social inquiry in the form of IES and examines how the method of drama could mediate students’ extended process of IES. This thesis asks the question,

Can social inquiry in the LS subject in Hong Kong secondary schools benefit from the use of drama, and if so, then under what conditions and in what ways?

By “social inquiry,” I mean learners’ use of their own experiences, whether past or present, to understand a situation that is “indeterminate” and “doubtful” (Dewey, 1938, p. 105). Social inquiry is both a mental process and a temporal process, where learners anticipate and assess possible responses to a future situation (Dewey, 1938). In this process, learners form new knowledges about the situation, themselves, and the social world. Inquiry, in its most general sense, is about problem-solving; that is, trying to understand things that are unclear (Dewey, 1938). People who engage in inquiry are striving “to see something that is hidden” (Polanyi, 2009, p. 22), with the goal of either acquiring new knowledge or changing a situation (Dewey, 1938; Courtney, 1997). The function of inquiry is neither to confirm and reproduce the present, nor simply to remember past lives, but to explore and to understand (Polanyi, 2009). Social inquiry is an examination of human relations, and thus, student inquirers can satisfactorily explore the practices of IES only when they take into

account their past experiences as inquirers, their lived experiences as members of a society, and the contextual forces that mediate and structure their IES work.

What Comes Next?

In Chapter 3, I will discuss the lens of the performative and the method of drama in my efforts to construct an IES-based framework for social-inquiry pedagogy. I will analyze data that I gathered from the previously mentioned group of senior secondary students and will clarify the social-inquiry learning process in Hong Kong's senior secondary schools.

Chapter 3: Conceptual and Methodological Frameworks

In previous chapters, I have discussed the context that has given rise to the problematics for this study—IES being a mode of constructivist learning under the influence of positivism in education. The complex nature of IES's pedagogic problem defies usual forms of investigation in the fields of cultural studies, education, and drama-in-education. This complexity requires a search for pedagogies, perspectives, and analytical frameworks that can help improve and, indeed, transform educational practices. The notion of the performative has been useful for conceptualizing pedagogy as a transformative cultural practice and schools as both machinery underlying contemporary power relations and complex cultural environments where students' histories and experiences are respected and considered significant.

This chapter constructs a conceptual framework for the present study by discussing the lens of the performative together with Williams' analytical approach to drama and society. Through the lens of the performative, I argue that education can be seen as performative practices leading either to make-belief or to make-believe, and social-inquiry learning in Hong Kong senior secondary schools is almost already a make-belief performative process. The make-belief performative processes of social inquiry shape and enact social realities for the given audience, reinforce existing organizing structures, and reproduce preconceived social relations. Drama and its general processes of representing, performing, and meaning-making are both productive and analytical, being of benefit to ideological and cultural critiques and to potentially transformative pedagogical action plans framed for existing IES practices. The chapter ends by delineating the action-research design that I used in a selected

IES classroom in a Hong Kong secondary school, where I sought to try out a pedagogical drama-informed action plan.

Performance, the Performative, and Pedagogy

In the past few decades, critical educators and cultural studies scholars, rather than merely improve existing practices, have drawn from other traditions and fashions a more comprehensive and radical pedagogy for reconceiving alternative educational practices. Giroux and Shannon (1997) contend that scholars in cultural studies and critical pedagogy should cross their disciplinary borders and conceive of pedagogy as “performative practice,” so that cultural studies scholars and critical educators can address the crisis of education in the United States in its multicultural, social, and cultural contexts (p. 3). These two critical educators describe the performative

as an articulating principle that signals the importance of translating theory into practice while reclaiming cultural texts as an important site in which theory is used to “think” politics in the face of a pedagogy of representation that has implications for how to strategize and engage broader public issues. (p. 2)

Giroux and Shannon’s notion of the performative emphasizes “doing” pedagogical work that focuses on burning issues in the wider political context in the most intellectually rigorous way (p. 4). Sharing Williams’ notion of culture and cultural pedagogy, Giroux and Shannon acknowledge that our whole social and cultural experience functions to teach and educate us across multiple sites. They then contend that performative practices need to be conceived of as forms of cultural politics that address issues of power “through the display of texts, bodies, and representations” (p. 4). In this regard, Giroux and Shannon’s concept of the performative is materialist and political, differing from certain popular North American versions of cultural studies that, as these two researchers note, reduce politics to rhetoric with an exclusive emphasis on texts (p. 3).

Other critical educators have asked new questions and advanced new agendas for learning, teaching, and school reforms through the lens of performance (Pineau, 2005; Alexander, Anderson, & Gallegos, 2005, Anderson, 2005). Pineau (2005) calls for performance approaches to education that involve teachers and students as actors engaged in the educational process. Such a view “acknowledges the interconnectedness of diverse roles played out by teachers and students, and furthermore, the necessity of engaging the whole person, rather than disembodied intellects” (p. 32). Alexander, Anderson, and Gallegos (2005) state that teaching is both “a performance event” and “a performative event”, which is in essence, “doing” and “the repetitive act of doing,” requiring the presence of the teacher’s “acting/active bodies” (p. 4). Also, the argument has been made that educators should examine issues of power relations in the educational process as well as in classroom rituals (Pineau, 2005; Alexander, Anderson, & Gallegos, 2005). Anderson (2005) analyzes the school reform movement in the United States and unveils a new performative culture in schools that exercises constant surveillance and on-the-job performance assessment of teachers. Such performative school culture results not in significant school improvement, Anderson argues, but in greater marketization of the public sector. His analysis of the effects of US school reforms goes with Tse’s (2005) analysis of those of Hong Kong’s school reforms (which I have discussed in chapter 1), though their analytical frameworks differ from each other’s. Anderson calls upon critical school practitioners and scholars to access theoretical tools including “theories of spectacle, performance, and performativity” to dismantle forces that sustain such performative school culture (p. 217).

Drama educators and educational researchers have attempted to rethink education through the practices of art and drama, noting their potentially beneficial influence on learning outcomes (Eisner, 2002; McLaren, 1988; O’Neill, 1995; Doyle, 1993).

Eisner (2002) advocates an artistic approach to education where both educators and students learn from “aesthetic intelligence” in areas like “flexible purposing” and “tacit knowledge,” thereby gaining novel insights into “what education might try to accomplish” (pp. 6, 7). Such types of educational practices, Eisner contends, attend to the social realities of both students and teachers, and would allow us to revisit and rethink existing educational practices that tend toward uniformed and standardized learning outcomes predominantly influenced by psychology on education. In teacher-student relations, McLaren (1988), borrowing Turner’s notion of liminality, characterizes teachers in general and drama teachers in particular as “liminal servants” who help take students across thresholds, or liminal points, to places where the students can defamiliarize the familiar and see things anew in the Brechtian way (Mumford, 2009). O’Neill (1995) sees connections between McLaren’s notion of teachers as liminal servants and the roles that drama teachers play in creating dramatic contexts that meet students’ needs for such things as empowerment. Doyle (1993) examines drama’s potential benefits to critical pedagogy in schools, and criticizes curriculum and methodology that, designed from a distance, tend to remove both teachers and students from their histories (p. 6).

The above scholarly initiatives, in reconceiving education through the lens of the performative, call forth a politics of the body, experience, and imagination for transformative educational and pedagogical practices. Through the body, lived experiences, and imagination, students and teachers not only can access tacit dimensions of knowledge but also can resist detached and disembodied positivistic modes of learning about—and of understanding—the self and the social. Such a reconceptualization of education through the performative has inevitably problematized popular notions of education and has triggered reconceptions of pedagogy “as cultural practice” for cultural production, a notion commonly

envisioned by critical educators, cultural studies scholars, and critical drama educators (Freire, 1985, 2000; McLaren, 1988; Giroux & Shannon, 1997; Grossberg, 1994; Doyle, 1993).

Make-belief and Make-believe

The scholarly works quoted above have emphasized the linking functions and the cultural-production dimensions of performative practices; however, these same works have neglected the role of performance in framing and reframing realities. Informed by varying notions of performance, studies that address the roles of narrative, gender, and sexuality in everyday social interactions have acknowledged the effects of performances and performative acts on framing realities for audiences and for performers (Austin, 1975; Maclean, 1988; Schechner, 2006; Butler, 1990; Goffman, 1959). These studies in various disciplines share the premise that performers, be they story-tellers, politicians, or clergymen, are always concerned about the effect that their performances have on audiences (Austin, 1975; Maclean, 1988; Schechner, 2006). For all forms of performative acts, from staged plays on theatrical stages to self-presentations in everyday life, there is the need for an audience, be it the self or an other (Goffman, 1959; O'Toole, 1992; Schechner, 2006). Performative acts always present constraints for performers and their audiences alike. For instance, some performances require audiences to willingly suspend their disbelief or require the performers themselves to submit to the regulatory frames in the case of dramatic play or identity play (O'Neill, 1995; Butler, 1990; O'Toole, 1992; Vygotsky, 1976).

Schechner (2006) distinguishes between make-belief performances and make-believe performances in framing realities:

Performances can be either “make-belief” or “make-believe”.... The performances of everyday life “make belief” create the very social realities they enact. In “make-believe” performances, the distinction between what’s real and what’s pretended is kept clear,...mark[ing] the boundaries between pretending

and “being real”.... Public figures are often making belief—enacting the effects they want the receivers of their performances to accept “for real.” (pp. 42-3)

Schechner’s public figures perform with the intention of blurring the boundaries between the world of performance and everyday reality—a scenario that echoes the conception of performers presented by Goffman (1959) regarding everyday social encounters: these everyday performers’ aim is to build belief in their audience; furthermore, they ask their audience to be implicitly or explicitly impressed by their performative acts. Goffman further maintains that everyday performances may give rise to a given performer who is “sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality,” or to a “cynical” performer who “has no belief in his own act and no ultimate concern with the beliefs of his audience” (p. 28). In this same regard, observers of performative acts may or may not respond to the acts as the performer in question intended.

To understand the make-belief process and the blurring of boundaries between the world of the performance and everyday reality, one can think of the work of agit-prop theater. Though varied in forms, the purpose of agit-prop theater would be to elicit from audiences both empathy and catharsis, be they in support of or in opposition to the ruling regime. Empathy and catharsis in the theater, however, have come under criticism because they immobilize audiences’ ability to observe and to judge freely, a view reflected in the critical theatrical works of Augusto Boal and of Bertolt Brecht. This brings us to Schechner’s notion of make-believe performances.

Whereas make-belief performances intentionally blur the boundaries between the world of the performance and everyday reality, make-believe performances maintain these boundaries (Schechner, 2006). The marked boundaries between the real and the pretend in make-believe performances function to allow the art of drama and theater to operate in the “in-between-ness” of the real and the pretend. By entering

the theatrical space, audiences can simultaneously hold real and fictional worlds together, juxtaposing the two contexts for a new understanding and for new meaning-making (O'Neill, 1995; Boal, 1995; Mumford, 2009). Contemporary theaters have harnessed make-believe performances on behalf of audiences and participants. Contemporary theater, theater in education, and drama in education witnessed a shift away from the conception of performance as an enactment of pre-scripted texts and toward the conception of performance as a meaning-making process. In the latter scenario the role and function of actor and audience are mixed. Boal coined the term 'spect-actors' for his well-acclaimed Forum Theater, indicating that spectators in his theater are simultaneously actors, taking part in the theatrical acts to rehearse important life issues (Boal, 1995; Babbage, 2004). Audiences in Brechtian theater would not go onto a stage, but they are no passive receivers of the stage-bound performance, thanks to Brecht's dramaturgical devices (Babbage, 2004; Mumford, 2009). By turning familiar "socially-conditioned phenomena" into oddities (using V-effects or Defamiliarization), and by bringing up the past to question the present (using Historicization), Brecht and his adherents have engaged theater audiences while paradoxically disengaging them from the dramatic action by inviting them to discern it from the outside (Mumford, 2009; Babbage, 2004). Brecht's dramaturgical devices maintain the boundaries between the real and the pretend to serve the purpose of his discerning audience.

Informed by the work of Boal and Brecht, practitioners and scholars in the field of drama-in-education and theater-in-education have devised improvisational drama works that engage participants in dramatic action (where they might contemplate ideas from several perspectives) before disengaging them from the action, leaving them free to reflect on the dramatic action from the outside, and the reverse is also possible (O'Toole, 1992; Franks & Jones, 1999; Jackson, 2007; Neelands & Goode,

2000; O'Neill, 1995). By holding both fictional and real worlds together, these drama participants can thus distance themselves from the drama so as to look at it "from outside." The reverse of this scenario is also possible. In both of these scenarios, the participants can enter into critical dialogic thinking between the marked boundaries of the pretend and the real.

For this research study, Schechner's (2006) notion of performances as being "make-belief" and "make-believe" is useful in discerning how IES students may work to ensure that their IES endeavors would have the desired effects on their target audience, mainly the teacher-assessors. Moreover, this twofold notion would throw light onto the positions that students assume and are subjected to in their IES practices, and it would also illuminate how realities are framed and could be reframed for the benefit of social inquiry in the Hong Kong secondary school context.

Local IES Practices Through the Lens of the Performative and Drama

In light of the performative lens, education can be seen as performative practices leading either to make-belief or to make-believe. Indeed, teachers and students alike are almost already "performers" in Hong Kong educational processes. Regarding the group of senior secondary students I first discussed in chapter 2, I argue that social-inquiry learning in Hong Kong senior secondary schools is almost already a make-belief performative process where student inquirers perform acts of selecting, (dis-)analyzing, and representing data to affect audiences, including teacher-assessors.

The seventeen students I interviewed in April 2010 expressed concern about the effects of their projects on potential or intended readers. One of the students shared his thoughts on using non-written forms of reportage because they could have a greater impact on his target readers. If the subject teacher allowed it, he might consider presenting a report as a drama or a film script, he said. For intended effects,

some of these students would tend to interview “expert” lawyers and scholars, citing copious amounts of quantitative data stemming from, for instance, “twenty-five” individual, completed questionnaires. When asked why “twenty-five” individual, completed questionnaires would be suitable for such a task, the student said that they would help prevent situations where “extreme cases” skew the results. This idea of having a large sample size was shared by other interviewed students. The prevalence of this belief suggests that the size of data pools matters.

The make-belief performative processes of inquiry are analogic relative to the “rendition” of a scripted text where the students’ research report essentially prescribes the inquiry results, much as a pre-determined playscript does. These performative acts, once carried out by students, sustain the students’ belief that they are indeed inquirers and that they command confidence among their readers, whether real, imagined, or potential. Among these readers is the teacher-assessor. These types of students also tend to assume a tri-partite relationship among themselves as inquirers or researchers, the target audience, and the subject of research. Most students whom I interviewed took a value-informed position by assuming that they knew more about the phenomenon in question and the issues at stake than anyone else, including their would-be informants. In effect, these interviewed students took an inquiry position outside of their own study.

Individual IES students’ behavior generally is not random, but a product of the tasks and constraints imposed by the given situation that these students encounter while playing their multiple roles in IES learning. As IES learners, these interviewed students play various roles: the student struggling to meet assignment deadlines; the apprentice learning (or not learning, as the case may be) his or her trade; or the

member of society understanding the contemporary world mediated by concerns about teachers, authorities, and the wider societal context.

In chapter 2, I have discussed how some of these students I interviewed dealt with data that did not fit the perceived or expected reality. The interviewed students perceived their collected data but took actions to present, interpret, and represent the data in ways that would typify conventional modes of behaving, relating, and thinking. Data that were inconsistent with the social realities prescribed by curricular discourses were data that did not fit and needed to be straightened out—a conflict to be resolved. IES conventions constitute “a closed world of known signs and meanings” (Williams, 1983b, p. 15) that allows and requires no indeterminate situations—only repetitive acts that present and *re-present*.

Performative practice that leads to make-belief serves the function of stabilizing, shaping, and enacting reality for audiences—the teacher-assessors in the context of IES. By taking part in performative acts that build beliefs in their audience, students who once have observed the social world in standardized curriculum now find themselves playing the roles of performers. Performative make-belief IES learning requires such students to create believable realities on the basis of IES conventions, regardless of whether the students personally identify with the performance or the make belief. In the subsequent chapters, I will further discuss this matter in light of the data that I collected at the action-research site.

Contemporary Power Relations and the Value of “Research”

The make-belief performative process of IES is reflective of the contemporary Hong Kong context. The method of IES in understanding the social is positivist, ahistorical. Social inquiry takes a positivistic orientation. To better understand positivism’s influence on social inquiry in Hong Kong, let us consider a brief

discussion that two students majoring in the science stream had regarding the significance of the term ‘discovery’ in our focus-group meeting.

Tess: New findings don’t matter so much. As long as I’ve learned something new from the process, I’ve discovered something.

Hugo: But I think we can learn new things through reading. For research [in oral Chinese, the student used the term *yan jiu* (研究), we have to make the research meaningful. Research that doesn’t have any new findings isn’t meaningful.

Muriel: Would you agree with Tess that she can benefit from the research process when she finds out what she has not otherwise known? That this is discovery?

Hugo: New findings refer not only to learning new things from others’ work, but also to finding gaps in others’ work through, say, your primary data. What you’ve got from other people’s work is the experience of discovering something, not discovering something “new” [in oral Chinese, the student here was probably trying to distinguish *xin fa xian* (新發現) from *fa xian* (發現) with the intention of highlighting a notion close to the word ‘innovation’].

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, April 20, 2010)

While Tess regarded one’s discovery of new knowledge as beneficial to the self, Hugo emphasized the significance of innovation through research. Hugo’s notion of the innovation-through-research suggests both the presence of a research community and the importance of its research for the implied community. Hugo’s innovation-through-research concept also reflects values contained in a book of learning materials compiled by Hou (2004), which I have first discussed in chapter 2. In fact, Hou’s book has gained a substantial circulation among Hong Kong schools, especially after the introduction of the senior LS subject, which has accompanied IES in Hong Kong.

The very last page of Hou’s book discusses his concept of “project” by way of discussing the Chinese title of his book. He first expresses his preference for the

term *zhuan ti yan jiu* (專題研究, meaning “research”), over two other terms, *zhuan ti yan xi* (專題研習, meaning “project study and learning”) and *zhuan ti xue xi* (專題學習, meaning “learning”). In Hong Kong, the more officially used Chinese equivalent of “project learning” is *zhuan ti yan xi* (專題研習). All official curriculum and assessment documents and many other commercial publications in Hong Kong have used the same Chinese translation (CDC, 2001; Tse et al., 2003; Chiu, 2006; Chiu & Mak, 2006; Lo et al., 2010). However, Hou prefers *zhuan ti yan jiu* [meaning “research”] for two reasons:

this kind of learning [through use of the project method] should be centered on some “problem” which threads through the whole learning process. We wish that students could learn to discuss and think critically from different angles.... Besides, I like the phrase *yan jiu* [meaning “research”] better [than *yan xi* and *xue xi*] because it makes the whole research process a challenging one. Curiosity and the desire to learn are important elements that enhance learning motivations. The phrase *yan jiu* manages to pique students’ interest in learning.

(Translated from written Chinese, Hou, 2004, pp. 177-8)

Of the three Chinese phrases that Hou compares with one another, two phrases—*yan jiu* and *yan xi*—share the character *yan* (研). (Hou has not discussed the third Chinese phrase *xue xi*. My best guess is that this phrase does not collocate with the character *yan*. Hence, it does not carry that notion of “challenge” in Hou’s conception of project.) The two phrases, when collocated with the character *yan*, imply studious work on the part of the learner. Therefore, the difference between the two phrases *yan jiu* and *yan xi* is one of form. The whole book introduces project work to Hong Kong secondary students, covering matters ranging from research-topic choice, research methods, sampling, and questionnaire design to graphical representations of data and report writing. Hence, it seems natural that the phrase *yan jiu* (meaning “research”) is a better fit than *yan xi*. Formalistically, however, *yan jiu* varies little in terms of meaning from *yan xi*. In Hou’s formulation, IES in the form of project learning takes the specific form of academic research, oriented toward an intellectual project. In this regard, the format and nature of IES embody a

specific kind of contemporary academic institutional values. Then educators and scholars should strive to determine whether secondary-school project learning must have a research-project format identical to the format used by university undergraduate and graduate students. Can other forms of project work, like practical problem-solving handiwork and problem-finding design work, be possible for secondary school students, and why?

Testing the Potentials of Drama as a Transformative Pedagogy

My field data show that everyday school experiences are of the performative make-belief nature in which students and teachers alike enact and, thereby, stabilize a predetermined social reality. For this reason, researchers should analyze the learning experiences in everyday school contexts. Schechner's notion of performance of make-belief and make-believe can help researchers and concerned scholars see the effects that those performative acts of make-belief and make-believe can have on the positioning and the possible repositioning of IES students with their inquiry acts. Williams' notion of drama and his analysis of the relationships between drama and society are useful for ideological and cultural critiques and for framing a potentially transformative pedagogical action plan for the existing IES practices. As discussed in chapter 1, Williams' notion of drama serves a double function: (1) to separate itself—but not altogether—from the present historical cultural context, steering a course toward a more open social world, and (2) to reveal how the organization of a particular society governs the perceptions and the relationships among that society's members. *Drama* in this research endeavor has been conceived of as both *a pedagogical art form* and *a conceptual tool* connecting us with some of the fundamental conventions that organize students and their learning experiences in the everyday schooling context. Together, the lens of the performative and drama offer

both a pedagogic and an analytical framework for educational practices in general and social inquiry learning in particular in Hong Kong secondary schools.

This PhD study reflects my modest attempt to test the pedagogical and analytic function of drama in relation to a group of Hong Kong students in an IES classroom. In the sections below, I will discuss the methodological considerations that underlie the action research work and the purpose of the work.

The Combined Methods of Action Research and Contextual Analysis

The complex nature of the pedagogical problem of IES has defied the usual kinds of investigations and practices in the fields of education, cultural studies, and drama-in-education. An effective handling of this problem requires an inter-disciplinary approach that would enable researchers (in this case, me) to test proposed solutions, to identify conditions conducive to change, and to institute changes. Acknowledging these three criteria, the present study combines the action-research method and contextual analysis for the proposed investigation.

The action-research method is “interventionist” in nature, and as an action researcher, I could bring new elements in the designated research site and generate data through my research-oriented actions (O’Toole, 2006; McIntosh, 2010). The participant-observer position would offer me “an on-the-ground perspective” regarding students’ and teachers’ needs in the special research context. Such a position and the accompanying perspective would enable me to see where hopeful signs for transformative IES practices may lie. Action research as a method for this study would help me not only to describe and interpret what has been going on at the selected research site but also to research interactions in ways different from those characteristic of positivistic research. Action research acknowledges and takes on the immediate unfolding research context that is always already structured by relations of

force and power (Grossberg, 1997; Britzman, 2003). Drama scholar and researcher Philip Taylor (1996) offers advice to researchers conducting interpretive research: their research design should use the ethnographic principle that realities are “multiple and shifting and that truths evolve and transform over time” (p. 37). Working with this principle, researchers should be better equipped to “permit the focus of the inquiry to transform once the study has been launched” (p. 37) and to remain “open to the multiplicity of happenings and events which can occur in the field site” (p. 36). The present doctoral thesis rests on this principle that there are multiple realities and truths. This thesis also reflects my commitment to embracing the immediate unfolding research context. I, the participant-researcher, must therefore access my intuitive knowledge and allow relevant beliefs to surface and enrich the study from inside the designated setting (in this case, an IES classroom).

Contextual analysis is one commonly used method in cultural studies research. For cultural studies scholars, the notion of “context” refers to sets of relations of power, cultural practices, or conjunctures that are socially and historically specific (Grossberg, 1997). Contextual analysis as a method takes the research context not simply as the site where research activities take place, but also as sets of power relations constituted within specific social and historical moments. To engage in contextual analysis, researchers can, for example, unpack relations of power and reveal specific social and historical conditions that structure or constitute those relations. In the case of IES, the action research I would conduct would add an additional *contextual layer* to the existing IES classroom context, which already has its own set of power relations. My presence as an action researcher in an IES classroom would possibly affect its contextual relations. Contextual analysis would enable me to investigate these layers of contextual relations and to reveal points of interventions for a transformed social-inquiry practice in Hong Kong senior secondary schools.

The present action research represents my experimentation with a method of doing cultural studies in connection with education in Hong Kong. I have aimed to transform the current pedagogical practices that have given rise to a specific pedagogical IES problem. Inspired by Freire and Grossberg, I take education simultaneously as a form of action capable of engendering freedom and as an act of knowing rather than of memorization (Freire, 1975, 1985, 2000). Moreover, I treat schools and their pedagogic functions as part of the machinery that produces sets of beliefs, including discourses of identity (Grossberg, 1996). The current doctoral study is geared toward “a transformative practice” of cultural studies as put forth by Grossberg (1996), which explicitly calls for cultural studies to transform its own practices in the following ways:

Cultural studies needs to move towards a model of articulation as “transformative practice,” as a singular becoming of a community. *Both models of oppression [the “colonial model” of the oppressor and the oppressed and the “transgression model” of oppression and resistance] are not only inappropriate to contemporary relations of power, they are also incapable of creating alliances; they cannot tell us how to interpellate various fractions of the population in different relations to power into the struggle for change.* (emphasis added, p. 88)

In addition, Grossberg presents a theory of “otherness,” wherein “the other exists, in its own place, as what it is, independently of any *specific* relations” (emphasis original, p. 94). Grossberg’s proposed theory of otherness conceptualizes the other as an existant in its own right, to be respected rather than to be denied. Hence, he calls for a “model of articulation” that would help “interpellate” various segments of a given population so that they experience different relations to power (p. 88). In the case of IES, to treat the politics of pedagogy and curriculum as transformative practice would imply that IES students treat self-other relations in ways different from existing IES practices.

Research Design and Set-up

At the school level, the aim of the present action research has been to experiment with drama as an analytical tool for social-inquiry learning and teaching. I have relied heavily on the literature and other intellectual resources in the fields of drama-in-education, cultural studies, and critical pedagogy for insights into devising a concrete plan of action for the research site in my study. Action research using drama in the designated site would serve (1) to enable the student participants to see and hear “the other,” who had rendered invisible and inaudible to the students by curricular discourses, and (2) to integrate into the students’ social-inquiry learning their past and present experiences that have often been dismissed in their learning processes in general.

To conduct the action-research plan, I established a partnership with a local secondary school for a 20-month period, from April 2010 to December 2011. Data came from my participant-observation of students’ participation in the drama processes, my interviews with students and teachers, my analysis of students’ written work and teachers’ pedagogic materials, my self-reflective notes, and my analysis of the class teacher’s observations of the drama processes. I recorded and transcribed for analysis the research interviews, focus groups, and other interactions between the workshop participants and the facilitator.

Prior to the commencement of my action research at the selected school, I conducted a preliminary study of IES learning and teaching in two other schools: one was my case school for my MPhil study, and the other was a network school where I had previously worked as part of a university-school collaboration project. The two schools had started their IES processes in advance of the official schedules. Between April and June 2010, I talked to the students and the teachers while

observing the IES classes (chapter 2 discusses these students' IES-based learning in detail). My collected data revealed the actual implementation of IES and helped me identify the problematics and the conceptual and analytical tools associated with the concrete research action that followed.

Summary and Subsequent Events

In this chapter, I have discussed the use of drama and the performative lens as conceptual frameworks for approaching the pedagogical problem of IES. The lens of the performative shows that education can comprise performative practices geared toward either “make-belief” or “make-believe.” As social inquirers, the interviewed students saw the data they collected in one way but took actions to present, interpret, and represent them in another way. The students embraced this difference so as to match the findings with curricular discourses. The students performed their IES tasks to convince their teacher-assessor that they could satisfactorily manage the related tasks. By taking part in performative belief-building acts, students who once had observed a social world as represented by curricular materials were now performers, using the conventions of IES to create a believable reality, regardless of whether or not the students themselves identified with the performances and the make belief. With the above analysis, the current study has combined context analysis and action research, and has adopted the conceptual lens of drama—of the performative—to pursue and identify a transformed pedagogy for Hong Kong's existing IES practices.

In the next two chapters, I will analyze the action research I undertook in the designated site. Chapter 4 discusses my pedagogical experiment with drama, examining the ways in which IES may benefit from the use of drama at the action-research site. Chapter 5 offers a critical analysis of the research context, in

light of the performative lens, to examine (1) how and what students have learned in the constructivist mode of IES learning and (2) the potential points of intervention stemming from pedagogical dramatic make-believe.

Chapter 4: “Drama as Method” in the Action-research Classroom

The action research that I undertook in the designated site rests on the following research question: *Can social inquiry in the LS subject in Hong Kong secondary schools benefit from the use of drama, and if so, then under what conditions and in what ways?* It proceeds from the analysis that social-inquiry learning in the form of IES is a make-belief process, and that student inquirers perform acts of selecting, (dis-)analyzing, and representing data to ensure that the IES work would have positive effects on teachers and fellow students as the potential audience.

The present study conceives of drama as an art form useful for framing a pedagogical action plan for IES instruction and as a lens useful for ideological and cultural critique of the existing IES practices (see chapter 1 for the full discussion). As such, the present action-research design comprises both a pedagogical plan that experiments with the use of drama in social-inquiry learning and a contextual analysis of IES practices through the performative lens. The action-research method has offered me the vantage point of participant-observation in the research site, though participation is temporary within the research timeframe. As the researcher-facilitator, I could engage in and respond to the needs and relations of power that would emerge in the action-research classroom. The action research undertaken created an additional *contextual layer* in parallel to the classroom and the school contexts within which the participating students and their subject teachers were living their social realities. My participant-researcher position offered me the advantage of stepping outside of the classroom’s context to analyze its connection to the wider social and educational contexts of Hong Kong.

Two specific research questions evolved while the research progressed:

- Can the use of drama facilitate complex understandings of an inquiry topic?
- Can drama be a useful data-collection and data-analysis method for an inquiry project?

These two specific questions have grown out of the contextual analysis in the designated action-research site, a local secondary school IES classroom. In the action-research plan, drama is first and foremost understood and used as an art form, aiming to engage the student-participants in experiencing and thinking self-other relations differently than would be the case in ordinary classroom settings across the dramatic contexts. The second specific question in particular experimented with the potentiality of drama as a research tool for data-collection and data-analysis for social inquiry. The conceptualization of drama as a data collection method, a research tool, is predicated on the understanding of data “as any material that is collected during and as a part of the project” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 34), and data analysis as “the process of examining all the materials that have been collected, to make sense of them, and help to address the Research Question” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 35). The action research dissertation, as a whole, also aimed to reveal to us—concerned scholars and educators—how drama may function as a lens, a conceptual tool to get through to some of the fundamental conventions that organize students and their learning experiences in the schooling context, in ways that Williams (1983b) has inspired me with his analysis of the relations between drama and society.

In this chapter and the next, I will discuss findings from the research. I will draw especially on the data that I collected from this pedagogical experiment with drama in this chapter. Using these data, I will examine the ways in which the use of drama could benefit IES learning in the action-research classroom.

The Action-research Set-up

I conducted this action research at a local secondary school, and the subject teacher, Mr. Daniel, was a friend of mine from a previous church congregation. I invited his school to join the research because their IES schedule of work matched the research timeframe. When I first contacted Mr. Daniel about the research collaboration in February 2010, neither his colleagues nor he had yet introduced IES to their students.

Fieldwork began in April 2010 with school visits and classroom observations, enabling me to assess the context and to identify the specific needs of the research site. The pedagogic action research took place in September 2010. It was intended to last till July 2011, encompassing a run of three research cycles that would enable me to reference the three officially scheduled assessment phases for the IES tasks: project proposal, data collection and data analysis, and report writing. Contextual factors intervened and the pedagogic experiments ended in late May 2011 after two cycles of research work. The fieldwork ended in December 2011 with two student focus-group meetings and a teacher meeting.

The research involved nine female students who were between the ages of 16 and 17 and were in their S5 and S6 years (from September 2010 to December 2011). They participated in the research during their free periods at school, when I was also off from classes at the university. As Research Cycle 1 proceeded, I felt the need to meet students from another class because Mr. Daniel often mentioned that students from that other class were more active and more academically driven and that they would have offered my project a momentum quite different from the one associated with the current group of students. Later, upon Mr. Daniel's recommendation, four students—two boys and two girls of the same ages—joined the research project by participating in focus-group discussions. I observed from the interviews that the newly joined students were more verbal and somehow more relaxed and intellectual.

They were more academically oriented toward schoolwork and higher education than were most of the nine female students, except for two of the three repeaters. The nine girls who participated in the action research differed from one another regarding their academic achievements, but none of the girls had prior drama experiences. In other words, for all the girls, this project constituted their first experience with learning through drama and bodily representations.

Mr. Daniel took part in the research mainly by observing the progress of the class and by offering me his related thoughts before and after the sessions. I identified and assessed the needs of the student-participants through my participant-observations and through my analyses of students' assignments, together with the teacher's feedback. Apart from the post-session meetings with the teacher, I kept reflective notes on events after each session.

The Specificity of the Action-research Context

Like many LS classrooms in other schools, classroom teaching with the main LS syllabus was supported by commercially published materials. Those textbook materials were for classroom use and for students' self-study, and they were also life-savers for both teachers and students in face of the sheer amount of issues to cover within the limited time devoted to curriculum, according to Mr. Daniel (see Excerpt 7.1, Appendix 7 for excerpt of the interview transcript^{xiii}).

During the two lessons that I observed in May 2010, students were mainly attentive in class. In one lesson, Mr. Daniel worked around textbook materials about the negative effects of smoking, and had students both discuss government "plans of action" for dealing with law-breaking smokers and consider the subsequent problems these measures might give rise to. Students brought up the "plans of action" in terms of pros and cons: Would increases in cigarette taxes strengthen black markets or

reduce smoking levels? Would the establishment of mobile smoking-cessation clinics be successful or be a waste of precious resources spent on smokers who lack the necessary initiative to participate in the clinics? Would the designation of no-smoking zones trigger a significant rise in the number of “law-breakers,” requiring a further devotion of resources to enforcement of the no-smoking zones? Would anti-tobacco campaigns that warn of the hazards of smoking reduce smoking levels or somehow backfire? To think in terms of pros and cons is to consider multiple perspectives: an approach highly lauded by many Hong Kong LS teachers (Law, 2006; Chan, Hui, Choi, et al., 2009; Chan & Law, 2012a). With the received understanding that smoking and smokers are a “problem,” students managed to make one sweeping conclusion from the decontextualized class discussion above: Government could remedy the “smoking” social problem through education because society has exhibited general ignorance about the significance of the problem. Nevertheless, during and after the above class discussion, these students had not yet clearly identified either the factors promoting tobacco use or the effectiveness of previous anti-tobacco education campaigns. This form of talking about social issues and of “managing the problem” is common curricular discourse in handling issues about teenager drug use, Internet use, and bullying, but seldom applies to topics about economic growth and technological advancement (Law, 2006; Chan, Hui, Choi, et al., 2009). Curricular discourse as such, in fact, serves to mask reality in the way the “banking approach” to education does, leaving the students a partial view of reality (Freire, 2000).

Regarding IES supervision, Mr. Daniel told me that teachers like him expected students to follow the steps laid out by the teachers for completion of IES tasks (Excerpt 7.2.1, Appendix 7). The school adopted Hou’s (2004) textbook, which covers areas including research-topic design, research-method choice, sampling

methods, questionnaire design, data presentation, and report writing. As reviewed in Chapter 2, Hou is highly critical of copy-and-paste types of project work (2004), which happen to constitute one dimension of the performative make-belief activities in the IES project. From past experiences, Mr. Daniel had concluded that, for students, the value of IES work was that it helped them accomplish major tasks (Excerpt 7.2.2, Appendix 7). Regarding the IES topics, some students in Mr. Daniel's class were interested in topics covering popular current events, as was the case with many students in other local secondary schools (Excerpt 7.2.3, Appendix 7). The objective of IES projects for Mr. Daniel was to develop students' generic learning skills including problem-solving, critical-thinking, and communication skills necessary for the presentation of the finished projects—a view endorsed by the official project learning objectives (CDC, 2001, p.87). However, this approach to IES learning has not necessarily been shared by other subject teachers, at least not by Ms. Ivy, the subject-panel chairperson in the school where I conducted my action research. Ms. Ivy expected students to conclude from the IES experience that the handling of issue-based learning in LS requires inquiry work of some depth (Excerpt 7.3, Appendix 7).

The nine girls and the other four students who participated in my research were not as expectant and energetic about IES as students whom I had met at two other Hong Kong schools one year earlier (see chapters 2 and 3). In my interviews with these students in the action-research site, we talked about what they considered to be a good IES project. Their ideas varied: an IES project whose analysis can inspire readers to care about the issue at the heart of the particular IES project (Maggie); an IES project whose inquiry yields substantive answers to the research question (Kim); an IES project that clearly states the stance of the inquirer (Pearl); an IES project that clearly focuses on a particular issue (Emily); an IES project whose schedule is more

reflective of the individual inquirer's desire to learn than of a pre-established deadline (Liam); an IES project that would allow the inquirer to acquire new knowledge (Yam) (Excerpts 7.4.1, 7.4.2, Appendix 7). When I asked all of the participating students whether there were differences between a good IES project and an IES project that scored well, these students began to talk about the difference between teachers as readers and teachers as assessors. The difference could concern the students' need to follow the procedures laid out by teachers (Kim, Wincey) or students' need to prove their grasp of the answers of the issue under scrutiny (Pearl). Another suggestion was that whether or not an IES scores well can depend on the assessors' subjective views (Maggie). For some of these participating students, it would be good if they could conduct an IES that both possesses rigor and scores well. Other students simply stated that they aimed only for a good subject grade, which took precedence over creating a project that would make sense to target readers. In this regard, the process of IES is basically a make-belief process where these students perform to have particular effects chiefly on the teacher-assessors than on the potential or intended audience. All the students who participated in this particular study were much more articulate about their practical study-related concerns than were the students' counterparts at other local secondary schools I visited.

Points of Intervention through Drama

When I met the nine participating girls in mid-September 2010, they had already written their research topics. Their IES topics were mainly current, covering such issues as cyber-bullying, the new secondary curriculum reform, *otaku* (a Japanese term, meaning "hidden youth"), teenage online shopping, teenagers' use of the Internet, and the post-80s youth activists in Hong Kong (see Appendix 5 for the IES topics both in their original written Chinese and in English translation). About 40%

of the IES topics were set to look into cause-effect relations, a percentage lower than the corresponding total of each of the other two sites I visited (90% in School A, 50% in School B) (see Appendixes 3 & 5). Most IES topics contained ambiguous and culturally contested terms. Take for instance Liam's topic of online shopping, in which the term 'consumption culture' could cover a range of meanings, extending from consumption habits and lifestyles to socio-cultural phenomena. In addition, the ideas underlying the topics of post-80s youth activists and otaku in Pearl's and Cindy's respective IES projects have been culturally constructed and contested in meaning. When using these contested terms, these students could run the risks of obscuring their IES projects' focus and of trivializing their IES projects' issues. The problem with using loaded words to frame the IES topics became clear during later IES phases, especially during the report-writing phase. I will return to this topic in the next chapter.

Students participating in this study submitted a reading assignment to Mr. Daniel for the purpose of enriching their understanding of the selected IES topics. Half of the materials that these students chose were news articles from printed or electronic forms of newspapers published within the current year (2009-2010). Most of the students took the textual information at face value. Other students who happened to have chosen texts that contained diverse viewpoints were confused by those points of view. As a result, these students resorted either to considering all the points or to opting for the mainstream discourses without engaging in any further questioning. In effect, the reading assignment failed to inform these students' IES inquiries. Regarding topics like cyber-bullying, otaku, teenage online shopping, and the post-80s youth activists in Hong Kong, students picked up images of dangerous, aimless, or restless youth that had prevailed in mainstream and curricular discourses (discussed at the beginning of this chapter). Therefore, my aim in the first action-research cycle was

to help students identify and examine the discourses embedded in the students' IES topics, particularly those related to the discourses of youth.

Pedagogical Research Activities at the Action-research School

My watch showed 2:20 p.m., and the school bell went off. Students in the classroom said goodbye to their teacher and shuffled outside into the corridor with their stationery and books. I flipped through my organizer and the school timetable to check whether I was in the right place at the right time. Which direction would the girls come from? The whole corridor was swarming with buzzing students who had just exited their classrooms on either side of the corridor, and were heading toward the staircases for the next block of classes. They and their teachers looked at me with curiosity. It was 2:30 p.m. Mr. Daniel arrived, holding the key to the classroom door. He needed it in case the previous teacher who had occupied the room had locked it. Now, it was 2:40 p.m., 20 minutes after the school bell had rung, and the traffic along the corridor had died down. Oh there they were! The girls appeared at the floor landing. They had had hall assembly the previous hour, and it often ends late, forcing the girls to move hastily from classroom to classroom, Mr. Daniel explained to me in this first action-research session.

(Extracted and revised from my reflective journal, September 21, 2010)

After I had completed the series of preliminary research activities and pre-planning, the first action-research session began (in late September 2010). The eighty-minute session turned out to be a sixty-minute session, twenty minutes short because of the hustle and bustle of moving between classrooms, and the scene described above from my journal wound up being a recurring scene in the remaining nine sessions, except that Mr. Daniel did not explain the girls' late arrival thereafter. The pace of the school was a relaxed one. During the fifteen or so minutes I would wait outside the designated classroom, few teachers would yell at students to discipline them or to smooth out the traffic along the corridor. Teachers around the corridor were mostly gentle in manner, but tired in appearance. Students' relations with teachers at this school seemed to be more causal than were relations between students and their teachers at many other Hong Kong schools. Rather than follow the usual pattern of

addressing teachers as ‘Mr. X’ and ‘Ms. Y’, students greeted all teachers by their nicknames or first names.

In the first action-research session, we warmed up by introducing one another in pairs with reference to a shape and a sound, a warm-up that enabled everybody to think metaphorically and bodily. Students were very quick to appreciate dramatic conventions like Still-Image (or Tableaux) and Thought-Tracking (O’Neill, 1995; Neelands & Goode, 2000). In this session, students used their own bodies to devise images of themselves, of people around them, and of the potential target informants of their IES projects. Presenting still-images of themselves and of the others as such crystallized students’ perception of those people and enabled the students to further interpret and discuss their representation of themselves and others in relation to IES (Neelands & Goode, 2000; Boal, 1995). We had fun and laughed at ourselves and at the images we displayed while learning through a language of observation and representation tailored to the LS students.

Research Cycle 1

Research cycle 1 occupied four one-hour class sessions and three 45-minute group supervisions during lunch. The purpose of Research Cycle 1 was to enable students to harness their imaginations, perceptions, and representations of themselves and of the others. In this way, students could dialogue with their peers in the IES classrooms and with the images they drew from perspectives differing from those of the curricular and the mainstream discourses. The research question for this cycle was *Can the use of drama facilitate complex understandings of an inquiry topic?* The question grew out of my analyses of students’ assignments, together with the subject teacher’s and students’ own comments on the needs of the students.

Edmiston (1998a) argues that complex understandings are better than simplistic ones, as the former “depend on more knowledge, as well as on finer distinctions” and embrace a sense of the “unknown” that enables people to “become receptive to dialogue with other views and interpretations” (pp. 90, 91). As such, complex understandings are more generative, more open-ended. The use of drama has the potential to facilitate such complex understandings through dialogue in the dramatic “as-if” space. Edmiston (2008) has also theorized pedagogic drama’s as-if space as dialogic space “when a person imaginatively enters into another consciousness, takes up a different perspective, and uses it to change their understanding” (p. 9). Hence, by entering the liminal dramatic space, participants in dramatic acts can acquire new perspective, new knowledge and new understandings of the self and of others through their interactions with one another.

For this action-research cycle, I used dramatic conventions like Still-Image, Thought-Tracking, and Space Between (Neelands & Goode, 2000) and aspects of Boal’s (1995) Image Theatre techniques to help students draw on their own experiences and impressions regarding how teenagers live their lives in contemporary Hong Kong society. Boal’s (2005) understanding of the relations between image and society is particularly useful for IES. For Boal, images in general and stereotypical images in particular carry ideas, values, and beliefs of dominant ideological forces. The purpose of his Image Theatre is to capture and scrutinize images people receive from various sources—from the media to the workplace to religious institutions—and to unveil the reality, be it masked or hidden by ideological forces, for his audience so that they might re-create their own reality through theater work. Boal’s conception of images in society informed this action-research cycle. The drama work in this cycle invited students to freeze their received images of themselves and of their target

IES informants so that they could closely examine these images for the purpose of the IES projects at hand.

Figure 1: Pictures from Research Cycle 1

- Crystallizing images of others and of the IES target informants & asking questions through the images
- Contextualizing & contrasting images
- Identifying & positioning significant voices related to the students' own inquiry topics & questions
- Imagining the readers: book-cover design for the completed IES work in view
- Trouble-shooting students' IES processes in small-group supervision

Table 1: Major activities in Research Cycle 1

In addition to Image Theatre techniques and drama conventions, I manipulated the dramatic element of time to facilitate students' inquiry process. For instance, in the lesson concerning book-cover designs, I first invited the students to imaginatively travel forward in time to a period by which they had already written up their IES reports (i.e., to travel forward about one year); the students would then take on the

task of designing a book cover for the finalized IES report. After completing this task, the students would once again harness their imagination, this time traveling backward in time to the present, where they would devise an action plan for IES activities that could bring about the anticipated end product. The purpose of this session was to have the students deal with IES materials from an “end-in-view” perspective (Dewey, 1938, p. 167) so that they might devise an action plan for bringing about this particular “end” while locating usable resources and identifying limitations that might pop up along the way. In so doing, students would also have to bring their imagined readers into mind for effective communications of the project endeavors when designing their book cover.

Research Cycle 2

The second cycle occupied six one-hour class sessions with a combination of drama work and individual supervision: my main task was to trouble-shoot while helping students with their inquiry topics and research designs. While the first action-research cycle focused on deepening individual students’ understanding of their inquiry topics, of the inquiry questions, and of the relationships between the two, the second action-research cycle focused on the following question: *Can drama be a useful data-collection and analysis method for an inquiry project?*

In general, a research method should be well-related to the nature of the project. To conceive of drama as a data collection method, a research tool, is to understand ‘data’ “as any material that is collected during and as a part of the [research] project” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 34), and ‘data analysis’ as “the process of examining all the materials that have been collected, to make sense of them, and help to address the Research Question” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 35). Drama, when conceived of as a research tool, works well with phenomenological and ethnographical projects that concern lived experiences (Edmiston, 1998b). Hence, I selected five of the nine

students participating in this study to participate specifically in the second cycle. I made the selections because these five students were involved in projects for which the students had to try to understand their informants' behaviors and lived experiences.

The aim of the second action-research cycle was for me to explore whether or not—and if so, how—the dramatic “as-if” space could generate data and facilitate data-collection. In this cycle, I used the dramatic element of role for the purpose of facilitating IES learning from within the dramatic “as-if” space. The specific dramatic strategies I used included functional role-playing and the Teacher-in-Role convention (in my case, it should also be referred to as “Facilitator-in-Role”). Students took on the roles of (1) interviewees meeting the facilitator-in-role, (2) their present IES-student selves considering their peers' ideas for questionnaire-item formulation, (3) their near-future IES-student selves interviewing their informants, and (4) focus-group members participating in a questionnaire survey. Neelands and Goode (2000) state that by adopting suitable roles within the dramatic context, both teacher- and student-participants in the dramatic events could “lay aside their actual roles and take on role relationships which have a variety of status and power variables” (p. 40). In the case of this action research, IES students played roles in order to negotiate their learning experience and to analyze role relationships—two strategies central to the students' inquiry endeavors. Also, by assuming various roles in the “dramatic elsewhere”, the participating students would benefit from the various role perspectives they assumed.

• Meeting the facilitator-in-role: gaining the experience of an interviewee• Meeting the researcher-facilitator: clarifying the inquiry proposal & trouble-shooting• Meeting the imagined focus group: collecting ideas for and revising

questionnaire items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the target interviewee: practicing the act of interviewing in paired role play • Reflecting on their own role-play experiences & planning and revising for interview research

Table 2: Major activities in Research Cycle 2

Both the research concern and the choice of pedagogic materials in Research Cycle 2 grew contextually in response to three factors: the IES work that this particular school had scheduled, the progress and the problems identified in the previous action-research cycle, and the problems emerging from the inquiry proposals that students had submitted during the holiday break (right after the conclusion of the first research cycle).

One change that Research Cycle 2 underwent in response to students' needs was the change characterizing my supervisory approach to individual students. As the action research progressed, I observed that about half of the students would merely rewrite the same ideas from task to task, rarely drawing on either the action-research lessons or my written feedback. My immediate perception was that my efforts to prompt these students to clarify and to rearticulate a given disarticulated inquiry topic were helping very little. I was, in truth, working on the margins of the student-project processes, keeping a substantial distance between myself and the students' decision-making processes. To better understand this distance, I considered how a devising-theater facilitator works to involve all her members in generating and developing performance-related ideas (Oddey, 1994). The self-reflection led me to change my supervisory approach to the students; henceforth, I placed myself in an *insider* position so that I might think *with* the students. These students would likely benefit from a supervisor who took a more proactive position within—rather than outside—their inquiry processes, offering comparatively concrete suggestions along

the way. Oddey (1994) states that in devising-theater, “no formula or prescribed methodology can be applied that guarantees a particular product [a devised performance piece] every time” (p. 149). It is probably true in my case that there was no prescriptive way of facilitating student participation in the action-research site, and that I had to interact spontaneously with students and had to operate spontaneously within students’ IES processes. In this regard, the devising-theater mode of working became a pedagogy for me; that is, I had learned to negotiate my role as an IES supervisor in the way deviser-facilitators would negotiate their own roles vis-à-vis every new group of devisers. Later, I realized that these students’ desire for precise instructions regarding both what to do and how to do it was a product of the specific socio-historical school context in which they had been situated for many years. I shall further discuss this matter of context in the subsequent section.

Another decision that I made in response to the research site’s demands was to involve myself in devising assessment rubrics for use in this action-research classroom. One prominent problem among the students’ various IES proposals was the disarticulation between the research topics and the research goals. Oftentimes, this disarticulation would lead students to select an irrelevant or ineffective research method. The IES exemplars issued by HKEAA in 2010 had not been of particular use for school teachers, whether in terms of grading or facilitating students’ inquiry learning. Teachers and scholars alike criticized the grading demonstrated in these exemplars for being inconsistent, and they also criticized the corresponding rubrics for being summative rather than formative and for being rather useless in improving students’ IES learning. Much as I took on the role of researcher-facilitator in devising the current study’s pedagogic materials, I took initiatives to revise the

assessment rubrics and devised a progress checklist to give the participating students feedback on their inquiry proposal.

The pedagogical experiment ended in Research Cycle 2, though the original plan was to include a third cycle that would explore the use of drama in data analysis and interpretation. In the section below, I will discuss the present study's findings in the light of the double function of drama as an art form that facilitates inquiry learning through dramatic make-believe, and as a lens that reveals IES processes and practices at the specific action-research site.

Research Findings and Analysis

The “Dependent” Learner in IES and Everyday School Performance

In the initial meeting and the subsequent interviews that I held with Mr. Daniel (i.e., the subject teacher) between April and June 2010, he expressed concerns over the teaching and learning of LS and IES in the Hong Kong educational system. Since the inception of LS as a new core subject here in September 2009, Mr. Daniel and his colleagues had observed that the learning process was chiefly teacher-led rather than student-centered. Students were having problems locating the appropriate reading materials, not to mention understanding and interpreting the located materials. In the face of this dilemma, Mr. Daniel and his colleague shouldered the responsibility of choosing materials and tailoring them—in the form of templates—to students, and had students follow procedures rigidly in assignments (Excerpts 7.2.1; 7.5, Appendix 7). Yet Mr. Daniel stated to me that teachers had been struggling with the question of how much input a teacher should give students before they fully take up the inquiry themselves (Excerpt 7.5, Appendix 7). I noted that Mr. Daniel and his colleagues believed that their recourse to directing the learning process and to giving students procedural knowledge had been ineffective—a way of side-stepping the complexity of

LS- and IES-related supervision. In general, the ultimate question regarding IES teaching and learning seems to center on identifying the precise time at which students should become independent inquirers, in line with official IES goals.

As my action research for the present study progressed, I came to understand what these student-participants were grappling with as dependent learners in the process of IES. During my small-group supervision with the students at the end of the first research cycle, I asked all nine participating students about their IES work in general. Most of the students preferred not to think and talk about IES unless the due dates of the assignments were around the corner. Why was that so? Two reasons were repeatedly mentioned: these students lacked interest in the topics chosen and these students received no direct reassurance from the subject teacher of their efforts in handling IES tasks. One student, Emily, said she found the topic uninteresting because it represented the “leftovers” from her group-brainstorming ideas. But why did she not simply choose a topic that interested her? Apparently, the task of identifying a truly interesting topic required far too much work on her part, and she would rather stay with the “leftover” topic. Another student, Maggie, admitted that she had chosen a topic because the web featured projects similar in nature, making it far less difficult for her to search for information pertaining to her school assignments. In a related matter, most of the participating students stated that they could discern whether the teacher approved of their IES work by piecing together the teacher’s various snippets of feedback. Even so, the students would have preferred clear and direct assessments from the subject teacher. Most of the students also noted that they had already dealt with the most difficult IES assignment: the reading assignment for which the students had to locate ideas pertaining to their own inquiry topic. That assignment was particularly difficult for the students because they received no help at all on it; moreover, the subject teacher himself was ambivalent about what to expect

from the students' handling of this IES assignment. The second assignment was the oral presentation, and according to most of the students, it was much easier than the previous assignment largely because the subject teacher accompanied the oral-presentation assignment with highly useful sample PowerPoint slides (taken from the IES exemplars developed by the HKEAA). Regarding the upcoming assignment for which the students had to compile previous small tasks into a comprehensive inquiry proposal, most of the students anticipated that the assignment would not be excessively difficult because the subject teacher had already handed out completed proposals from former senior students as references.

The findings indicate that these student inquirers' IES process was one of dependence. They depended on authority figures—oftentimes the subject teacher—to assess students' progress and to issue clear instructions for the IES work. They also depended on frameworks like presentation templates to guide the practical work of planning and charting the research process. Apart from these sources of help, the students depended on their own collective efforts in locating possible IES topics, as was the case in Emily's project. Another source of help was the presence of bounds, or limits, within which students might devise their projects' inquiry design, Maggie's project being a case in point.

The dependent nature of students' IES processes should neither be subjected to simple criticism, nor be considered simply negative. Glimpses into the student inquirers' nature of dependence should offer insights into the multiple needs of students. A closer examination of these students' learning and work processes reveals that these IES processes are social through and through, even though IES is nominally a self-directed and individual inquiry. On one level, students who are trying to conceive of a project topic consult with their peers to generate ideas. On another

level, students connect to the wider social contexts when browsing through materials taken from the web, media, and other people. Students' desire for some kind of authority figure indicates their desire for reference points by which to measure success. In this light, templates that function as samples for students would not meet their needs because samples disregard many of the social elements at the core of IES inquiries.

Teachers who feed students with procedural forms of knowledge, in fact, shape the students' mode of learning over time. In the small-group discussions, I asked students whether they really wanted to pursue an inquiry about the topic at hand, and all of them offered very similar responses, expressing ideas summed up by the comment "I treat it as an assignment only." The students went further, stating that "When it's submitted, it is submitted." Templates geared toward small tasks organize general school-based learning, including IES projects, into a series of disconnected acts performed in a repetitive way. Completing the learning tasks becomes meaningless labor, especially when experiences from the present work process are neither contiguous nor consistent with past and future work processes. Such a mode of learning arrests rather than contributes to students' independent inquiry. What is more, as technical forms, the aforementioned types of templates encourage students to perceive information in compartmentalized ways. Learning through these technical templates structures students' modes of thinking and working around the needs of the immediate present. Oftentimes, such needs are reduced mainly to the needs of teacher-assessors.

The pedagogic materials and improvisational drama work that I introduced to these participating students added a contextual layer to the existing classroom and its school realities. The research that I have conducted should clarify, through the lens of

drama, how Hong Kong schools organize IES learning and how dramatic art may positively intervene in inquiry learning.

Re-“viewing” Experience through Drama

The constructivist nature of IES learning would require that students acquire a sense of authority throughout the meaning-making and knowledge-construction processes. For an inquirer to be able to go about independent inquiry, the abilities to assess, select, and order relevant responsive activities and make purposeful decisions are crucial. Such abilities rely on the inquirer’s own sense of authority in interpreting actions and their consequences. Findings in the action research classroom have revealed that imagination informed by experience and observation could be a potential source of authority on the basis of which students would juxtapose the information collected and the feedback received. Bonnie’s experiences in a functional role-play exercise would be useful as an illustration of this process.

Bonnie was one of the three participating students (the other two were Yvonne and Hannah) who had taken S5 again in the new academic structure in the action-research school. In fact, the three girls were repeaters at the school. Bonnie had concluded that IES was critically important for the LS-subject grade after having observed seniors studying the old subject in her former school. She had been engaging in action-research sessions very promisingly and had been very articulate in her thoughts about her IES work. In the session where we practiced interviewing techniques in paired role play, Bonnie objected to having a new partner arranged for her on the basis of their seats. She made her request explicitly and clearly to me:

Bonnie: My new partner [Maggie] may not be able to answer my interview questions. I need an S5 repeater as an interviewee. My topic is about the S5 repeater’s ideas on the new secondary school curriculum. [Maggie was not an S5 repeater, and Bonnie was

probably thinking of Hannah for the new round of practice because she had already had Yvonne in the previous round.]

Muriel: Your classmate will help you out in her own way.

Shortly after the interview practice, Bonnie shouted in amazement about Maggie, her new partner:

Bonnie: She [Maggie] is really good. She's not a repeater, but she did so well in the role, it's like she was one. She really looked like she'd taken the old senior secondary school curriculum before.

Muriel: What makes you say that Maggie did well in the role of an S5 repeater?

Bonnie: I'm a repeater myself, so I understand how it feels being like one.

Muriel: (*turning to Maggie*) So how did you manage to play the role of a repeater so well?

Maggie: (*in a matter-of-fact manner*) I've observed them (*pointing to all three of them: Bonnie, Yvonne, and Hannah*) in my everyday life.

[Everyone in the room broke into laughter.]

(Translated from oral Chinese, Session 4, Research Cycle 2)

This small episode indicates on an abstract level the relationships between experience and inquiry. There is no such thing as a neutral inquirer, because inquirers take their experiences around with them while formulating inquiry questions and conducting data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Educators and

teachers should acknowledge both the presence of personal experiences in education and the influence that these experiences can have on educational tasks, and should reflectively and critically examine these influences relative to our understanding and handling of a given inquiry issue.

What is more, Bonnie's two moments suggest the general premise that drama, as an art form, can help participating students access personal experiences to make sense of

experiences. The role-play activity that I conducted in the classroom for this particular study was more than just a pre-interview practice through which Bonnie and Maggie could test their interview questions. Rather, by entering the dramatic “as if” in role, Maggie made audible her everyday observations of her classmates. For Bonnie, her initial moment cited above show that the functional role-play activated her own experiences as an S5 repeater, prompting her to identify which classmates would make satisfactory role-play partners and which would not. Later, by suspending her belief that Maggie was not an S5 repeater, Bonnie stepped into the imagined role-play relations and met Maggie in role as an S5 repeater. Bonnie was amazed at Maggie’s performance while Maggie delighted the whole group with her I’ve-observed-them remark. Their dramatic experiences allow us to see how the dramatic elsewhere can *externalize* personal experiences, observations, and imagination—which were previously available only to the two students and no one else—and make those experiences accessible *as data* to they themselves and the other participating-students in dramatic exercises. When these students took on an imagined role or imagined themselves in the dramatic elsewhere, they began to use drama to create, experience, and interpret an imaginary world in addition to the everyday world of the classroom (Edmiston, 2003). In short, the dramatic “as-if” space becomes a liminal space that students can enter and leave when they want to encounter their experiences anew, something that is crucial for social inquirers at work.

Suspending Typified Roles in the Dramatic Elsewhere

Throughout the action-research process, individual students expressed their wish not to conduct any IES assignments. Emily and Cindy were two such students, and in fact, they quickly grew frustrated with the set of IES tasks, which the girls found to be excessively monolithic and difficult. Devising questionnaire items was a

particularly difficult task. We spent one session refining the questionnaire design using functional role-play. Here are my observations of this session, which I recorded in my reflective journal after the session.

Emily stared straight at the returned assignment: the questionnaire she had designed to collect data from the teenagers regarding how they see their own mental wellbeing. She was delighted with the grade received: "I've never received a passing grade in any other IES assignment before. I got one for this questionnaire design." "You did a good job," I said. Wincey and Yvonne were chitchatting about the grade I gave them. Cindy was slumped in a chair idling the time away, while she and the other girls in the room were supposed to be looking at the comments I had written on their draft questionnaires and getting ready for the Focus Group role play, in the quest for more ideas on how to revise the questionnaire items. That was the major purpose of the lesson.

"Emily, why don't you begin first?" I asked. "Try to treat the classmates as your informants. Introduce your topic and interview them with your questionnaire, for real."

Emily picked a few items and asked the group for their answers. To her amazement, some of the ideas that popped into her head had never before come to mind when devising options for the questionnaire items. Her face glowed, and she was happy with the activities. Cindy was next and was unsure whether the role-play activity would be useful, but she was trying to finish the assigned task. It didn't take long, and she exclaimed, "Oh yes, why didn't I get that point down in my questionnaire?" Afterward, Cindy enthusiastically played the role of informants for the other classmates. Yvonne was very much into the role-play mode and asked her peers to put themselves in her informants' situation: teens who inflict physical harm on themselves.

(Extracted and revised from my reflective journal, March 8, 2011)

Toward the end of the activity, the students began to say that the focus-group activity was useful. Cindy even asked why the activities had not been scheduled for earlier. Obviously, the functional role-play had animated these girls' experiences. The functional role-play mediated the nature of questionnaire design, shifting the task from a solitary form to a group form. The social nature of drama oriented the girls,

as a group, toward direct participation in and ownership of the processes of production.

What is more, role play in the dramatic elsewhere—in liminal space—temporarily suspended classroom realities that had inflexibly placed these students in the role of IES inquirers. In their everyday school performance, these students typified their inquirer roles through repetitive acts, most notably the act of completing templates. While performing these acts, the students were joining in the process of representing and relating themselves to the other in ways predetermined by the templates and the curricular and media discourses. In the liminal space of drama, these students could play diverse roles: individuals who draw on their own experiences to help shape wider understandings of a given issue; individuals who observe their own actions across dramatic acts; and individuals who, as learners, reflect on their experiences and raise questions about their IES inquiry to further the inquiry. By occupying the liminal space of drama, students in general can activate different roles and relate both to themselves and others in ways different from those characteristic of everyday classroom realities.

Re-“imaging” and Repositioning the Self and the Other through Drama

“Does the post-80s include the post-90s?” Pearl asked.

It was the second action-research session in Research Cycle 1 (Sept. 28, 2010), and we were exploring the notions of “teenager” and “the post-80s” when Pearl asked me the question above. Pearl’s question made sense because the term ‘the post-80s’ was coming into vogue in Hong Kong media. Hong Kong media ascribed the term ‘post-80s youth’ to young Hong Kong activists born in the 1980s. The term itself gained widespread media circulation during protests against the Express Rail Link construction in January 2010 in Hong Kong. The phenomenon drew considerable attention and mobilized support among Hong Kong’s young adults and teenage youth,

many of whom visited the affected village as a sign of support or joined in a sit-in protest outside the Legislative Council the nights that council members were debating the funding bill for the Express Rail Link. These protests placed a spotlight on a variety of issues, ranging from local governance and the post-colonial city-land movement in Hong Kong to calls for rethinking economic developmentalism. In the context of the current study's participants, the phenomenon attracted the attention of Pearl and her friend Kim, as it had many other people in Hong Kong, chiefly because of media coverage. The two girls chose to look into the phenomenon's relationship with the local cultural and the local political scene.

Though the post-80s youth-activist phenomenon was emerging as a promising social movement at the end of year 2009, mainstream-media discourses about those post-80s youth have generally been far less diverse and contested than they could have been. As usual, the restless-dangerous-youth discourse gained currency, dominating the media's treatment of related events and themes. To address these events and themes, I devised a session in Research Cycle 1 where the study's nine participating students would explore the notions of "teenager" and "the post-80s" using various dramatic conventions that specifically work with roles and role relationships. Students, in pairs or trios, took on the roles of the post-80s youth, identifying situations where these young people would have been active. Then, in still-images, these students showed what these post-80s were doing and with whom. When it came time to perform, the students presented still-images of youths at a protest site, thrusting their fists up toward the sky, or youths in front of computers, composing protest literature. After the nine students briefly embodied the post-80s youths with those still-images, I made use of the Thought-Tracking convention to help the students tap into the private thoughts of their roles (Neelands & Goode, 2000, p. 91). Through the Thought-Tracking convention, these students-in-role gave a voice to post-80s youths

they embodied with the images. For about ten minutes, the students portrayed youths yelling in protest against Express Rail Link construction, youths planning the dissemination of protest materials, and youths wondering why so many of their peers had taken to the streets. The students then got out of the role of the post-80s youths and reflected upon the whole dramatic in-role experiences in relation to their understanding of the post-80s youth. Some of the students talked about their in-role experiences in class. One of the ideas brought up during these conversations was that these youths were not restless and dangerous but serious about a cause, an understanding differed substantively from reductive mainstream-media representations.

To further make audible and visible the figures of post-80s youth, I used the Space Between convention (Neelands & Goode, 2000, p. 86) to invite these students to position themselves physically in relation to an empty chair that signified the protesting youths whom the students had previously embodied. This time, the students took on a different role, the youth figures' "significant other," as it were. The Space Between convention invited the students-in-role to locate themselves physically in proximity to a protesting youth (i.e., to the empty chair). The physical space between

each individual student (now embodying the significant other) and the empty chair would symbolize how close or distant that particular significant other would be relative to the youth. In identifying both a place where the significant other

would stand and a distance between that significant other and the youth (the empty

chair), the students had to consider which significant other they would try to embody and also had to analyze the relationships between that particular significant other and the youth. Pearl and Kim, who chose the post-80s as their IES topics, situated themselves closest to the chair as they embodied the role of the youth's family members offering him encouraging remarks and unconditional love. Other students who took on the role of family members but positioned themselves a greater distance from the empty chair did so to indicate their disapproval of the youth's social acts.

After the drama activities, I invited the students to return to their own IES topics and consider the materials they had read thus far (at the end of September 2010). In light of the Space Between convention that work on roles and the analysis of role relationships, I asked them to compile two lists: one list showing the views they had collected so far about their IES topics, and another list indicating views they would like to collect to further their IES inquiry. On almost all these students' first lists, *the subject of inquiry* of these students' IES topics were talked about as if they were *the object of inquiry* (see Appendix 6 for the lists that students compiled after the session of drama work, in the original written Chinese). Take for instance, Hannah's topic on how teenagers view love and sexual intercourse, the materials she had collected featured university academics, and media professionals commenting on teenagers' immature attitudes toward love and loving relationships. Take for another instance, Emily who planned to investigate the causes of teenagers' health deteriorations had collected reports from health experts, nutritionist, and medical professional's reports. On their second lists, seven of the nine students stated that they would like to collect their subject's personal views of the matter. Their show of interest in understanding their IES subject is a promising sign that these student inquirers had witnessed—through drama—the importance of understanding *views of their subject of*

inquiry rather than resting with simple univocal representation of their subject of inquiry.

The drama work structured in this aforementioned action-research session works as a *method* for these student participants in two senses. In one sense, drama works as a method of *generating, gathering and analyzing data* for social inquiry. The dramatic exercises invited students to freeze images of the post-80 youths they received from the media for close examination, and to collaboratively inquire into the meanings of these youths' experiences with the social world. In so doing, the drama work assisted students to generate and gather *observational and experiential materials* and analyze those materials with the variety of *perspectives of positions* they took up in the dramatic exploration. In another sense, the dramatic intervention serves as a method for these participating students to *think* their own IES projects at hand. Drama assisted students to see the *need* of identifying points of view other than those circulated in the mainstream media, and points of view unheard, particularly that of their IES inquiry subject. Dramatic exploration through dramatic role and real-life images *contextualize* the "depersonalizing" media and curricular discussion, bringing students' experiences, feelings and thinking into their social inquiry.

The Failure of IES Conventions

In the above-mentioned session, I used the dramatic elements of role and space to help students understand not simply the phenomenon of post-80s youth but indeed the phenomenon of *discursive representations of post-80s youth* in the Hong Kong scene. After the session, both Pearl and Kim, who had chosen to examine the phenomenon's relationship with local culture and local politics, expressed interest in learning more about how post-80s youths would comment on their own social acts.

However, shortly after the Christmas holiday break (right after the conclusion of the first research cycle in early January 2011), Pearl and Kim told me that they had changed their topics: Pearl's new topic was teenagers' views on and experiences of parenting, and Kim's new topic was teenagers' perceptions of love and marriage. Pearl and Kim had decided to change topics because their LS textbook offered more supporting material for the new topics than for the previous topics. It was clear that Pearl and Kim were grappling with their previous youth-activity topics even though both of the students had already reached the middle stage of writing their respective research proposals. The emerging youth-activist phenomenon presents, as Dewey (1938) might have described it, a kind of "indeterminate situation" that is "full of conflicting tendencies and obscure" (p. 105). The two girls had grown doubtful about their original topics because the situation that the emerging youth-activist phenomenon presented was "inherently doubtful" (p. 106). Such a situation, steeped in indeterminateness, should have presented itself to Pearl and Kim as an opportunity to uncover new knowledge (Dewey, 1966; Courtney, 1997). However, Pearl and Kim homed in on the messiness of indeterminate topics, and opted for two "cleaner" topics.

Pearl's and Kim's cases help elucidate the discussion from chapters 2 and 3 that positivistic, linear, and detached approaches to conducting IES activities fail IES students. The processes of inquiry are "mental" and "temporal" processes where the inquirers "anticipate" the consequences of their inquiry, and then select and order "responsive" activities with reference to the imagined "final" situations (Dewey, 1996, pp. 106, 107). And yet the conventional approach to conducting IES activities fails students by confining their learning to the minute rather than by bringing to bear the end-in-view aspects of such activities. Culturally contested notions like "the post-80s" and "political ecology" made the problem of confined IES learning acute

and prominent.

The decision by Pearl and Kim to drop their original topics on the emerging youth-activist phenomenon also raises the issue of context. The two students experienced tension between taking time to conduct in-depth exploration of their respective projects and treating the projects just as graded assignments with deadlines. Such tension results from a lengthy process of repetitive practices that emphasizes procedural knowing and disconnected learning. The cases of Pearl's and Kim's IES projects suggest for us that academic or dramatic interventions in IES processes are ineffective if the contextual elements of Hong Kong's classroom practices do not undergo a substantive reworking.

Drama as a Method for IES

Role-play and real-world images provided this study's participating students an opportunity to learn in the *dramatic elsewhere* and, in some cases, redirected some of their negative energy from resisting the IES tasks to productive energy in collaborative group learning. The liminal drama space afforded students the opportunity to create, experience, and interpret an imaginary world, promoting social inquiry. The action-research session that explored notions and images of post-80s youth exemplifies how drama works as an IES method. Students crystalized images of post-80s youth using their own bodies to present those still-images as fragments of realities, *contextualizing* the "depersonalizing" media and curricular youth discourses, giving voice to post-80s youth. Drama works as a method in assisting students to see the *need* of identifying points of view particularly that of their IES inquiry subject for the inquiry. In this sense, drama and the structuring of the work could function to serve as a *template* of inquiry for the student-participants.

In the everyday IES classroom, students learn to relate to others through templates of work that stabilize self-other relations in the existing social order. In the action-research classroom, these students experience an alternative mode of relating to the other using drama. In the session that these students practiced paired role-play, for instance, they reflected on the activity in respect to interview practices, evaluated interview questions' relevance to given inquiry topics, and considered the follow-up work that they would have to do in order to improve the interview process (see Appendix 7 for the written reflections in original written Chinese). Regarding how they would prepare for the actual interview process, some students wrote that they would try to anticipate many responses from the interviewees, some students planned to elicit information from the media to stimulate discussion, and one student wrote about the need to consider the interviewees' emotions. These written reflections indicate that role playing functions as a lens through which students can review or modify their interview questions for actual use. In this regard, students explore new relations among themselves, the IES inquirer, and their would-be interviewees by entering the liminal drama space.

IES conventions naturalize the discourse of self-directed learning so that it becomes individualist learning. IES is self-directed work, but it does not have to be a solitary form of inquiry. The action-research findings in this study strongly suggest that students, in general, can benefit from *learning as a group*, because they need "an other" from whom they can acquire novel perspectives. Drama can be a method of work that supports student inquirers socially as a group. Students can go in and out of a role's consciousness, positioning and repositioning themselves for the benefit of acquiring new perspectives and experiences. In this way, student inquirers in my study entered an imagined world where they could explore a web of relations and a community of co-informants. While Mr. Daniel attributed students' undesirable IES

performance to their immaturity and lack of self-initiative, my action-research findings suggest that students' ill-performance was in fact a result of not only the toilsome and repetitive acts of filling out templates but also the failure of IES conventions to support students' inquiry learning. Drama as a role-playing method creates a liminal space in which students can reposition themselves from being make-belief IES performers to being sincere IES inquirers.

Drama as a Research Tool for IES

The second action-research cycle aimed to explore whether or not—and if so, how—the dramatic “as-if” space could generate data and facilitate data-collection. Research findings have indicated that the as-if world of drama taps on the use of imagination and reflection, and offers opportunities for the voice of the researcher self and those of her research subjects to be heard, as such, making it possible for the researchers to negotiate their way through the inquiry processes, framing and reframing the processes. This is evident in the session where students imaged the post-80s youths and explored their relations with these youths through different perspectives of positions in Research Cycle 1. The drama work assisted students to generate and gather their observational and experiential materials and analyze these materials with the variety of perspectives of positions they took up in the dramatic exploration.

Drama has the potential to be used as a research tool. In the dramatic space, data for social inquiry comes in the form of the student-participants' observation and imagination of the lived real world, and their doubts, queries and disbelief of such observations. Drama can assist the student inquirers to generate data by structuring in a variety of *perspectives and positions* for students to identify (with), to make connections, to interpret and reinterpret their previously held viewpoints and positions. The use of functional role play in Research Cycle 2 where we had the two moments of

Bonnie is a case in point. Bonnie and the other participating students generated and gathered data from test-running their IES interview questions in their paired role-play, analyzed those data through reflecting on the role-play experiences, reviewing their inquiry topics and planning to revise their initial interview questions. Such processes of action, reflection, analysis and rethinking new action are enhanced through the shift of positions and perspectives made available in the drama work and its liminal space.

Data collection and analysis through drama comes in a spiral manner. Reflective analysis of the dramatic experiences opens up possibilities for developing the student self as the source of authority in making meaning and making sense of the inquiry experiences. Their reflection on dramatic action put them back into the scenarios of the activities, engage them in research activities to observe and gather data of the activity that took place, and inform and modify their IES plan and planning.

Summary

The action research undertaken in the IES classroom for this study added an additional contextual layer in parallel to the social realities of the classroom and the school where students and teachers were situated. Findings from this drama-oriented pedagogical action research identify where knowledges are situated, what forms of knowledges are valued, and how knowledges are shared. During the action-research sessions in this study, observational data proved valuable and useful for social inquiry. Reflections have their place in social inquiry. What is more, the method of drama works as a lens for critical educators to illuminate the failure of IES conventions both in typifying the participating students' roles as make-belief IES performers and in sustaining these students' dependence on technical templates.

The current study's action research ended in late May 2011, though the original action plan was to conduct a third cycle, which would have explored the participating students' use of drama on the basis of data analysis. The specific questions that I would have asked in the third research cycle would have included the following: How will the student inquirers' emerging sense of an authoritative self in Cycle 2 continue to help the student inquirers further develop novel perspectives of the given project in Cycle 3? After having shared positive dramatic experiences with one another, will these students negotiate with their teacher for a more generous timeline governing their IES project (owing to the tensions of assignment due dates)? I never undertook Cycle 3, however, and my experimental research drew to a close by late May 2011. These questions remain unanswered.

After completing the fieldwork in these two action-research cycles of my study, I was left with the question of whether the positive effects of drama on the student-participants' classroom tasks would remain active after the completion of the action-research intervention. The question invites us to look at the action-research context in connection to both the wider school context in Hong Kong and the wider social contexts. In the next chapter, I will address this question through a critical analysis of the participating students' school context in light of the performative lens. The analysis will concern how and what students have learned in the IES constructivist mode of learning. Drawing on both my final interviews with students and their written IES reports, I will further reveal the tensions and opportunities of my experimental work within the institutional constraints of Hong Kong's educational reforms.

Chapter 5: Drama and Everyday Performances at School

In chapter 4, we have seen how drama and its method have been useful for IES learning within the action-research classroom. The use of images and role-play managed to *redirect* participating students' energy to the project contents, though *briefly* within the research timeframe. The liminal space of drama helped give shape to students' diverse roles including those of IES co-informants, society members, and peer IES learner-assessors. By activating these roles, students *briefly suspended* the self-other relations and the mechanical ways of seeing social realities typified through the conventional method of IES. Did the effects of learning through drama sustain themselves after the action-research intervention ended?

In this chapter, I will address the question through a critical analysis of the classroom context based on the performative lens. The performative lens will illuminate the efforts that students made to ensure that their IES work would have particular effects on others in the classroom (i.e., the teacher and fellow students). By analyzing students' final IES products and the final interviews with the students and their teacher, I will examine what knowledges are constructed, how they are constructed, and how they are legitimated in the school in the IES mode of learning. In the second part of the chapter, I will review potential points of intervention revealed by action research and I will invite academics and educators to help identify the most useful kinds of IES practices in today's Hong Kong school context.

Frustrated IES Performers

Soon after the action-research activities ended in late May 2011, students began their intensive summer training for the March 2012 HKDSE; that is, students went solo with their IES projects during the summer break. School resumed in September

2011. I managed to meet up with the students again in December the same year to collect their feedback on the drama-oriented action research and on their overall IES experience. By the time we met, the students had already submitted their IES reports, which constituted the last item for the school-based assessment (SBA) (see Figure 3, Appendix 2 for the assessment format). During the focus-group interviews, the students commented on the IES process, expressing chiefly frustration and anger. Here is what some of the students said:

Maggie: IES is really troublesome. There's so much to do, and it never ends. It's simply unnecessary. It's a complete waste of time. Why don't they let us spend the time studying [for public exams]?

Yvonne: You've got to do so many [assessment tasks] within so little time.

Sam: There's been so much to do and you've got to do things this way and that way. Yeah, it might be more detailed, but it takes a lot of time. But for the History SBA, you set the topic, read some books, and collect materials and then you can start writing the essay.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec. 9 & 16, 2011)

These students grew frustrated and ill-spirited by the end of the IES work, their emotions contrasting strongly with the emotions they had experienced fifteen months earlier, when we had first met. The performative lens helps reveal what caused the students' frustrations and where the students' IES-directed energy and efforts actually wound up.

It is not hard to see that frustrations and anger swelled up in the students when they grew enlightened to the artificiality of IES and SBA.

Bonnie: At the end of the day, the public-exam results rule.

Muriel: But SBA really counts for a certain percentage, doesn't it?

Cindy: But SBA assessment won't save us.

Maggie: If you fail the public exam, SBA won't help.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec. 9, 2011)

Bonnie was once very sincere about IES and its effects on her overall subject grade. That was what she had learned from seniors who, while attending her former school, had engaged in the old HKALE Liberal Studies as an elective. Now, as an S6 student, Bonnie came to see that the SBA arrangement in the new senior secondary curriculum was a total deception. Under the curriculum reforms, *all* senior secondary subjects carry an SBA component. The purposes of SBA are to “includ[e] the assessment of outcomes that cannot be readily assessed within the context of a one-off public examination ... [and] to motive [sic: motivate] students by engaging them in meaningful activities” (HKEAA, 2010). However, Bonnie’s and her classmates’ experiences were that SBA—whether stemming from IES, English, or Visual Arts—induced repetitive tasks surrounding similar matters only for the sake of assessment. Those SBA tasks were numerous and were to be finished within a limited time; hence, the experiences were pressurizing. To make matters worse, SBA-assessment criteria were poorly designed and incomplete (Excerpt 8.6, Appendix 8).

These students ended up refuting the HKEAA’s claim that SBA can “reduce dependence on the result of public examinations ... [and may] provide the most reliable indication of the actual abilities of candidates” (HKEAA, 2010). What is worse is that the students made dismissive remarks regarding their own inquiry work (Excerpt 8.7, Appendix 8). These frustrated students became cynical performers upon perceiving SBA to be a falsehood. Nonetheless, students felt that they had to abide by this falsehood because it had real consequences on their subject grades. In the case of IES SBA, students would indicate their “actual abilities” by inquiring into the social issues at hand while knowing that what counted was their ability to meet the due dates for assignments. The students participating in this study performed as good and diligent students would, and their objective was to strengthen their

teacher-assessor's view of them as apt pupils even though the students themselves had little or no faith in their IES-related activities.

The performative make-belief nature of IES had triggered cynical practices among the young inquirers. In my final interviews with them, Sam, Yam, and Liam talked about ways of “tampering” with data to make the report look “good.” The inquirers would engage in this tampering either to compensate for poor questionnaire-return rates (Sam) or to remedy the problem of having collected irrelevant information (Leo, Liam) (Excerpt 8.8.1, Appendix 8). Data-tampering among students also helped them deal with untidily collected data and unwieldy schedules (Liam, Excerpt 8.8.2, Appendix 8). Participating students confessed to me that they would make up statistical data satisfying questionnaire items. Some of the students had discovered that schoolmates would make up entire data sets without administering any questionnaire survey at all. In general, such tactics are common among students undertaking IES projects (Fung, 2010) and junior-secondary projects (see Chapter 3).

Alongside cynical practices came cynical reasoning. When the participating students tampered with both their data and the corresponding analyses, did the students know which way to go to make the data look good? Sam, for example, said she first anticipated her informants' replies and then checked whether those replies would strengthen her anticipated “findings” and whether HKEAA would accept those findings and its accompanying analysis. So Sam had a priori knowledge of the IES findings (Excerpt 8.8.3, Appendix 8). These students also recalled how they prepared for teacher-student consultations. Yam would prepare a long list of ideas for teachers to comment on. Though she thought her IES inquiry question could probably help her decide which ideas would fit her IES topic, she was unsure whether the teacher would share her views. Leo would present ideas modified from some

reference materials so that the teacher would not recognize such ideas belonged to someone else (Excerpt 8.9, Appendix 8). Obviously, these students were attempting to guess the assessors' or markers' intentions and preferences, which the students would then use as a basis for developing their inquiry work. Ultimately, the students wanted either to impress the teacher-assessor or to avoid negative consequences from SBA assessments. Such cynical reasoning and practices have become ideological forces that structure not only the ways in which students conduct their IES projects but also the ways in which students prepare for the public examinations of the subject LS (Apple Daily, 2010, 02:12).

McCarthy (1996) reminds us that, in contemporary culture, ideology is not false consciousness in the Marxist sense. Informed by Althusser and Foucault, McCarthy contends that ideologies are cultural practices.

[I]deologies provide the most fundamental frameworks through which people interpret, experience, and “live” the conditions available to them. Nor are these frameworks primarily mental, for they exist as *lived practices* of particular groups, classes, communities, and so forth. (emphasis original, p. 42)

In the case of IES, cynical reasoning and practices among these students and some of their peers in Hong Kong schools are framing the way students interpret teacher-learner relations and the way they interpret their IES practices. As a researcher, my next task in this regard would be to identify the forces involved in producing and circulating such ideological practices.

When Make-belief Performance Meets Instrumental Rationality

The participating students' cynical reasoning and cynical practices in IES circulated beyond the classroom and school contexts. I turned to Mr. Daniel to identify possible sources of both his students' frustration and their cynical IES practices. Here are excerpts from our discussion.

Muriel: It seems that what students have found out [in the IES] is something other than what actual society is all about. The thing that worries me is the message that students are learning: that it's ok to be unfaithful to social realities, and that we can go on as we like.

Daniel: It could be so. They [students] might be learning that their studies at school are not relevant to the social world ...

Muriel: On the surface, students seem to be learning about the social world. But in fact, they're not even though they pretend they are.

Daniel: Yes, it's pretend and unrelated to the world. When the learning's done, the learning is done. It's the same for SBA. When it's finished, it is finished. It doesn't matter

Muriel: That worries me a lot.

Daniel: Yes, of course, it's worrisome. But that's the way things are. True, what we really do is to give out grades and there's nothing else we can do.

Muriel: Is there really nothing else to do?

Daniel: It's all about grades and students have to make efforts to complete their tasks.

Muriel: The efforts go down the drain.

Daniel: True, up to this point, most teachers think that IES isn't worth the time.

Muriel: It's just a pity, a waste of effort.

Daniel: Yeah, SBA is a waste of effort.

Muriel: The whole SBA thing is a waste of effort. For one thing, there's no room in the existing curriculum for teachers to recognize students' IES efforts; and for another, IES as an inquiry itself is a pretense. Does that concern you?

Daniel: To be honest, it doesn't concern me. ...

Muriel: What doesn't concern you—students being frustrated by the IES work, or students perceiving SBA as an illusion? ...

Daniel: It doesn't matter. At the secondary school level, they don't really have the time and space to freely inquire. It's not the same for students doing the IB [International Baccalaureate] program, where students can, say, identify a science topic and write a report on that. There is no such freedom for the students here, and the teacher-student ratios can't

be improved. Right now, the LS teaching syllabus is just too packed for students to have extra time to enjoy IES work.

Muriel: You've seen the constraints.

Daniel: Yes, there's an SBA for every subject.

Muriel: I think that it's just pointless.

Daniel: Yes, it is pointless, and tough for the students.

Muriel: What we have just discussed comes up in all these other subjects.

Daniel: Exactly, it's exactly the same, repetition after repetition. Students do the same thing over and over again. How could they have a sense of satisfaction?

(Translated from oral Chinese, Mr. Daniel Interview, Dec. 16, 2011)

Mr. Daniel stated explicitly in this conversation that IES work does not function to help students understand the social world. Students' experience of IES helps them learn how to manage assignment deadlines and to meet assessment needs, according to Mr. Daniel. In other words, effective and meaningful social investigation was not his concern. Rather, he focused on getting the students to pass the IES SBA and the LS subject. In this sense, genuine inquiry learning was out of the question in the Hong Kong educational setting, at least from the perspective of Mr. Daniel. The unintended consequences of nurturing cynical subjects did not bother him at all. He was bothered by the poor design of the HKEAA's SBA assessment criteria, which was late to develop for school use in Hong Kong. Without clear assessment criteria, Mr. Daniel felt that assessing students' IES tasks was like "putting students through hell" and would cause him to fail in his instructional duties.

It is clear that Mr. Daniel was enlightened enough to perceive the falsehoods underlying SBA. He was well aware of the ideological function of make-belief educational practices in general and of IES practices in particular. He also recognized that SBA amounted to just a grade and that IES amounted to just a series of assignments having no relevance to the social world. Nonetheless, he still insisted

that these falsehoods were useful insofar as they helped him motivate students to do their school work. He would be happy to see students strive to get good grades because some students had already given up on their studies and had no motivation to pass their assignments (Excerpt 8.10, Appendix 8). There is no doubt that Mr. Daniel had subscribed to cynicism. Borrowing from Peter Sloterdijk, Žižek (1989) defines cynicism as “enlightened false consciousness” (p. 26), which applies to people who are aware that they are “following an illusion,” but who nevertheless continue to follow it (p. 30). Mr. Daniel knew full well that by following SBA, he was “following an illusion”—and yet he continued to follow SBA. Why? In short, he felt that SBA’s instrumental function was necessary for his classroom instruction.

The make-belief IES performances framed the classroom learning and the reality of school experiences for the students who participated in my study. IES and its SBA as a whole constitute a performance game with pre-determined rules and roles for students and teachers. Under this context, students wanting to play the game well would have to follow the concealed rules and to play the assigned roles. Hence, bashing students for engaging in such academic deception as tampering with or making up data (Fung, 2010) is, in a sense, a way of blaming the victim: to assign such blame is to divert attention from the structural and contextual forces that shape students’ behaviors.

Mr. Daniel and his panel of LS teachers were planning to reduce their time and effort to IES supervision.

Daniel: In principle, we won’t put any extra effort into [supervising and teaching] IES. ... So we’ll keep the workload at a minimum.

Muriel: I guess you and your panel members will shift your efforts toward the LS curriculum ...

Daniel: Of course, we’ll definitely work on teaching. Now that three years [of the senior secondary curriculum] have passed, everyone will be

able to see how students should learn LS. Things will get better year after year, and the quality of teaching will improve, too.

(Translated from oral Chinese, Mr. Daniel Interview, Dec. 16, 2011)

In the preceding excerpt from my interview with Mr. Daniel, Mr. Daniel is making the general argument that Hong Kong's changing academic system has caused a predicament for the first cohort of HKDSE students, and that both teachers and students in Hong Kong would operate more effectively in classrooms if teachers gained more experience with the new subject and with their teaching. Yet my research findings reveal that this perception is not necessarily the case.

The fact that this first cohort of Hong Kong students has functioned as guinea pigs in Hong Kong's new academic structure does not necessarily make them victims. What the research findings show is that these frustrated students learned to be cynical not because of a transitory academic structure but because of an educational practice that has interpellated them into cynical performers in their everyday schooling context. Such educational practice blends make-belief performances with instrumental rationality in name of (the artificiality of) IES and SBA. With such everyday performative schooling practice, students could no longer remain distanced spectators. They now had to take part in the make-belief process and to act and reason in cynical ways. As long as IES practices continue to call for performative make-belief practices, cynicism will recur and circulate among other cohorts of IES students. Moreover, such cynicism does not necessarily guarantee better grades in the upcoming cohorts of students.

Hence, my analysis of the action-research findings has revealed that IES as a constructivist mode of learning is positivistic in nature and that students practice IES in cynical ways. Further analysis reveals that this cynicism is fuelled by instrumental rationality in Hong Kong schooling practices. Students devote

considerable effort and energy to convincing their given teacher-assessor that they are dutiful, rule-abiding learners. Therefore, IES sustains students' dependence on faculty rather than nurture their independence.

Making Meaning in Conventional IES

What exactly have Hong Kong students learned in this make-belief performative process? What meaning have the students made on the basis of their IES experiences? For some students who participated in my study, IES constituted little more than acts of repeating or confirming already-known assertions (Cindy, Yam, & Leo) (Excerpt 8.13, Appendix 8). For other participating students, IES trained them to anticipate the expectations of authority figures (Liam and Sam), to please and satisfy prospective employers in the workplace (Liam), or to acquire skills for the workplace (Sam) (Excerpt 8.13, Appendix 8). In this sense, the function of IES is to fulfill the objectives not of student inquirers but of others.

Reflection is an assessment element in the IES SBA. Students “are expected to demonstrate that they can reflect on and evaluate their learning,” as stipulated in the HKEAA assessment framework (2009, p. 66). In progressive educational programs that are experience based, reflection plays a crucial function in intellectual development. In his book *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938/1997) states that genuine reflection enhances intellectual growth by

some reconstruction, some remaking, of impulses and desires in the form in which they [the impulses and desires] first show themselves. ... For thinking is stoppage of the immediate manifestation of impulse until that impulse has been brought into connection with other possible tendencies to action so that a more comprehensive and coherent plan of activity is formed. ... Thinking is thus a postponement of immediate action. ... What has been said explains the meaning of the well-worn phrase “self-control.” The ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control. (p. 64)

By reflecting on completed activities, learners can stop, think, and make sound judgments regarding subsequent plans of action conducive to future learning.

Dewey's statement "The ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control" (p. 64) is predicated on an experience-based educational program. The learners themselves are the ones who know their impulses and desires the best and would be the best persons to order those impulses and desires by intelligence. Dewey argues that self-initiated control of impulse results in freedom of intelligence, and such freedom develops learners' "power to frame purposes, to judge wisely, to evaluate desires by the consequences which will result from acting upon them; power to select and order means to carry chosen ends into operation" (p. 64). Freedom of intelligence accompanies freedom of observation and of judgment, with which learners identify and judge plans for future action, Dewey says.

Dewey's conception of reflection is significant for this thesis insofar as learner reflection is both a means and an end in the effort to free learners' intelligence. Learners reflect on and evaluate their learning according not to someone else's purposes but to the intrinsic values and purposes of the activities that they previously engaged in. In other words, learners reflect on their learning to enhance their own intelligence, to gain understanding of their own needs, and to free themselves from other people's goals and values.

In light of Dewey's conception of experience, we would do well to analyze the reflections that my study's participating students recorded in their IES reports. Only eight of the thirteen written IES reports contain some form of reflection (see Excerpt 9.1, Appendix 9, for excerpts from these students' written reflections in their original written Chinese). In the students' finalized IES reports, these reflections appeared specifically in either the section entitled "Reflections" or the section entitled "Research Limitations and Evaluation." Bonnie, Hannah, Liam, and Leo presented their reflections in "Reflections" whereas Pearl, Yvonne, Yam, and Sam presented

theirs in “Research Limitations and Evaluation.” Though presented in different sections, these students’ reflections had some common features. On the whole, the reflections constituted the students’ efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the questionnaire distribution and of the data-collection methods. Some of the students recommended to “prospective researchers” the need to prepare well for interviews and to learn good interview techniques (Pearl, Yvonne, & Sam). Hannah mentioned the need to triangulate data from different sources, and Bonnie reflected on the values of peer learning. Liam’s and Leo’s reflections focused on data-analysis and time-management difficulties that would undercut IES projects. The two students commended their own diligence in overcoming those difficulties.

When reading these students’ reflections, we can distinguish distinct speaking voices. The reflections written by Pearl, Yvonne, Yam, and Sam present the voice of inquirers addressing interested “prospective researchers.” These students’ reflections all end formalistically with the statement “I hope that the above evaluation would make useful reference for future researchers” (translated from written Chinese, Excerpts 9.1.1 to 9.1.4). The reflections written by Bonnie, Hannah, Liam, and Leo present a more personal voice but to different audiences. The reflections by Bonnie and Hannah review their inquiry process and their encounters with difficulties or mistakes before summarizing the lessons learned. Bonnie’s and Hannah’s reflections address the importance of avoiding over-reliance on voice-recording machines, of triangulating data from different sources, and of verifying data from the internet. Liam’s and Leo’s reflections clearly speak to a different audience. Their reflections’ voices suggest the presence of “persistent learners,” “novice time managers,” and “dutiful students” striving their best to complete the IES projects. Liam ended his reflection section with the statement, “Now I understand what is meant by the maxim ‘You reap what you sow’, so I expect that I will do better next time” (translated from

written Chinese, Excerpt 9.1.7), and Leo ended his reflection section with the statement, “So the next time I have to undertake inquiry learning, I will manage my time well” (translated from written Chinese, Excerpt 9.1.8). It is reasonable to conclude that Liam’s and Leo’s reflections treat the teacher-assessor as the imagined audience.

The above analysis of these students’ IES-report reflections reveal that most of the students performed reflective acts by playing the “speaking” roles of *persistent learners*, *effective time managers*, and *responsible students* for an imagined audience; that is, for prospective researchers and the teacher-assessor. To write reflections in those prescribed roles, these students were subordinating their own values to the purposes of the imagined others and to the repetitive IES-SBA tasks. The tasks, for instance, might have strengthened some skills available to the students while nevertheless leading them to a place of frustration and cynical reasoning; in effect, such influence would have narrowed the students’ opportunities to accumulate further experience by distorting both the meanings and the purposes of social inquiry in terms of IES. The IES experience passes for a “mis-educative” experience, an experience that has “the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience,” in Dewey’s formulation (1938/ 1997, p. 25). Bonnie and Hannah perhaps seem to have been exceptions to this principle, as the two students were relatively reflective learners capable of reviewing their own learning in a self-oriented way. Yet Bonnie’s and Hannah’s frustrations with SBA (which surfaced in the final focus group discussion) raise doubts about whether the IES reports’ reflections, as composed by this study’s participating students, can lead them toward future fruitful learning experiences.

Hence, in general, the students participating in the action-research site are *pretending* that IES work enables them to construct knowledge about the social world. What is actually happening is that students are participating in reproducing knowledge received a priori. Students strive to prove to their respective teacher-assessor that they understand how to learn through inquiry-based discoveries and reflections. Students struggle to survive the SBA, and so do their teachers. Mr. Daniel and Ms. Ivy, striving to have their students earn good grades, stated that they had no alternative but to follow the falsehoods underlying IES and its SBA. Teachers are, it would appear, subscribing to an ideology of cynicism.

In Search of Hope ...

The above analysis suggests that performative make-belief schooling practices encompass the everyday school life of teachers and students. Such schooling practices subsume and contain the effects of my dramatic interventions *within* the action-research context. Can students and their teachers have alternative approaches to learning and to teaching, respectively, rather than submit to the all-encompassing make-belief schooling practices in Hong Kong? Is there a positive way out of this cynical mode of operating social inquiry?

The performative lens has been powerful in illuminating the cynical ideological forces at work within Hong Kong's IES classrooms, where frustrated IES performers have been nurtured. The lens has highlighted the make-belief nature of schooling practices, which transforms students in the IES classrooms into cynical performers. The lens reveals how positivism and cynicism can frame classroom realities and blur the boundaries between the pretend and the real. The performative lens is equally powerful in revealing that IES classrooms' context is inextricably linked to wider social and educational contexts in Hong Kong. School forms part of the machinery

in the production of power relationships in contemporary Hong Kong: complex sets of power relations in wider contexts infiltrate classrooms and manifest themselves through public examination, assessment requirements, and inquiry work influenced by and oriented toward positivism. Cultural studies, however, sees power as a set of decentered web-like relations. Power circulates through nodal points rather than either flow in a unidirectional way or adhere to a ruler-and-ruled hierarchy. This form of circulation is true in the case of IES and schools in Hong Kong. The needs of IES and LS classrooms have invited interventions from wider contexts, academic interventions being one such intervention. Academics devise IES and LS curriculum materials and provide professional support in LS and project-learning teaching for schools, as discussed in chapter 2. This doctoral thesis is, without question, a pedagogical intervention in IES teaching practices. Analysis of the interplay between the IES context and academic interventions from wider contexts should allow for insights into the potential areas where reframing of realities can take place. In this way, analysis should offer reason for hope in the effort to release Hong Kong education from the currently encompassing and subsuming effects of make-belief schooling.

In the section below, I will examine the IES classroom context where dramatic interventions take place and where students experience the artificiality—indeed, the falsehood—of IES and its SBA in relation to Hong Kong’s wider educational contexts. Drawing on both the IES projects written by this study’s participating students and the statements made by the students during interviews, I will suggest points of future intervention in social-inquiry practices characterizing Hong Kong senior secondary schools.

Reconsidering Academic Interventions

The pressure and burden of the newly reformed senior secondary school curriculum and school structure rested heavily on Ms. Ivy, the LS subject panel chairperson. Beginning in September 2009, she and her colleagues expressed concern about LS and IES assessment issues because the subject was new at the senior secondary level in Hong Kong. Ms. Ivy and her colleagues eagerly awaited HKEAA's release of IES exemplars^{xiii} so that they would meet the needs of SBA. Yet the released HKEAA IES exemplars received only a halfhearted welcome. Ms. Ivy, in her interview with me, commented that the IES exemplars demonstrated inconsistent grading, and she observed that HKEAA seemed to rate the variety of research methods used in the IES projects higher than the substance of inquiry (Excerpt 8.11, Appendix 8). Local cultural studies scholar Po-keung Hui examined the HKEAA IES exemplars in detail in his newspaper series (2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d, 2011e). Hui revealed that the inquiry, the data analysis or the research methods reported in those exemplars were often unrelated to the respective problems that the student inquirers had set out to solve. To make things worse, comments and grading indicated in those exemplars did not intend to indicate problems as such nor did they attempt to rectify such disarticulation, Hui criticized (2011a). Hence, these IES exemplars were not of particular use for school teachers, whether in terms of grading or facilitating students' inquiry learning. Reading the exemplars through, Ms. Ivy soon came to the idea that the more research methods used in an IES, the greater the likelihood that the project would earn high marks. She began to consider the idea that she should allow students to use more research methods (Excerpt 8.11, Appendix 8). Originally, she made questionnaire surveys the only must-use research method for all student IES work. As viewed by Ms. Ivy, not only are questionnaire-design skills highly teachable, but also students' formulation of questionnaires renders the students' efforts

transparent, enabling teachers to assign grades accordingly (Excerpt 8.12, Appendix 8). With the official IES exemplars in view, she had to diversify the research methods students could use. She argued that by developing extra kinds of templates, she would help students discover a greater variety of research methods (e.g., field visits and interviews). In her desire to attain supportive new templates and to merge her students' projects into a commendable IES-project format, Ms. Ivy quickly turned the IES exemplars into PowerPoint templates and oral-presentation outlines on which students could model their own IES projects. Here, instrumental rationality would play a significant role in Ms. Ivy's manipulation of the official exemplars. There should be little doubt as to the sincerity underlying Ms. Ivy's approach to teaching. Yet her anxiety over having to strengthen students' SBA left her uncritical of the problematic correlation between the number of research methods used by students and the quality of their IES projects.

To strengthen students' ways of handling questionnaire surveys, Ms. Ivy drew heavily from Hou's (2004) book *A Complete Manual on Project Learning: Advanced Techniques*. By this means, she sought to create a school-based handbook that, addressing how to formulate questionnaire items, would be tailor-made for all her students and fellow teachers. Questionnaire-design skills are considered teachable and, more importantly, assessable from teachers' points of view rather than from the premises underlying IES projects. Whether questionnaire surveys would benefit students' investigation of a given topic is, from the perspective of the students' project, basically out of the question.

In the students' IES reports I collected from this school, the problem of handling questionnaire surveys reveals itself in a number of ways. In general, students used the questionnaire surveys to collect data about respondents' perceptions of the topic

surveyed, but the data collected were analyzed in causal-relations and were later concluded as such (see Excerpts 9.2.1 to 9.2.6, Appendix 9 for excerpts from the IES reports in their original written Chinese). Liam's handling of his questionnaire exemplifies the problems with data analysis. In Liam's questionnaire, one item featuring an agree-or-disagree format asked the respondents, "Will online shopping increase unnecessary spending?" (Q.6, Excerpt 9.2.1, Appendix 9). Of the respondents, 77% (16% strongly agree + 61% agree) answered in the affirmative. He annotated the collected data in this particular regard to express the idea that the respondents would spend more money when shopping online than when shopping in brick-and-mortar businesses. The annotation immediately led Liam to speculate that electronic transactions may cause spending sprees. Liam's speculation found its way into the conclusion section and was characterized as a specific finding. One could say that, in this case, an opinion poll had become a causality analysis.

Apart from improper data collation and analysis, these students' reports contain problems like conclusions drawn from unsupported claims (Hannah, Kim), uncritical use of and appeals to literature as authoritative sources (Pearl), and the presentation of conclusions largely irrelevant to the survey data (Wincey, Hannah). The problems with data collation, analysis, and unsupported claims appear not only in these students' IES reports but in the HKEAA IES exemplars, as well. Published by the HKEAA, one of the most commendable IES exemplars (investigating teenage suicide in Hong Kong) exhibited all the aforementioned problems (see Excerpt 9.3, Appendix 9 for the finalized IES reports in their original written English). Nonetheless, that particular official IES exemplar was commended by its assessor as "demonstrating multiple perspective [i.e., multiperspectival] thinking and formulating well-supported arguments in the discussion of the findings" (Excerpt 9.3, Appendix 9).

Students' problems in handling their IES data could indicate general insufficient support accompanying students' efforts to understand and to use the questionnaire survey method. The problem as a whole, however, indicates an excessive prioritization of the positivistic research paradigm for IES-related social inquiry. Perhaps most notable in this vein is the Ms. Ivy's home-made manual, which, drawing extensively from Hou's book (2004), would lead students to question and interpret the social issues at hand in a positivistic manner. The positivistic orientation to research fails to support students like Liam and Leo, who were quite serious about their inquiry topics when they found themselves having to handle untidily collected data. I have discussed this problem at length earlier in this chapter and in chapter 4.

In this regard, Liam's and Leo's problem with the questionnaire survey in their IES projects is neither chiefly their own difficulty in satisfactorily mastering the technicality of questionnaire surveys generally, nor chiefly some profound ineffectiveness afflicting Ms. Ivy's design of the material. A significant component of the problem is ineffective academic intervention. Academics like Hou, who intervened with textbook-like materials for classroom use, have overlooked both the nature of IES and its specific Hong Kong secondary-school context. Hence, the problems that the current study's participating students and their teacher encountered in IES learning and teaching raise questions about what kinds of academic interventions could best serve teachers' efforts to facilitate effective IES learning in particular and knowledge construction in general.

Hence, in light of the research findings made thus far in this present doctoral thesis, let us now consider the following crucial questions for academics serious about supporting IES work in local senior secondary schools. Must the current IES approach to social inquiry take the form of academic research? In the face of the

seemingly all-embracing everyday make-belief performances in Hong Kong schools, how would academics who care to intervene into pedagogical issues orient their interventions for a critical course? Should academics equate interventions whose purpose is to improve pedagogical practices with interventions whose purpose is to transform practices? Or should academics make every attempt to discriminate between interventions that are potentially transformative and those that are prone to ideological appropriation? With schooling and educational practices that are geared toward reproducing both predetermined knowledge and preconceived social relations, how would educators and scholars in Hong Kong respond to the rhetoric and the myth of IES as a “self-directed,” “investigative exploration of issues” (CDC, 2007, p. 57) when IES is, in fact, only repetitive acts of knowledge reproduction? To find a way out of the existing positivistic and cynical mode of Hong Kong’s educational practices in general and IES practices in particular, concerned academics here should try to strive to address the above questions.

Let me contribute in a small way to *thinking through* the first question I raised above. Currently in Hong Kong’s education system, the interplay of positivistic and cynical ideological forces that shapes students’ IES practices is decontextualizing the students from their own learning and from the society they live in and investigate. Hence, I propose a plan of *revitalizing the multiple forms of project work* once practiced in the previous Hong Kong school curricula for the purpose of the senior secondary IES. I have already noted, in chapter 2, such forms of curricular project work in the history of Hong Kong school systems. These diverse project forms have ranged from problem-solving craftsmanship and problem-solving design work to experimental laboratory work and direct experiential learning. I would propose that, among these different project forms and practices, Hong Kong educators in the IES field should revive the handiwork mode of project work as it relates to the design-and-technology

syllabi used before 2009 (time before the new senior secondary school curriculum was inception). While the form of the current design-and-technology curriculum privileges mainly computer-aided learning activities, the previous handiwork mode of project work valued learners' sensitivity in solving a given practical problem and required that they actively review the needs of that problem, a topic that I have already discussed in chapter 2.

People who follow the present reformed secondary school curriculum in Hong Kong will note that the current secondary school curriculum has compartmentalized the appearance of all the previous project forms in their relevant KLA subjects under the banner Other Learning Experiences (OLE)^{xiv} and that the orientations of this current curriculum differ only slightly from those of its predecessors. My proposal to multiply and revitalize previous project forms and handiwork-mode project practices should encourage educators and scholars *to rethink and debate the nature and purpose of IES* in Hong Kong's senior secondary school curriculum.

Contextualizing Social Inquiry through Drama

With regard to thinking the question of critical academic intervention into pedagogical issues I raised in the preceding section, I shall propose to concerned critical educators and scholars drama as *a method of contextualization* for the purpose of transforming the ahistorical and positivistic social inquiry teaching and learning practices in Hong Kong secondary schools.

For IES, where social inquiry is done in the form of a research, the nagging questions that face the student inquirers, as those face many professional and academic researchers, include: defining and redefining their inquiry questions, articulating the questions with proper choices of research methods. My findings in the present action research suggests that drama works as a method of generating, gathering and

analyzing data for social inquiry supported by the variety of *perspectives of positions* it could offer for students to take up in the dramatic exploration. Dramatic exploration through dramatic role and real-life images *contextualize* the “depersonalizing” media and curricular discussion, bringing students’ experiences, feelings and thinking into their social inquiry (see chapter 4 for the full discussion).

In this regards, drama as a research tool works well with phenomenological and ethnographical projects that concern lived experiences, in ways similar to what Edmiston (1998b) has observed in his social studies classroom in the US context. To contextualize social inquiry through drama would be to offer opportunities for students to position and reposition themselves to see the social issue at hand from various points of view. The strength of dramatic contextualization lies in assisting students to *embody* their viewpoints and perspectives, and to *situate* them in their inquiry subject’s social context through imagining their subjects’ experiences in that social context.

Such understanding of the strength of dramatic contextualization had guided my supervision with individual students’ IES work in the second cycle of the action research. Most of the IES topics in the action-research site were loaded with ambiguous and culturally contested terms and were too broadly framed to be researchable, Cindy’s and Emily’s IES topics were two such examples (See Appendix 5 for the students’ IES topics). Cindy’s initial topic, for instance, was “To investigate the formation of “otaku” and its relations with teenagers’ style of living” (p. 153, Appendix 5). Framing an IES topic with cultural constructed notion of otaku could run the risks of obscuring their IES projects’ focus and of trivializing their IES projects’ issues. My basic concern in supervising Cindy in Research Cycle 2 was to clarify her topic with her, to extract elements from those abstract concepts and

to reframe the inquiry topic into a workable IES investigation. The focus was to assist Cindy to reformulate a more “personalized” subject of inquiry. In the end, Cindy finalized her IES topic as below:

To investigate secondary students’ habit of using the internet to see their social life and the social impact of the internet (p. 153, Cindy’s Finalized IES Title, Appendix 5).

Drama as a method of contextualization would offer an initial position for Cindy, and other student inquirers alike, to view how their subject of inquiry may live and see his/her social realities. Hence, it has potentials for situating the often ahistoricized and decontextualized understanding of the other in historical specificities.

Rethinking Experience and History from an Insider’s Perspective

The make-belief schooling process reflected in the IES classroom may seem powerful and be capable of subsuming alternative pedagogical practices under instrumental rationality and cynicism. Yet my research findings from the current study’s action-research classroom show that not all of the students taking part in the research were equally susceptible to becoming cynical subjects. Students including Emily and Cindy who had become paralyzed by fear of failure resorted to evading their everyday schooling tasks. Dutiful and diligent students like Liam and Yam were as frustrated as their peers in the face of the falsity underlying IES and its SBA when they found themselves interpellated into the position of cynical IES performers.

Yet, Liam’s and Yam’s genuine interest in their selected IES topics helped the two students preserve some of their genuine beliefs in the value of inquiry. In my first focus-group meeting with them, they talked about what a genuine inquiry would mean for them.

Yam: It [a good IES project] can let me know more about what’s behind the issue [that I am looking at].

Muriel: Is the one that you’re doing now a good one in this sense?

- Yam: Yes, but not good enough.
- Muriel: What will make it a better one?
- Yam: Right now, the project begins with what I've already known, and I haven't found something I don't know yet, something new.
- Muriel: Right now, what you've done has to do with something you've already known, but you still want to find new things?
- Liam: I've got some understanding, but it's not complete. Right now, it's like proving something that I've known.
- Muriel: Right now, it's more like proving something you've known rather than exploring new things or acquiring a new understanding. But how do we know that we don't know?
- Yam: Maybe we can find out from an interview survey or questionnaire survey.
- Muriel: Well said. We want to know what we don't know, but at the moment, we don't know what we haven't known.
- Liam: We set off from what we'd known to find the unknown.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Jan. 28, 2011)

Liam and Yam said in the meeting that a good inquiry would enlighten them to matters of which they were ignorant. The drive of their inquiry was the unknown behind the phenomena. These two students' understanding of what genuine inquiry means for them tell us the significance of the self and the role of experience in and for inquiry learning. Liam and Yam recognized *the role and the presence of the self* in the inquiry process, two essential elements for effective experiential and constructivist learning to take place in the Deweyan sense. Liam and Yam's conversation with me is significant in another way, indicating *the role of experience* in inquiry learning as their comments reflected an inquiry-oriented approach quite different from the conventional mode of IES: "We set off from what we'd known to find the unknown," in Liam's words. Learning in general and inquiry learning in particular can transfer learners' present or past experiences into desirable future experiences, forming what

Dewey (1938/ 1997) has called “the experiential continuum” (p. 33). Dewey states, “Every experience is a moving force” when it “arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes” (p. 38). For Dewey, it is the responsibility of educators in general to arrange for students the kind of experiences that would promote desirable future experiences. In the field of critical education, Freire (1985) contends that “studying is above all thinking about experience, and thinking about experience is the best way to think accurately” (p. 3). Learning and thinking about and through experience form the basis of liberatory and social transformative education (Freire, 1975, 1985).

At the close of the first round of their three-year senior secondary curriculum, the students who participated in the present study exhibited a discerning eye for the make-belief performative processes of IES. Yam commented that the education officials were very similar to the IES students when these officials handled the present curriculum reforms. In her eyes, these officials made a considerable effort to get things done without knowing what they really wanted to achieve in the curriculum reforms at hand (Excerpt 8.14, Appendix 8). Liam had been cynical about the IES SBA from the very beginning and kept repeating to me that all he had been doing was to satisfy SBA conditions, but he was also very critical of the educational reforms. As a learner diagnosed with dyslexia, Liam perceived that the currently reformed school curriculum and academic structure was disadvantaging not only special-needs students like him but also students who did not wish to pursue a college education. In essence, what Liam was saying was that education reforms at the secondary-school level as a whole would end up placing institutionally legitimated knowledges high up in the hierarchy and knowledges lacking institutional legitimation low in the hierarchy.

The existing cynical IES practices in Hong Kong classrooms subsume any sincere inquiry endeavors under the purposes of assessment. Nevertheless, the students who participated in this study harnessed their own IES experiences as a vantage point from which to perceive the make-belief nature of curriculum reforms. Toward the end of the final focus-group meeting, I invited the students to think about educational reform from the insider perspective—or the “men-in-situation” perspective, as Freire put it (2000, p. 94). The following excerpt from our dialogue reflects this theme:

Muriel: Let’s exercise your imagination; if you could revise the academic structure, what would it be like?

Sam: I wouldn’t go for a sudden change to the academic structure. The changed structure is so drastically different from the previous one. There is no reference for such change. ... Maybe there’s a need for structural change, but it could take time, like gradual change. That’s just not the way the current one was done.

Leo: We can choose the subjects we like without having to take so many other subjects. ... There doesn’t have to be a combination of subjects in the current setup. Students should be able to do subjects that they’re best at.

Yam: I’d say Chinese Language and English Language should still be the core subjects, but now we’ve got four core subjects: Chinese Language, English Language, Maths, and Liberal Studies: two core subjects more than were in the HKALE [i.e., in the old academic structure]. People may be weak at a certain core subject, but as a university entrance requirement, we have to study [the subject] for the examination. The subject we’re weak in may wind up getting us poor grades and it may affect our university admission.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec. 16, 2011)

In this interview, the participating students offered some thoughts on how alternative approaches to reforming the old academic structure could have more desirable effects for the students, themselves. They consciously emphasized the old academic structure in formulating these hypotheses. Sam, for instance, specifically questioned

the basis for the current curriculum reform. Yam and Leo subtly compared that subject combinations in the past and the present school curricula and suggested that the previous curriculum was more advantageous for them than the current reformed one. These students suggested that Hong Kong's past school curriculum and academic system could have value for the present even though the purpose would be to reform the past system.

There is some truth in these students' brief comments on and quick suggestions for the Hong Kong approach to educational reforms. History is not dead (Williams, 1983a; Giroux, 1981); it is closely associated with "human self-development" because specific histories, be they of specific individuals, institutions, or communities at large, are connected not only to the present but also to the future, as analyzed by Williams (1983a, p. 147). Giroux (1981) contends that, in the wider political context, the death-of-history and the irrelevance-of-history discourses have stripped history of "its critical and transcendent content," and hence, these discourses can "no longer [allow history to] provide society with the historical insights necessary for the development of a collective critical consciousness" (p. 39). Positivism finds its strength in the death-of-history and the irrelevance-of-history discourses, Giroux maintains. The Hong Kong approach to educational reforms in general and to IES practices in particular are two cases in point. These frustrated IES performers' insider perspectives on a more desirable academic structure than is currently in place should invite concerned educators, scholars, and government officials to reconsider the role of history in policy recommendations.

Summary and Future Directions

In this chapter, I have conducted a critical analysis of the IES-classroom context, where my action research could take place through the performative lens. The

performative lens has enabled me to gain access to the ideological forces that contributed to the frustration and anger that this study's participating students demonstrated at the end of the whole IES process. Findings from the present research offer yet further evidence that knowledge production has not been—and can never be—a neutral, or value-free, endeavor. In the context of IES, students' nominal engagement in knowledge-construction activities is in fact subsumed under positivistic and cynical practices of reproducing existing discourses and applying them to social understanding.

The performative lens has been powerful in illuminating the cynical ideological forces at work within the IES classroom that has nurtured frustrated IES performers. The lens is equally powerful in revealing that the IES-classroom context is inextricably linked to wider social and educational Hong Kong contexts in a dynamic rather than a chained way. School forms part of the machinery in the production of power relationships in contemporary contexts. The teachers in the action research site of this particular study have drawn resources from outside the school institutions to mediate the relationship between IES teaching and IES learning. To view Hong Kong schooling and its immediate contexts in relation to the wider social and educational Hong Kong contexts, concerned academics might identify and examine (1) forms of intervention that educators and learners alike could appropriate in school contexts and (2) potential points of critical intervention.

These frustrated IES performers' insider perspectives has offered us a view into the fissures and gaps afflicting the seemingly all-embracing make-belief everyday performances at a school in Hong Kong. Research findings from this study have indicated that some of these IES performers who participated in this study embraced the presence of inquirers' personal experiences and histories in inquiry work, and that

the use of dramatic roles and real-life images in the IES processes managed to channel some of the frustrated learners' fears and resistance into productive energies for the IES tasks when they entered the liminal dramatic space made available by the action research, as I have discussed in chapter 4. Then it would be the responsibility of concerned academics and educators to reconsider possible ways of remaking the pedagogic and educational contexts if transformative educational practices in general and IES practices in particular are to gain traction. I consider the present research intervention, which has taken the form of a PhD dissertation, as one such initiative in transforming Hong Kong's wider academic context for IES learning at the school level.

In the next chapter, I will offer my own reflections on the action-research interventions in the specific IES classroom and the tensions arising within and beyond the micro-classroom context during the course of the research. I will also discuss the implications of action research for future research.

Chapter 6: Recontextualizing Project Learning for Hong Kong Secondary Schools

This doctoral study is grounded in the work of cultural studies and its concern for pedagogy and education. The study investigated a local *pedagogical* issue—Independent Enquiry Study (IES)—a specific form of social inquiry in the senior core subject Liberal Studies (LS) in Hong Kong secondary schools. It took a designated IES classroom as the point of intervention and as the basis for exploring *transformed pedagogical* practices in Hong Kong secondary school education.

The research endeavor set out to experiment how the method of drama could mediate a group of senior secondary students' extended process of inquiry into social issues in contemporary Hong Kong society, with *a conceptual-analytical framework of drama and the performative*, developed from Raymond William's notion of drama and Richard Schechner's notion of make-belief and make-believe performances. The attempt was to reconceive pedagogy and recontextualize pedagogical practices in the Hong Kong secondary school setting. My emphasis was on education rather than on the art form of drama.

A Recap of Drama and the Performative for Social Inquiry in Hong Kong

For the past few decades, critical educators, drama education scholars, and cultural studies scholars in such contexts as Latin America, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and Hong Kong have identified problematic educational practices concerning issues important both within and beyond the classroom (Freire, 1975; Giroux, 1985; McLaren, 1988; Doyle, 1993; O'Neill, 1995; Grossberg, 1997; Giroux & Shannon, 1997; Eisner, 2002; Brizman, 2003; Anderson, 2005; Pineau, 2005; Alexander, Anderson, & Gallegos, 2005; Williams, 2007; Turner, 2007; Sefton-Green, 2011; Chan & Law, 2011; Hui & Pang, 2011) (see chapter 3 for the full review).

These concerned scholars have criticized schools as being mere institutional sites where teachers and students are receivers rather than co-producers of school culture. This functioning of school, as these concerned scholars have commonly contended, tends to ignore the fact that schools are economic, cultural and political sites of contestation. Some of these scholars have drawn from the theater the notion of performance and drama as an approach to conceptualizing a novel, radical pedagogy that can help transform—rather than merely improve—existing educational practices (McLaren, 1988; Doyle, 1993; O’Neill, 1995; Pineau, 2005; Alexander, Anderson, & Gallegos, 2005) (see chapter 3). This small body of literature treats alternative educational practices in terms of the notion of performance, and has called upon teachers and students to be engaging “actors” who access tacit knowledge through their body, lived experiences, and imagination in the educational processes. By initiating the performative approach to education, this body of literature has problematized existing educational practices that have typified teachers and students as knowledge depositors and receivers respectively; and it has also called into question what counts as knowledge, where knowledges come from, and how students learn to learn. The literature has further reconceptualized pedagogy as a process that involves both teachers and students in the production of knowledge and meaning. In other words, the concerned scholars have expanded the notion of pedagogy to mean “cultural practice,” a notion embraced by other critical educators and cultural studies scholars (Giroux & Shannon, 1997; Grossberg, 1994; Doyle, 1993). These scholars in the fields of cultural studies, critical education, and drama in education have converged on a general view of schools as living places for teachers and students alike and as machinery critical to simultaneously limiting and enabling contemporary power relations (Doyle, 1993; Grossberg, 1994; Giroux & Shannon, 1997; Britzman,

2003). The notion of performance can help identify and clarify educational practices that serve as transformational alternatives to existing educational practices.

This doctoral research took an IES classroom as the point of intervention and as the basis for exploring transformed pedagogical practices in Hong Kong schools' senior secondary social-inquiry learning. In the Hong Kong context, IES is both a teaching and learning method and a component of SBA for LS, the senior secondary core subject. IES in Hong Kong senior secondary schools is almost already performative in nature, but is not of the transformative kind. Research findings in the present study have revealed that IES students who took part in the study were almost already performers eager to present themselves to their teacher-assessors as knowledge builders capable of reflective thinking. In fact, these students subscribed to the positivistic and cynical practices of reproducing existing discourses and applying them to understanding the social (see chapters 4 and 5). The performative acts these IES students undertook were neither subversive nor transformative, as suggested in the aforementioned studies on performance approaches to education. In performing seeming acts of inquiry, these IES students would re-enact the prescribed curricular discourses of understanding and reproducing the existing social order. IES learning in the Hong Kong context has posited a specific problem for a transformed pedagogy. Schechner's notion of performances and William's analysis of the interrelations between drama and society have been useful in this connection.

Schechner's (2006) notion of performance as being "make-belief" and "make-believe" has helped me analytically discern the various efforts this study's participating IES students made in ensuring effects of their IES endeavors on their teacher-assessors. Moreover, this twofold notion has thrown light onto the positions that teachers and students assumed and are subjected to during everyday school

performances (see chapter 5). The notion encompassing “make-belief” and “make-believe” brings into sight the respective subservient and subversive sides of performative acts. As such, the performative lens possesses a *bifocal* power that can discern (1) the rhetoric, myths, and falsehoods surrounding IES and its SBA insofar as IES is a mode of constructivist learning heavily inflected with positivistic ideologies from (2) the politics of performance that function to carve out a cultural productive space in which IES students can experiment with independent learning in the constrictiveness of everyday school life. Williams’ (1983b) approach to analyzing the relationships between drama and society highlights *the double function of drama*: one function concerns drama’s ability to break free from fixed social realities while steering a course toward a more open social world; the second function concerns drama’s ability to reveal how the organization of a particular society governs the perceptions and the relationships among that society’s members.

The present study has been informed by Williams’ notion of drama and Schechner’s notion of make-belief and make-believe performances. Drama and its double function have helped me undertake an ideological and cultural critique of existing IES practices and frame a pedagogical action plan serving to transform the IES practices in Hong Kong’s senior secondary schools. The performative lens reveals what ideological forces have been at work and how those forces have come to define what an IES performer should be like and how an IES performer should perform IES work.

The performative lens has been powerful in illuminating the cynical ideological forces at work within Hong Kong’s IES classrooms, which nurture frustrated IES performers. Findings reveal that, in performing seeming acts of inquiry, these IES students would re-enact the prescribed curricular (and media) discourses of understanding and reproducing the existing social order. The lens has revealed how positivism and

cynicism have framed classroom realities and blurred the boundaries between the pretended and the real.

The performative lens is equally powerful in revealing that the specific IES classroom is not only a site of political and ideological contestation, but also a nodal point where power circulates. Complex sets of power relations in wider contexts infiltrate classrooms and manifest themselves through public examination, namely assessment requirements for the inquiry work. Yet teachers in the research site, while submitting to the wider contextual and ideological forces, managed to appropriate for their own pedagogic purposes such tools as the official IES exemplars (see chapter 5). The significance of illuminating both this contested IES-classroom site and the interplay of contextual and ideological forces should allow for greater insights into the potential areas where reframing of realities can take place. In this way, the current analysis should offer reason for hope in the effort to release Hong Kong education from the currently encompassing and subsuming effects of make-belief schooling.

Informed by Williams' theoretical insights, drama carries the dual function and double meaning in this thesis study. First of all, drama is an art form that is about roles, role-playing, and role-taking, whether imagined or real, in the dramatic "as-if" world. When students use drama as pedagogy in the school context, they are engaged in a cultural practice supportive of experiences that are significantly different from the experiences typical of ordinary classroom settings. Second of all, drama is a conceptual tool connecting us with some of the fundamental conventions that organize students and their learning experiences in the everyday schooling context. Drama, hence, is about conventions and the structuring of the conventions to frame and reframe social realities.

Drama and its Benefits and Potentialities as a Method for IES

This current study's experimental use of drama has revealed that drama can be a method of work that supports student inquirers socially as a group for IES (see chapter 4). *Liminal dramatic spaces* and *the use of dramatic role and real-life images* afforded the participant-students the opportunity to create, experience, and interpret an imaginary world, promoting social inquiry. The spaces helped give shape to students' diverse roles including those of IES co-informant, member of society, and peer IES learner-assessor. By activating these roles, students *momentarily suspended* self-other relations and the mechanically induced perceptions of social realities *typified* by conventional IES method. Research findings have also indicated that, the transformative potentials of drama as a method for IES lie in the structuring of a variety of points of view and positions through the use of dramatic role and real-life images in the liminal dramatic space. By entering and exiting a role's consciousness, students positioned and repositioned themselves for the benefit of acquiring new perspectives and experiences. Social inquiry in the *dramatic elsewhere* has potentials in *reopening* the closed system of signs that frame cynical reasoning and acts.

Drama also serves to function as a method in contextualizing ahistorical and detached understanding and inquiry of the social world. Dramatic contextualization takes advantage of multiple roles and perspectives of positions. Exploration through dramatic role and real-life images *contextualize* the "depersonalizing" media and curricular discourses of "the other", bringing students' experiences, feelings and thinking into their social inquiry. The participating students' feedback and different understanding of the post-80 youths after the dramatic exploration is a case in point. Intervening IES social inquiry through dramatic contextualization would offer

opportunities for students to re-experience and re-connect with an other in ways different from the self-other relations pre-determined by and reproduced in the curricular and media discourses.

Drama as Lens and Implications for Educators

The current study's action-research findings show that drama functions as a lens, a conceptual tool for critical educators. It reflects how the method of IES—through the repetitive act of completing templates—typifies students' roles as inquirers and sustains students' dependence on those templates of work and on the teachers' assessment guides. In essence, drama helps reveal that, in general, students' undesirable IES performance is due not to their immaturity or lack of self-initiative (a belief held by Mr. Daniel), but to IES conventions' organization of students' learning.

Contextual analysis, a commonly used cultural studies method, treats context as sets of relations of power, cultural practices, or conjunctures that are socially and historically specific. In this thesis, the conceptual-analytical lens of drama has further discerned context in layers and each contextual layers are interwoven and interconnected with one another. The implications of the interdependence and interconnectedness of the contextual layers for educators in general and drama educators in particular are that there are multi-layers of sets of power relations and cultural practices beyond the immediate contexts where the concerned academics situate. It is on the basis of such understanding of the interconnectedness of contextual layers that I raised the critical questions for concerned academics who would care to intervene into the make-belief cynical practice at Hong Kong schools in chapter 5.

The research findings here imply that concerned drama educators and scholars in Hong Kong should rethink the interrelations between schooling contexts and dramatic

interventions so that drama can effect changes in social education in general and social inquiry learning in particular. An emphasis on the interrelations between schooling contexts and dramatic interventions would further suggest that, if drama is to achieve its desired effects, drama educators and scholars must treat schools not merely as “a background to the aesthetics” (O’Toole, 1992, p. 3) but also as an important part of the context in which dramatic intervention takes place. Only in this way can the desired effects of such dramatic interventions as those revealed in this present action research negotiate their way into the lived realities of Hong Kong’s classrooms and schools. In this regard, the action-research findings in the current study should invite drama-in-education researchers to investigate the intersection of the dramatic liminal space and the everyday social classroom space—a much under-researched area—and to explore how this intersection may help student-inquirers, in their social-inquiry processes, understand themselves and others .

Action Research, Drama, and the Performative for Cultural Studies of Education

This doctoral thesis adds to an emerging body of cultural studies literature that addresses the relationships between education and society in Hong Kong (Chan, Choi, & Hui, 2006-8; Law, 2006; Chan & Hui, 2007; Chan, Hui, Choi, et al., 2009; Chan & Hui, 2011; Chan & Law, 2011; Hui & Pang, 2011; Chan & Law, 2012a, 2012b). This literature takes as its objects of analysis the meaning-making process of educational reforms and the intended and unintended consequences of those reforms, including those on students, teachers, and society at large. This present study contributes to the practice of Hong Kong cultural studies by (1) offering an ideological critique of the existing schooling and educational practices while interrogating the classroom conditions that define the limits and forms of the critical

pedagogical interventions; and (2) bringing in an interdisciplinary use of critical and theoretical perspectives for the investigation of the pedagogical IES issue at hand.

Methodologically, this study combines action research and contextual analysis. It offers me, the researcher, the vantage point of both that of an ethnographer and of a cultural studies researcher to intervene with my presence, and to discern from stepping outside of the research action to reflect on what has been happening. Some may have reservations about the “objectivity” of participant-observation and of interpretive research design and would suggest the presence of external non-participating observers in the claim for objectivity. Taylor (1996), in his discussion of classroom teacher researching his/her own students’ learning, contends that “[o]bjectivity has no greater hold on an external evaluator than it does on a classroom teacher” (p.14). In fact, he argues that what is critical is that

every attempt is made by each researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Trustworthiness in interpretive-based design has been traditionally supported by ensuring that the researcher’s observations are credible or believable ones (p. 14).

In this study, I committed to “credible” and “believable” participant-observation by taking a reflective practitioner stance, with which I accessed and evaluated my intuitive knowledge and relevant beliefs to enrich the study from inside the designated setting (in this case, an IES classroom). The presence of Mr. Daniel, the subject teacher, and his observations and comments on students’ participation throughout the research processes informed me with the participating students’ personal histories and the contextual conditions where the students situate, and as such, enhanced the “trustworthiness” of the action research findings.

As far as the question of research scale is concerned, one may criticize that the numbers of students and teachers involved in the pedagogical action-research were relatively small. When combined with contextual analysis, the action-research

investigation in this research study brings into bear the interconnected sets of power relations in the various contextual layers. In so doing, the combined research methods contextualize and historicize the small-scale, focused pedagogical action research in the designated Hong Kong classroom, and throw lights onto the wider social and global contexts that enable and limit social inquiry in the form of IES in the Hong Kong context (see chapters 2 and 3 for the full discussion).

The present study takes cultural studies' conception of power as decentered web-like relations that circulate rather than as relations that are chained to a ruler-and-ruled hierarchy. In this sense, *schools* are not just *machinery* underlying contemporary power relations, but also complex *cultural environments* where students' histories and experiences are respected and considered significant. The study has examined the pedagogical processes and conditions of IES social-inquiry learning at senior secondary school level. It contributes to our understanding of the teaching of social inquiry from the perspective of student learning. It also contributes to cultural studies of education by examining the institutional workings of school through the lens of drama and the performative.

This study represents my modest attempt to do cultural studies of education in Hong Kong in a "transformative" way, a way that Lawrence Grossberg (1996) has advocated. The purpose of "a transformative practice" of cultural studies is to "interpellate various fractions of the population in different relations to power into the struggle for change" (p. 88). Hence, this dissertation calls for collective efforts from academics and scholars to intervene in all levels of educational practices, with the aim of remaking the vast contextual sweep of teaching and learning in Hong Kong as a way out of these cynical and positivistic inquiry-learning practices.

Constraints, Limitations and Negotiations of Research Interventions

This action research is an experiment. Writing it is in itself an experiment. In the actual writing of the thesis, I experimented with writing for the dual purposes of contextualization and historicization in individual thesis chapters, two processes crucial in countering the positivistic influence in the Hong Kong educational practices. Couldry (2000) argues that cultural studies, approaching culture as a material process from within, needs to apply a historically informed sense of the material processes which form our “present” and our “past” (p. 60). To do so, is to “disrupt our naturalized sense of “the present” (p. 60). In the case of the present doctoral thesis, the history of Hong Kong curriculum with regard to project learning and social inquiry has been illustrated in broad strokes. Institutional and time constraints within the action-research site, however, prevented access to the history of the participating students and their teachers’ experiences with project learning and teaching. The research is limited to the cultural experiences of these student- and teacher-participants “present” experiences with IES learning. Without the reach of the participating students’ and their teachers’ past experiences with project learning and social-inquiry learning, this study leaves out opportunities to reveal points of interventions for a transformed social-inquiry practice in *one* contextual layer—the institutional context of the action-research school.

The action research that I have undertaken in the given IES classroom created a *contextual layer* in parallel to the social realities of the classroom and the school where the students and their teacher were situated. The research method has offered opportunities for me—a postgraduate and a former school teacher—to intervene in research site and to remain dynamic and reactive in relation to the unfolding research context. In the sections below, I will reflect on my own experiences as a cultural

studies researcher at work in a PhD study (i.e., the current one) and identify the tensions arising from action-research interventions within the micro-classroom context. I will further discuss the implications of those tensions for future research.

I entered this study with the interest of transforming social-inquiry learning in the LS subject. My own MPhil study (2006) of the junior EPA curriculum shows that mere ideological critique of the curricular effects on students' learning is not sufficient for transformative pedagogical practices to come about. I decided to engage with a group of students in a participatory action-research approach to solving the pedagogical problem. My intention for the present study was that it should intervene in the IES teaching and learning context as a whole. I also intended to make the action-research project a participatory one in order that it could be educative to the teachers and students who were involved in the research work. However, my intention was never shared by Mr. Daniel or Ms. Ivy at the research site. They made it clear at our initial meetings that they would expect the research to help students finish their IES projects and to help teachers assess the students effectively. In fact, the teachers' concern for SBA constrained my initial intention that the research be "interventionist" in the research site's learning-and-teaching context as a whole. To make the most of the "limiting" situations (Freire, 2000, p. 99), I took measures throughout the research process to negotiate with Mr. Daniel regarding the time available for my pedagogic try-out, for meetings students in other groups and for my small-group student supervision. I also devised an alternative formative assessment rubric to give feedback to students regarding their project proposals, as teachers had criticized the official rubric for its ill-design. I kept Mr. Daniel informed of my research progress and my preliminary data analysis at various stages of the action-research work, though he exhibited little enthusiasm about them. The action-research work and the research collaboration were limited mainly to my

interaction with participating students at the school site; however, my analysis of the research findings did offer glimpses into problems afflicting the wider classroom and school contexts, precisely because all these contexts are interrelated (Grossberg, 1994, 1997; O'Toole, 1992). The project was still interventionist because the research site was not a social world being gazed upon from afar but a world where I, the researcher-facilitator, was an inhabitant taking research-oriented action, though my presence there was brief within the research timeframe.

Mr. Daniel's interest in the action-research collaboration reflected his emphasis on having expert help to relieve a certain amount of his day-to-day teaching load. He found my researcher position particularly useful in informing him and his students how the students' overall IES performance was measuring up against the parallel performance of other schools' students to which I had access. It is obvious that the value and usefulness of my presence to Mr. Daniel was no more than an instrumental one. I experienced tensions between my desire of being useful in the research site and the desire to remain critical of the cynical everyday schooling practices which privilege instrumental rationality. Of importance in this regard is the following question: what modes of collaboration would allow for the most useful and transformative interventions in educational contexts without either compromising the criticalness of the interventions or subsuming the criticalness to school sites' cynical practices?

Couldry (2000) identifies reflexivity as one crucial principle for cultural studies practitioners who wish to take the full complexity of being "inside" culture, and, in my case, my research practices couple with actions at the research site (p.4). Couldry takes the principle of reflexivity to include the cultural studies practitioners' obligations to listen to and go in dialogue with all those voices inside the processes of

cultural production; and the practitioners' reflection about the means and conditions with which the dialogues have been formed (p.38). In this light, in the case of cultural studies' interventions in educational practices, research efforts are yet to be made to investigate creative forms of cultural production that can engage teachers—who are susceptible to be or already interpellated into cynical subjects in the Hong Kong educational scene—into dialogue.

Invitations to Think Through Future Research Directions

Tensions I experienced in this action research revealed tensions within and beyond the micro-classroom context. They indicate areas where further work is needed to address issues of cynical practices, positivistic paradigms of knowledge production, and make-belief performative schooling practices.

Action-research findings in the current study show that the *performative make-belief* schooling practices encompassed the everyday school life of the participating students and their teachers, and indeed *contained* the effects of my dramatic interventions *within* the action-research context. The IES students at this specific research site were subjected to a process of cynical subject formation. When it comes to social inquiry, these students' cynical IES practices, including cynical IES reasoning, *is partly the result of the teachers' instructional needs*. Therefore, to transform these students' cynicism about social-inquiry learning would be to transform the schooling practices and the schooling conditions for both the students and their teachers. The pedagogical problems with IES are more than isolated pedagogical issues: the problems are a reflection of Hong Kong's larger educational problems. In this regard, critical academic interventions at all levels would be necessary to rework the institutional settings, to reorient educational policies, and to reconceptualize the function of education—a long project ahead for critical educators, cultural studies

scholars and drama educators to create more promising and enabling schooling conditions and educational practices for students and their teachers alike in Hong Kong schools. Hence, dramatic and academic interventions in IES processes will not be effective if school and social contextual elements are not reworked.

Findings in the present action research have also revealed that students participating in this research managed to make sense of their present educational experiences in general and their IES learning in particular through their insider's perspective. This insider's perspective was specific to the students' socio-historical context, which itself was inextricably tied to Hong Kong's historical past (see the discussion in chapter 5). In light of the research findings, I would propose a direction of future researches regarding educational practices in general and social inquiry learning in particular: to unpack the specific historical moments the Hong Kong educational reforms for insights into the possible ways of reinventing the existing IES practices. To this task, I have contributed a small proposal (in chapter 5) suggesting that concerned educators and scholars multiply and revitalize previous project forms and project practices for future scholarly debate about the nature and purpose of IES in Hong Kong's senior secondary school curriculum.

The existing cynical and positivistic IES practices in Hong Kong classrooms subsume almost all sincere inquiry endeavors under the purposes of assessment. The possibility of a transformative social inquiry has become a question of recontextualizing inquiry learning in reference to Hong Kong's specific histories, be they the history of social inquiry or the history of educational practices. Moreover, the efforts of critical educators to reconceptualize pedagogy as cultural practice could engage students and teachers in the cultural production of knowledges meaningful for social-inquiry learning and educational experiences on a broad plane.

Freire (1994) has it that “Hopelessness and despair are both the consequence and the cause of inaction or immobilism” (p. 3), and that “hope needs practice in order to become historical concreteness. That is why there is no hope in sheer hopefulness” (p. 2). Contextual analysis of the interplay between the IES context and academic interventions from wider contexts should allow for insights into the potential areas where reframing of realities can take place. In this way, analysis should offer reason for hope in the effort to release Hong Kong education from the currently encompassing and subsuming effects of make-belief schooling. A way out of these cynical and positivistic inquiry-learning practices requires collective efforts from academics and scholars who must intervene in all levels of educational practices, with the aim of remaking the vast contextual sweep of teaching and learning in Hong Kong.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Thinking Types and Scaffolds for the 3-I Project Learning Program (Ou, 2006)

Thinking Type (First level)	Scaffold (Second level)
What if... 如果...	New assumption 新假設 Creative idea 創意
Somebody said.. 據別人說...	Very credible 可信性極高 Somewhat credible 可信性一般 Little credible 可信性極低
My estimation is 我估計是這樣的...	My theory 我的理論 Logic thinking 邏輯推理
My opinion is 我的意見是...	My experience 我的經驗 My observation 我的觀察
My design 我的設計	New creation 創新 Ordinary 普通 Practical 實用
Let me conclude 我的結論	Elementary 簡單的 Intermediate 中級的 Advanced 高級的

Appendix 2: The New Secondary Academic Structure, Liberal Studies, and IES

Areas of Study	Independent Enquiry Study (IES)
Self & Personal Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 1: Personal Development & Interpersonal Relationships 	Students are required to conduct an IES making use of the knowledge and perspectives gained from the three Areas of Study and extending them to new issues or contexts. To help students develop their IES titles, the following themes are suggested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Education Religion Sports Art Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
Society & Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 2: Hong Kong Today Module 3: Modern China Module 4: Globalization 	
Science, Technology & the Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 5: Public Health Module 6: Energy Technology & the Environment 	

Figure 1: Liberal Studies and the Three-year Senior Secondary Curriculum

(Figure 1.1, CDC 2007, p.3)

Figure 2: Curriculum Framework for Liberal Studies

(Figure 2.1, CDC, 2007, p.11)

2.8 Independent Enquiry Study (IES)

As an integral part of the curriculum of Liberal Studies, the IES contributes to the curriculum aims by:

- (a) providing an opportunity for students to learn to become self-directed learners responsible for their own learning;
- (b) enhancing students' ability to connect, integrate and apply knowledge, perspectives and skills developed through the three Areas of Study;
- (c) helping students develop higher-order thinking skills and communication skills through investigative exploration of issues; and
- (d) broadening students' horizons and catering for their interests and inclinations.

2.8.1 Objectives of IES

The learning experiences in the IES will help students to:

- (a) set goals, plan, implement the plans and solve problems;
- (b) reflect on and evaluate their learning progress;
- (c) collect data, evidence and information through means appropriate to their enquiry;
- (d) analyse and evaluate information in order to construct knowledge, propose solutions to real issues, and make decisions;
- (e) appreciate the complexities and cross-disciplinary nature of real issues, and identify the various perspectives applicable to the understanding of these issues;
- (f) communicate, articulate and present their thoughts and ideas effectively through appropriate means and media; and
- (g) become motivated and responsible learners.

2.8.2 Nature of IES

Self-directed learning experience

IES is a self-directed learning experience in which the student takes up the major responsibility for learning. In IES, students are "independent" and "self-directed" in the sense that, having consulted a range of references and opinions, they themselves choose their title, the scope, the methods of their investigative study, and the ways of presenting the findings and products of the study. They take the initiatives in raising questions, finding answers, and evaluating the enquiry process, and they are responsible for their plans and decisions.

Figure 3: Objectives of IES

(CDC, 2007, p.57)

MODE OF ASSESSMENT

The table below outlines the various components of the public assessment of LS in 2012 HKDSE:

Component		Weighting	Duration
Public Examination	Paper 1: Data-response questions	50%	2 hours
	Paper 2: Extended-response questions	30%	1 hour 15 minutes
School-based assessment (SBA)		20%	

Stage	Assessment Items (Weighting)		Total Weighting
	'Process' (50%)	'Product' (50%)	
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent thinking Communication Effort 	Project Proposal	25%
II		Data Collection	25%
III		Product	50%

Figure 4: Public Assessment of LS and Assessment Framework of IES

(HKEAA, 2009, p.64, 66)

Appendix 3: Students' IES Topics in Schools A and B

(in their original written Chinese)

1. 台灣的偶像劇如何影響香港青少年的思想及與朋友相處的行為？
2. 香港掀網上社交熱潮，Facebook 如何影響青少年朋輩關係？
3. 影像傳媒如何影响青少年的審美觀？
4. 香港青少年 11-19 歲如何在 Facebook 獲得存在感？
5. 文字傳媒如何影响青少年接收政治議題的資訊？
6. 手機短訊如何促進青少年人際關係？
7. 網絡日誌如何協助青少年自我建？
8. 傳媒如何提升 80 後和 90 後的政治參與？
9. 日、韓偶像對青少年身份認同的影响？
10. MSN 對 12-19 歲的中學生在學習能力上的影响？
11. 廣告如何導致青少年有從眾的行為？
12. 網絡上的暴力遊戲會對青少年做成甚麼心智發展？
13. Facebook 對 12-18 歲青少年個人成長方面的好處與壞處。
14. 九十後看八十後:八十後帶來的啟示
15. 潮流電子化如何影響我們生活質素？」
16. 香港飲食文化有多大程度受西方飲食文化影響？
17. 中國內地與香港法律的差異及矛盾

Appendix 4: IES Exemplar Topics from HKEAA

(in their original written languages)

A. Products in Written Form

1. Teenage Suicide in HK and Ways for Prevention (Uploaded September 30, 2010).
2. 探討設海下灣成為海岸公園和建立海洋生物中心在何等程度上達到保護及教育的目的 (Chinese version only). (Uploaded September 30, 2010).
3. Is attending tutorial classes a new trend? (Uploaded September 30, 2010).
4. 解構報紙新聞報導 (Chinese version only). (Uploaded September 30, 2010).
5. Are teenagers too stressed? (Uploaded September 30, 2010).

B. Products in Non-written Forms

1. 以東坪洲為個案-探討生態旅遊如何影響該地的環境 (Chinese version only). (Uploaded October 4, 2010).
2. 以旺角街頭熟食店為研究對象，探討即棄食具和食物環境衛生的問題，從而提出改善之建議 (Chinese version only). (Uploaded October 4, 2010).
3. 香港市民對中西醫的選擇取向及對中西合璧 (Chinese version only). (Uploaded October 4, 2010).
4. 在二十世紀的今日，能源直接影響一個國家或地區的發展。為什麼中國面臨能源短缺? (Chinese version only). (Uploaded October 4, 2010).

Source:

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. (2010, September).

Independent Enquiry Study (IES) Exemplars (with Marks and Comments). Retrieved Dec 01, 2011 from

http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/SBA/sba_hkdse_core/LS/IES/sampleA.html

http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/SBA/sba_hkdse_core/LS/IES/sampleB.html.

Appendix 5: Students' IES Topics at the Action-research Site

(in original written Chinese and English Translation)

Wincey's Initial Title:

從青少年的角度探討「起底」文化的影响。[The investigation of the impact of 'human flesh search' culture from the perspectives of teenagers.]

Finalized Title: 探討「起底」文化如何影響青少年的價值觀。[To investigate how 'human flesh search' culture influences teenagers' values.]

Maggie's Initial Title:

報章的報導手法對青少年有何影响？[What impact does newspaper reportage have on teenagers?]

Finalized Title: 報章的報導手法對青少年成長影响。[The impact of newspaper reportage on teenagers' development]

Emily's Initial Title:

「一代不如一代」，青少年健康漸趨下降的原因。[“Each generation gets worse.” The cause of teenagers' health deterioration.]

Finalized Title: 探討青少年如何看自己的心理健康。[To investigate how teenagers see their own psychological wellbeing.]

Pearl's Initial Title:

80 後對香港社會文化帶來甚麼影响？[What impacts do the post-80s bring to Hong Kong societal culture?]

Finalized Title: 父母管教模式對青少年成長的影響。[The impact of modes of parenting on teenagers' development.]

Kim's Initial Title:

80 後青年對香港現今社會的政治生態帶來甚麼衝激？[What impacts do the post-80s bring to the political ecology in contemporary Hong Kong society?]

Finalized Title: 探討中學生對組織家庭的觀念。[The investigation of secondary school students' conceptions of raising a family.]

Yvonne's Initial Title:

探究現時青少年利用「極端方法去解決問題」有什麼看法？極端方法如自殺、威嚇等。[The investigation of teenagers' perception of using 'extreme problem-solving measures', for examples, suicide, threat.]

Finalized Title: 探究現時青少年利用「極端方法去解決問題」有什麼看法？[The investigation of teenagers' perception of using 'extreme problem-solving measures']

Cindy's Initial Title:

探討「宅男」的成因與青少年生活習慣的關係。[To investigate the formation of 'okatu' and its relations with teenagers' style of living]

Finalized Title: 從中學生使用網絡的習慣看對社交生活的特質看法與影响。[To investigate secondary students' habit of using the internet to see their social life and the social impact of the internet]

Bonnie's Initial Title:

現今香港青少年競爭力的調查。[The investigation of teenagers' competitiveness in contemporary Hong Kong.]

Finalized Title: 新高中對培育青少年競爭力的預期成效。[The expected outcome of senior secondary curriculum on nurturing teenagers' competitiveness.]

Hannah's Initial Title:

青少年對戀愛及性行為的看法。[Teenagers' perception of love and sexual intercourse.]

Finalized Title: 從社會人士和青少年角度看在互聯網上接觸不良資訊對青少年價值觀的影響。[The investigation of how society members and teenagers perceive the impact of objectionable materials on the internet on the teenagers' values.]

Liam's Initial Title:

從網上購物看青少年的消費文化改變。[To investigate the change in teenagers' consumption culture through online shopping]

Finalized Title: NA

Yam's Initial Title:

從潮流文化看青少年對自我形象的看法。[To investigate of teenagers' perception of self-image through popular culture]

Finalized Title: 從傳媒中的潮流文化纖體和美容看青少年對自我形象的看法。[To investigate teenagers' perception of self-image through body sliming and beauty culture]

Sam's Initial Title:

探討內地轉校生到港讀書面對的困難及解決的方法。[To investigate difficulties and solutions of mainland transfer students studying in Hong Kong.]

Finalized Title: 內地轉校生到港讀書面對困難及解決方法。[Difficulties and solutions of mainland transfer students studying in Hong Kong]

Leo's Initial Title:

家庭壓力對青少年的影响。[The impact of family pressure on teenagers]

Finalized Title: NA

Appendix 6: Excerpts of Students In-class Written Work

報章的報導手法
對青少年有何影响?

1. 團體, 新聞(記者) 調查
2. 青少年自己, 家長

平時看新聞
怎樣分析

對子女的分
析有沒有懷疑?

現今青少年競爭力的調查

① 香港

- 傳媒 (編輯) = 懶, 沒有責任心
- 研究員 = 缺乏危險意識、
照搬提升競爭力只靠
在學習上努力

上一代 = 不如上一代

② 家人, 其他國家的青少年

青少年對戀愛及性的看法

① 市民: 戀愛太過火, 一無事處
大學專家: 青少年變得過份早熟
傳媒: 遇困難就要生要死,
完全沒有解難能力

② 青少年

探究現時青少年利用"極端方法"解決困
難的看法 (eg 自殺, 吸煙, 吸毒, 偷手等)

① 傳媒 - 研究青少年行為的傳媒人
- 家長 - 新聞 - 從新聞發表意見的人
- 編輯 - 心理學家 - 研究青少年心理的

② 曾談使用極端方法解決問題的青少年,
由家長

大眾對此↑的看法
(論壇 → 找尋!)

80後對香港社會文化
帶來甚麼影响?

80後是什麼?
為何如此互相猜忌?

1. 老一輩的人認為80後外事(事)
偏激, 家長認為他們不懂

2. 80後如何形容自己?

After the Space Between convention, students returned to their own IES topic and reviewed the materials they had read about their subject of inquiry. Students then compiled two lists of views:

1. they identified from the materials collected
2. they would like to collect to further their IES inquiry

探討宅男的成因與青少年生活習慣的關係。

① 傳媒, 研究報告, 網上的百科全書

② 家長, 老師, 學生(80後)

↳ 直接提供資訊的子弟(知識份子)

↳ 宅男的家長和老師,

↳ 其他人的家長和老師.

從青少年角度探討「起底」的影響

① 傳媒一報章
大眾
網民 - 受害者
起底者

② 局外人
/ 1 手
其他網民
普通 - 家長
上一代
的人(無在
上網環境
成長的人)

「一代不如一代」, 青少年漸趨肥胖的原因

① 專家、營養師、醫生... 一些專業報告

② 青少年自我看法, 家長建議
(無論有或沒有肥胖問題的青少年)

80後青年對香港現今社會的政治生態帶來甚麼衝擊?

知道嗎?

1. 年紀比最大的人會批評/評論他們
媒體亦會評論他們

2. 80後為己對他們所做的事的看法.

Appendix 7: Students' Reflections After the Interview Role-play Exercise

(in their original written Chinese Session 4, Cycle 2, April 12, 2011)

中五通識科 獨立專題探究
階段二：資料搜集
以戲劇活動來搜集訪談資料

學生姓名：_____

反思：

1. 回想剛才的戲劇活動，嘗試綜合分析一下你設定的訪談問題有否為你搜集與專題相關的資料呢？為甚麼？
2. 你訪談時遇上甚麼具體問題？當時如何處理？對解決問題有作用嗎？
3. 經過這個戲劇活動，你會怎樣準備你的訪談？

	Q1 ¹	Q2 ²	Q3 ³
Wincey:	有，問題是與焦點問題相關，將問卷所遺留的，更詳細的問出	受訪者的答案與預期的不一樣，執生，以其他角度入手，引導他回答	預備多些「預期」的答案，一步步的問，唔好咁大範圍
Maggie:	有，受訪者能夠回答問題的重點，重點是報章對性的看法，受訪者能夠回答我的問題重點	受訪者的答案與我預期不一樣，嘗試繼續追問或從另一角度進入，有作用	搜集更多資料有關本題目
Emily:	有，可以知道人們的看法。知道人們在各方面的壓力，從而方便我修改問題	交流不夠，受訪者不會仔細地回答，需要再修訂問題及方法，引導對方回答	會深切地重新考慮我原本的問題，要考慮受訪者的心情，是否願意表達自己

¹ Q1 in English: "Look back at the dramatic activity, did it help you collect information relevant to your IES? Why?"

² Q2 in English: "After the dramatic activity, how will you prepare for your IES interviews?"

³ Q3 in English: "What problems did you encounter in the paired role-play? How did you deal with it? Did that work?"

	Q1 ¹	Q2 ²	Q3 ³
	題	得更加深入	等等
Pearl:	有，受訪者有回答到我的問題	受訪者回答太少。繼續追問。有	繼續搜集資料。定立有用的問題
Kim:	能，受訪者清楚回答問題並且作出更進一步的解釋	問題太少。即時加插其他問題	早作準備。如果對方不明白問題，我會先給予例子，引導對方答出答案
Yvonne:	有。可從中得到更多不同人士的心態／問題。 - 旁人／親身經歷／朋友見聞／看法〔對哪一些人〕 - 看法／原因 - 理解程度	難以令訪談者長談自己的看法，從他的答案延伸或從反方面去問，更多方面的看法、心態	設定多角色的問題，旁人→準備一些報章或 case，從而問他的看法→理解程度
Cindy:	有。因為他會 延伸答案或者在之前問卷的東西裏 ，沒有的 choices 都會出現	可能沒有預計到的回答，要即使〔按：時〕執生，也可以知道更多原因。	事前思考，2 个答案的效果和問多些有用的 questions
Bonnie:	有。因為訪談問題緊貼專題的題目。而且受訪者得詳盡的回答，讓我想起其他很重要的問題	受訪者的一些答案不如我所預計的，讓我一時無法繼續發問	我在考慮訪談問題時，會預計多方面的回答，而且留意問題會否觸動受訪者情緒
Hannah:	有。因為所設定的訪談問題十分緊貼我所研究的題目。	未能得到十分長盡的答案，答案較簡短，需要修改一下問題再作引導。後來，也能得到我想要的相關資料	好好設定問題，以免離題，得不到想要的答案

Appendix 8: Excerpts of Teacher and Student Interviews

(translated into English from oral Chinese)

Excerpt 8.1

Daniel: EDB does not agree that we use of textbooks. Well, we just don't bother. Textbooks are really good and useful ... there is so much relevant contents to use, and is always richer than the materials we prepare. Students feel more confident with the textbooks around, having something to study ... There are not many class time, and we can't cover every single issue ... When [the students] really have time, they study the textbooks on their own. So textbooks are very important ... If we really follow EDB's advice of not using textbooks, there's no chance at all [covering all the issues laid out in the curriculum] and students won't be able to get in touch with other issues [not covered in class]. That will be worrying.

(Translated from oral Chinese, Mr. Daniel Interview, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.2.1

Muriel: What do you expect students to do in IES? What would you like them to experience from the process?

Daniel: We don't really expect this first cohort [of senior secondary students] to would experience much out of IES, because we can't just compare them to students doing Liberal Studies at AS level [for HKALE]. ... Well, we don't really have much expectation ... I don't have much expectation. I just expect that they follow our approach to finish an IES. That's all. So, as I told you last time, we do it in a very rigid mode. They follow the procedure we laid out, take it step by step and at the end put everything together. That's what I expect from them because they don't really have the ability to organize an IES.

(Translated from oral Chinese, Mr. Daniel Interview, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.2.2

Daniel: I think what the project work has given them [students who took LS as an elective for the HKALE] is a sense of satisfaction after accomplishing a big task in life. This big task has given them something to compete with

others, to be assessed for grades. Those are the things that they had never experienced before.

(Translated from oral Chinese, Mr. Daniel Interview, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.2.3

Daniel: Another dilemma about students' IES work is that they care about their interests, but then their interests is narrowly defined, say, boys like sex-related topics and girls like 'teenage models'.

Muriel: Oh, they are interested in topics like 'teenage models'?

Daniel: Yeah, topics like 'subsidized dating', topics sensitive and close to teenagers, and flashy phrases and terms is another type.

Muriel: Do you think these are researchable topics?

Daniel: It depends on who does that, I think. I'll ban some of the boys who want to do sex-related topics.

Muriel: Why?

Daniel: I'm worried that they may not be able to form an IES, because they are subjective, and think too simplistically, i.e. with tendency towards things porny. That's what I'm worried about. Boys have got that dilemma and I want to avoid that and would advise them not to do so. Girls are fine, but no girls have picked sex-related topics. They usually pick trendy ones.

Muriel: Topics like subsidized dating, teenage model.

Daniel: I'll let them. According to their abilities, they may not be able to find someone who does subsidized dating for interview, so they may only be doing something superficial. If it were for the AS Levels students, I would always require that they get one [interviewee].

(Translated from oral Chinese, Mr. Daniel Interview, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.3

Ivy: In fact, IES is to answer a question, a question that interests you [sic: students], a question you [sic: students] are willing to go for in-depth inquiry. In return, it would help students with LS learning. That means, students would discover that if I [sic: students] really have to understand an

issue, I really have to explore the matter in-depth. Then they would understand the thing more comprehensively.

(Translated from oral Chinese, Ms. Ivy Interview, Jan 11, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.4.1

Muriel: What is a good IES project for you?

Maggie: I think it enlightens people after they finish reading it ... The whole report may not be telling them an exact answer [to the inquiry question], but by reading the analysis inside it, you [sic: the reader] can come up with some thoughts yourself [sic: themselves].

Kim: It [the analysis] should be clear in thoughts and direction. It can't go off the track, can't be incoherent ... and it [the analysis] should answer the [research] question that is set.

Pearl: I think the report should express the author's own point of view. So it's different from something general and informative, or it's different from newspapers' standpoint. That means there's a personal stance to share, but not just quoting from the news reports, and then repeat the same things over again ...

Emily: I think a good IES should have a focus on one question, rather than targeting a lot [of questions]. I do want the IES to show people the outcome of an inquiry.

Wincey: It can remind people [of the topic I look into] and let them think about the issue.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Sept 14, 2010).

Liam: [A good IES project is] one that I can enjoy the process without pressure ... I don't have to submit report for grades as the school system requires me to. It [a good IES project] is driven by my motive and desire to finish the inquiry reports.

Yam: It [a good IES project is] can let me know more about what's behind the issue[that I am looking at].

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Jan 28, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.4.2

Muriel: Do you think a good IES project is the same as an IES project that scores well?

Pearl: They may not be the same. An IES project that scores well may have a clear conclusion, one that gives very clear answers. But a good IES project may bring about reflection [for my readers] from different points of views. There may not be a substantial answer [to the inquiry question]. It may end in a question rather than a statement.

Maggie: I think people have their own point of view, so the project may read good for some, but not good for others. A project scores well and a project that is good may not be the same ... Maybe the task requires that you have good analysis. Everything [sic: steps and procedures] about questionnaire survey or data collection must be clearly done in order to score well.

Muriel: How do you come up with this thought?

Maggie: From previous assignments.

Kim: I think a good IES project depends on the point of view your project brings forth. The teacher marks according to the assessment criteria. In the other assignments we submitted, the teacher always requires that we follow the procedures to write the answers, and he marks according to the criteria.

Emily: A good project and a well-scored project are not the same. I agree [with Maggie] because the ways of assessing and thinking are not the same for everyone. I think it depends on how that person [assessor] thinks.

Wincey: Of course, I wish for high score, i.e. all the steps are right. But I also hope that the project is good, e.g. I study of cyber-bullying and its impact on teenagers. When I finish it, I actually want it to inspire them, i.e. my target readers.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Sept 14, 2010).

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Excerpt 8.5

Daniel: Ten months [into the new senior secondary] now, the very first problem about IES learning is about understanding an issue. The problem is there right from the start. How much should they know before they can start the inquiry? So we have to keep assessing how much they should know and how much we should talk. Should we tell them everything? Or would it

work just by giving them the background information? It's something we need to find a balance with in teaching.

[...]

In fact, we are pretty passive now. We teachers look for materials ourselves first, and choose news clipping for them to read. [Muriel: Choose for them?] Yeah, choose for them, we can't avoid that. If you go and ask them to prepare things in advance, it would work for students at AS Level in the past. Students at AS level manage to do look for materials, go into groups and discuss ideas. They could manage. But for students at the new senior secondary level, there's obviously a gap ... So teachers need to be very directive. It goes against the principle that students do self-directed inquiry. Right now, it is just not that [student-directed learning]. In fact, it is the teacher who is directing the whole learning process.

(Translated from oral Chinese, Mr. Daniel Interview, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.6

Bonnie: English SBA is the most troublesome, it's troublesome all the time

Hannah: It's troublesome all the time, there has been so many of them [sic: assessment tasks].

Bonnie: You've got so nervous. For example they gave you [the topic] today to prepare something and you've got to present it the next day. ... With IES, you go about doing something, but for English, you've got only one day to finish writing the one whole piece [sic: a presentation script], recite it the night before and speak in front of the video camera ... It makes you all tense up.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec 09, 2011).

Liam: [With SBA in Visual Arts], you've got to finish 6 artworks within 2 years. With one Visual Arts topic, there are three subtopics. For each subtopic, you've got to submit one artwork plus a portfolio that contains the content, things about [related] artists, the art media and the techniques learnt. It is so troublesome. ... The assessment criteria have not been set out. They [HKEAA] kept revising the assessment criteria and we kept changing what we did when the assessment criteria changed.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.7

- Muriel: Now, it's been more than a year since you began the IES work, what would you say about the experiences of IES?
- Cindy: It's meaningless, a waste of energy and time. You've done something you've already known, doing things repetitively as if it is very analytical.
- Maggie: You've anticipated the answers already.
- Cindy: No, you have already got the answers, but you still need to find prove what you've already known.
- Maggie: It's simply pointless.
- Muriel: I've glanced through your projects, some of you wrote in the conclusion and the reflections that you've discovered something ...
- Cindy: Well, we bragged about it.
- Bonnie: You've got to write in that way.
- Muriel: Bragging? Really no discovery at all? It's all there as expected and known beforehand?
- Cindy: It's really like that. Like what I did was about making online friends, what they [the respondents] said about the cause and effects is known to everyone. Why bother to inquire about it?

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec 09, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.8.1

- Sam: Say, the quantity of questionnaire, the copies of the questionnaire sent out and the copies returned are not the same; the items in the questionnaire didn't work. Some schoolmates just haven't given out any questionnaire, or some other schoolmates sent out too few copies of the questionnaire, so they made up the data.
- Yam: Some students in the class next door were like that. We printed out copies of the questionnaire and gave them out one after the other. But, they didn't give out any questionnaire at all, they got better grades than we did.
- Liam: During the work process, you [sic: Liam referred to himself when he used the pronoun 'you' here] came to see that some of the questionnaire data collected could not give you what the IES topic wanted. You found

something missing, so you added in a few questionnaire items. Then the data set have to be tampered again.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.8.2

Liam: They [the data] were different from what I had expected. It's because as the work progressed, I found that the questionnaire items I set already diverted from the inquiry topic, the data collected differed from the topic. You [sic: Liam referred to himself when he used the pronoun 'you' here] got to use the data, and did some 'fine-tuning' to the data to give out a perfect conclusion [to the inquiry topic]

Muriel: How about Leo? How did you 'fine-tune' your data? And to what direction? Like making them closer to the data already collected? Or towards what others' have expected from the information? How did you decide?

Leo: Sometimes data I collected contradicted with one another. I'm not sure what went wrong. Were some of the questionnaire items not well-designed? Or we just had asked for answers detailed enough in the questionnaire? I didn't do any interview survey.

Muriel: Then you have nothing else to follow up with?

Leo: Then the only way was to add in one item or two into the questionnaire ... then it made the [data analysis] work perfectly done.

Muriel: Then the one or two questionnaire items would give you the 'missing' data you would expect.

Leo: Right.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.8.3

Muriel: How did you come to know what answers people would expect from the IES?

Leo: I observe the social climate and then decide [what the answers to write in the IES report]

Muriel: So you would come up with a conclusion through the IES?

Leo: To confirm the ideas I have taken up from the social climate

Liam: I concern how to meet the needs of HKEAA ...

[...]

Muriel: ... Are they the same, the answers you anticipated and the answers you think HKEAA expects from IES?

Sam: Some of them, yes. When I set the questionnaire items, I feel that people will give me a certain answer, and I also knew that the HKEAA will accept that answer. So I set a questionnaire to confirm my idea. But there were also items that collected data different from what I anticipated, and I didn't want to tamper with the data to make them look good. For example, the question: Has the government offered sufficient help to mainland transfer students? The data collected said it's not sufficient. I didn't want to make it up to say that 'It is sufficient'. I just don't want to say what the authority wants to hear, I just don't want to do so.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.9

Muriel: You anticipated some difficulties, how do you deal with that?

Liam: Go and ask the teacher.

Yam: I push myself to think a lot of stuff to show the teacher. Once, I came up with four ideas, but it turned out that all the four were banned by the teacher. So I have to think of a lot ideas as options for the teacher, like having eight instead of four and there's got to be one or two of these ideas that would work. [Preparing more ideas] is better than less. It's better than feeling depressed after all ideas are banned.

Liam: Give the teacher more options.

Yam: Think of more options.

Muriel: Among all the options you show the teacher, do you manage to know which one is the most relevant and more useful?

Yam: What you think is relevant may not be what the teacher thinks.

Muriel: So you simply prepare the options to ask the teacher. How about you, Leo? How do you deal with difficulties you anticipated?

Leo: I will make reference to relevant literature.

Liam: You make 'copy' from the literature.

Muriel: You'll find help by making 'reference' from other previous literatures, Have you worried about being banning by the teacher?

Leo: I'll alter them [the ideas] a bit.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Jan 28, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.10

Daniel: That's good. It's good that they can do it for the grades. Some students just don't give it a damn ... We do have a portion of students who don't care about grades at all. What they do is to submit an assignment. They haven't felt the pressure of HKDSE. How do you expect them to finish a project? There's nothing we can do. We can't help. It's already half way through [the three-year senior secondary] now ...

(Translated from oral Chinese, Mr. Daniel Interview, Jan 28, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.11

Ivy: I think their [HKEAA's] assessment is pretty subjective, frankly speaking. That means, those [IES exemplars] on the[ir] website seem to have covered a lot, but the contents may not be that rich. I think some [of the IES exemplars] have got graded higher than they should be. I feel that they [HKEAA] recognize a variety of research methods ... I feel that they don't really expect high quality work, high quality in terms of the content. Rather they want the students to know what limitations they have [during the inquiry process], and the need to use different research methods to collect data etc. ... So now I have accommodated to that, telling students they must use questionnaire survey in the IES project. That is the basic for a passing grade. But to strive for a better grade, they can add in other inquiry methods. We have adjusted our assessment.

(Translated from oral Chinese, Ms. Ivy Interview, Jan 11, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.12

Ivy: As far as research method is concerned, literature review should be done instead. In real life, when people want to find out more about a thing, they read. But why do I pick questionnaire survey? For one thing, to be able to do literature review requires very strong analytical power. It is not easy to

train students up to do that well. I'm not saying questionnaire is easy, but it is easier for me to teach. What does it mean by easier to teach? It's easier to make concepts explicit and clear, and to help students to find out what they really want, and to find the questions to ask for the answers. I think that our kids, like more secondary school students, would find that easier to get hold of, more substantial for them. If you compare [questionnaire survey] with literature review as a research method, I don't think my students can do that. Literature review requires higher order thinking and it [higher order] needs to be revealed in the actual writing. But with questionnaire survey, at least they have really set a questionnaire, and you can see their efforts shown and score them for that.

(Translated from oral Chinese, Ms. Ivy Interview, Jan 11, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.13

Muriel: How do you think the IES experience may affect you?

Liam: It's like you are working, as an employee, you need to meet the needs of the customer. Right now, we are doing the IES to meet the needs of the government, EDB. It's the same. It lets us begin adapting to meet the needs of the other early.

Sam: We need to submit data analysis in the final task [the project write-up] ... it feels like we are doing a project for a big company.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec 16, 2011).

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Excerpt 8.14

Muriel: Do you feel that the way they [the Education Bureau officials] deal with changes in senior secondary academic structure is more or less similar to the way you deal with IES?

Yam: Yeah, it's similar. They don't know what they are doing, and they simply do something. We are the first cohort [doing the senior secondary school curriculum and HKDSE] ... we've got to do what has been given to us. But they [the government officials] may not know what they want to achieve, and we [students] will never know why we are doing all these ... What we know is to submit assignments for grades.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec 16, 2011).

Excerpt 8.15

Liam: They [the government officials] want to change our learning styles, and turn students into generalists. I think after they change the academic structure, they have ignored certain students ... students not doing so well academically, or student not of the ordinary type like me, I have dyslexia ... I think with the change in academic structure, we have to fulfill the HKDSE requirement, we have [learning] difficulties but have to meet the same standards. It really discourages me and others, it's just too difficult.

[...]

I think they target at students who would be admitted to the university, and they ignore a portion, a big portion of students who wouldn't be. They put students who can't be admitted to university together in the same game with those who can, and it is just wasting the time of the students who won't do university.

[...]

For me, every individual has their strengths and skills. Hong Kong educational system should not be 'knowledge-base', but to meet the different needs of the students. Say you have a basic education, from there [students can choose] to [receive] professional trainings [at technical institutes], or [students can choose] college. There should be diversified [schooling options] to meet different student needs. To bring all students up to the university level [is in fact] discriminat[ing] those who have no [university] degrees. Different skills and knowledges should be of equal status. Knowledges from the university do not necessarily have higher status.

(Translated from oral Chinese, SFGI, Dec 16, 2011).

Appendix 9: Excerpts of IES Reports and HKEAA Exemplar

(in their original written Chinese)

Note:

All markings (underlinings, arrows, circles) on the extracts are added emphases that highlighted the elements in support of the discussion in the main text of the thesis.

Excerpts 9.1: Excerpts of Students' Reflections:

Excerpt 9.1.1: Pearl's Reflections

8. 研究限制及檢討

報告的角度大多是從青少年出發，包括問卷調查和訪談的對象均是青少年。相反卻含有比較少父母的意見，所以可能尚欠缺多角度思考。不過時間有限，本人未能完成多角度的研究，因此客觀性方面尚欠充足。

而且問卷派發頗有難度，因為受訪者未必如實作答，也可能不認真回答。而約見訪談亦有難度，因為相方未必能配合時間，在訪談時，若遇上大家無語的時候(dead air)，情況更為尷尬，作為訪問者，應先打破沉默，主動追問或問其他問題，讓受訪者在安心和不尷尬的情況下繼續進行訪談，所以經過是次經驗，我明白到在派發問卷和訪談前，應該要準備充足，同時亦要考慮好各種應對措施。

這些檢討，希望能給予將來的研究者作參考。

Excerpt 9.1.2: Yvonne's Reflections

而在研究期間都有遇到困難，而就在問卷調查中未能為焦點問題3.找出主要的結論和資料一事，最後利用訪問一些專業人士，收集更多專業意見，因而，找出現時青少年最需要關注的是心理問題上和現在能找出更適合及有效的解決方法。另外也進一步了解了現時青少年協助中心裡的自殘學生應以什麼因素和方法去幫他們解決問題及如何令他們明白真正的解難方法。這些資料對本研究中提出可行的解決方法有很大幫助。而訪問中的問題，會在預先準備好，避免有尷尬和浪費時間的情況出現和能確保在訪談中能收集到有用的資料。仍會為若訪談人士未能提及的資料，做足心理準備。

這些檢討，希望能給予將來的研究者作參考之用，令他們能找出更多更好的建議和分析結果。

Excerpt 9.1.3: Yam's Reflections

7. 研究限制及檢討:

發現低年級的同學對問卷調查的問題不太清楚，有些問題胡亂剔除或沒有填寫，導致數據不太準確造成誤差。而自己去派發問卷的回收率較學校替我派問卷的回收率多，從而方便我日後去作出分析，雖然要親先去取回問卷，但總括整個過程都順利進行。不過由於時間和資料有限，本人只能在本校學校去進行調查，因此代表性方面尚欠充足。

而在編制問卷的過程中，本人需要去考慮到低年級與高年級的看法和價值觀，因為兩者對潮流文化的看法原因可能不同，因此要搜集更多資料才可設立問卷題目。

這些檢討，希望能有助我日後進行研究其他報告。

Excerpt 9.1.4: Sam's Reflections

研究限制及檢討：

在這次的研究中我曾遇到幾個困難，因為調查的對象是內地轉校生，但學校當中並沒有足夠多的內地轉校生讓我可以收集足夠大的數據，我只能在校內派發 20 份內地轉校生的問卷，而在問卷收集時我發現有一部分的問卷因為有部分同學的原因的問卷不同原因而要作廢。

在約人做訪問時要遷就訪問對象的時間而作出調整。做訪問時要清晰地表達題目的意思，否則別人會會錯意。如果問題不夠清晰或者一針見血被訪問者會很難理解我的提問和難以有清晰的方向作答，以至將題目的意思理解錯誤。我也在訪問中學會了在訪問中要引導同學作答和訪問的技巧。而在設計問卷時應將問題的重點字眼標清楚，選擇題的選項應該多元化，題目的表達要清晰等。這樣才能方便同學清楚問卷的作答方式。

這些檢討，希望能予將來的研究者作參考。

Excerpt 9.1.5: Bonnie's Reflections

7. 個人反思

雖然本專題探究最終能順利完成，但當中仍存在不少過失及不足之處。初期擬定問卷問題時，經常出現偏離研究題目的情況。有些問題雖與研究題目相關，但對探究焦點問題卻無關，以及含有個人主觀意見，因此老師建議我們與朋友互相討論並指出對方的不足和奇怪之處。我藉此發現自己忘了在一些多項選擇題中列出指示，令人不清楚可選擇多少項。所以，我明白到互相合作及指點的好處，因為問卷是自己所設計，因此很可能發現不到問題所在，需要旁觀者才能有客觀的評價。

於收回問卷期間，由於回收問卷數量不足，令新高中與舊制學生的問卷數目比例不一，以致統計出來的數據不夠客觀及公平。因此需再去複印問卷並再次自行派發給舊制同學，才能分析出統一性的結果。此讓我反省到應在任何計劃的實行前，先預計過程中有機會發生的小意外，並作出預備，如預留多 20 份問卷以預防同學不交回問卷的情況。

另外，由於我遺失了第二次訪談的錄音記錄，需要憑記憶將內容打成文字稿，令不少重要內容變得不完整。我醒覺自己不應只依賴錄音機，因為這只是方便我記錄較完整的資料，故仍需以書寫形式記下重點，以備不時之需。這啟示了雖然科技十分先進及方便，但也不可過於依賴，否則可能得不償失的道理。

在研究的同時，亦加深了我對新高中課程的認識，如「學生學習概覽」和「其他學習經驗」的範疇和作用，提升了我在新學制教育下的方向感。

Excerpt 9.1.6: Hannah's Reflection:

8. 反思

鑑於愈來愈多青少年長時間使用互聯網來作不同用途，希望透過網上搜集所得的資料、問卷調查和訪問了解一下在新媒體潛移默化下，青少年如何建立出不正確的價值觀和心理發展，並提出可行的建議。然而，在過程中卻遇到不少問題。

網上資料方面，所找到的都是那些報章、網上資料、文獻等二手資訊。由於它們均缺乏真確性和客觀，於是我嘗試尋找其他能找到一手資料的途徑，如：訪談和問卷。

問卷方面，由於擔心完成問卷所需的時間太長，於是我盡量把問題精簡化，並保持客觀的態度，去繼續設定往後的問題。當重新收回問卷時卻發現數量沒有合符預期所想。唯有再到各班和親戚家派發問卷，直至數量達到八十份。最後，所收回來的數據未能充分回應到“現時互聯網上的監管方法，對阻止青少年去接收色情、暴力等不良訊息的可行性”這條焦點問題，因而需要另找其他調查方法如：透過訪問去找更多不同持份者的意見，再綜合所有數據，加以分析和比較。

訪問方面，早前未能安排一個合適的時間去進行訪談，為了盡快找到更多的資料來協助我完成有關專題研習，於是我於六月相約我的訪談對象：社工，完成專訪，然後，運用訪問的內容去協助我完成接下來的階段。

在研究的過程當中，通過由不同渠道搜集而來的資料，以及與校內社工進行的一連串訪問，讓我明白到事前和事後準備都是十分重要的。在分析網上資料的過程中，我需要十分仔細地去選出較客觀的文獻和研究報告，同時要留意資料的來源及真確性，以避免一些過於主觀的資訊影響到最後研究所得出的結論。而在訪問方面，我需事前整理好問題，避免受訪者不明白問題的意思，而未能如我預期適當地回應到有關問題。

Excerpt 9.1.7: Liam's Reflection:

反思

在是次的專題研究中，我學到有關網上購物的多方面認識，例如：網上購物的類型、定義和真實情況。在探究過程前，我一直輕視別人的研究報告，但當我親力研究一份專題時，才明白到一份好的研究報告是需要投入精神和心血的。

在研究過程中，從我訂下題目、找參考資料、擬定問卷、分析數據及整合內容，都令我感受到一大困難，盡管現在已完成到研究結尾部分，我依然難以忘記過程中的艱辛，例如：在進行多角度分析時，難以以客觀的角度分析。雖然過程困難重重，可是我也憑着積極的態度面對困難，如今也總算是盡我最大努力地完成了。

現在到了研究的最後階段，我回顧一直以來的成果，我體會到何謂「一分耕耘，一分收穫」的道理，所以我期望下次將比今次做得更好。

Excerpt 9.1.8: Leo's Reflection:

反思

首先是在找尋一些於研習題目的相關資料上，因為必須選擇的資料要有可信性，又要附合題目的，的確非常困難，曾試追尋找了一個小時，也沒有一份完全適合的資料，幸好自己的堅持和努力選擇到一份合適的資料。

另外，因為時間管理上出現了問題，令到做這一份報告的時候，我必須要用盡我有限的時間，令人身心疲倦，所以下次再遇上要做研習報告時，我必須好好地管理好自己的時間。

Excerpts 9.2: Problems in Students' IES Projects

Excerpt 9.2.1: Liam's: Improper Data Collation and Causal Analysis

焦點問題二：網站購物會造成什麼影響？

(一)金錢敏感度層面

圖表四：每月的零用錢消費介乎多少之間

圖表五：每月在網上購物平均花費的總額

圖表六：網上購物會增加無謂消費

從以上數據得知，65%受訪者每月的零用錢消費介乎於\$201—\$500 或以上（圖表四）。有 82%的受訪者每次網上購物平均花費\$200 以下，佔零用錢消費約有三成（圖表五），反映網上購物漸漸地成了日常購物的一部分。

（圖表六）顯示，76%受訪者同意網上購物會增加無謂消費，可能原因是網上購物大多時都不是以現金付款，受訪者容易不知不覺間增加消費；參考（圖表四）及（圖表五），網上購物的趨勢日增，在不知不覺間增加消費的問題，會影響到受訪者對金錢的敏感度，這個問題很值得我們去關注，而我亦會於研究報告的結尾中加以探討。

● 總結

接著，回應焦點問題二，首先從金錢敏感度層面看，我發現網上購物是會降低受訪者的金錢敏感度。（圖表六）有 76%受訪者同意網上購物會增加無謂消費，由於網上購物大多時都是以信用卡等方式付款，而非以現金交易，便令青少年容易不知不覺間增加消費，甚至會向朋友借貸，引致入不敷支或欠下債務等問題。文獻資料(3.2) 指出，『網路購物平台經常會介紹當今流行商品，吸引消費者購買，間接使青少年可以藉由購物網頁得知目前最新的流行資訊。』這日新月異的流行資訊能增加青少年的購買慾，從而降低受訪者對金錢的敏感度。

Excerpt 9.2.2: Hannah's: Improper Data Collation and Causal Analysis; Basing Conclusions on Unsupported Claims

焦點問題二：現時互聯網上的監管方法，是否有效地阻止青少年去接收色情、暴力等不良訊息？（Q.9）

圖九. 你認為現時互聯網上的監管方法能有效地阻止青少年瀏覽色情資訊嗎？

問：你認為現時互聯網上的監管方法能有效地阻止青少年瀏覽色情資訊嗎？

答：當然沒有，因為香港的體制尚未發展到有一個完善的政策去監管互聯網的資訊，相比起其他國家，這是較人落後的，所以在這方面，我認為還有很大的進步空間。就在這個緩沖期，青少年就會因不懂得選擇或沒有人給予意見，而墮入色情資訊的陷阱。

根據圖九，100%的中學生認為現時互聯網上的監管方法未能有效地阻止青少年瀏覽色情資訊。而受訪者就表示因為香港的體制尚未發展到有一個完善的政策去監管互聯網的資訊，相比起其他國家，這是較人落後的，導致很多青少年在這個緩沖期墮入色情資訊的陷阱。

7. 總結及建議

互聯網上的監管制度方面，100%的中學生認為現時互聯網上的監管方法未能有效地阻止青少年瀏覽色情資訊。而受訪者就表示因為香港的體制尚未發展到有一個完善的政策去監管互聯網的資訊，相比起其他國家，這是較人落後的，導致很多青少年在這個緩沖期墮入色情資訊的陷阱。

此外，調查結果還顯示，部份中學生認為互聯網最能影響青少年的性觀念，可見，互聯網上資訊的真確性，是會直接影響青少年的性觀念，一旦網絡上的性知識存有錯誤，便會導致青少年對性產生錯誤的價值觀，影響日後的心理發展。根據圖十二，有55%的中學生認為最有責任協助青少年遠離色情資訊的是青少年自己，其次是家人、政府，以及學校。可見，家人、政府和學校只是協助者，青少年自己才是最終的決定者。而受訪者則表示父母和青少年自己是最有責任協助青少年遠離色情資訊，因為父母與青少年相處得最長時間，所以較其他因素帶來更直接的影響。顯示父母與青少年同樣有重要的責任去監管和遠離色情網站，但最關鍵的仍是青少年自身。

Excerpt 9.2.3: Emily's: Misreading Survey Data

Total number of questionnaire collected

初中	高中
54 人(約 55%)	45 人(約 45%)

問卷調查結果（學業層面）：

Q1 (1) 在考試開始前的一個星期，我會因擔心自己的成績而失眠

Q1 (4) 當每次小測不合格時，我的心情會因成績差而心情低落

從 Q1 (1)的圖表結果顯示，35%位受訪高中同學在面對考試或者接受考試結果的情況下，心理的情緒會比較有大的起伏，甚至會因心理的不安造成難以入睡狀況。相對而言，只有 24% 就讀初中的受訪青少年會出現這些問題，可見初中的受訪同學明顯較少面對此問題。Q1 (4)的圖表結果顯示，有 40%受訪高中同學在成績退步的情況下，會出現悲觀的感覺，然而初中同學只有 29%位受訪同學有此情況。這很可能是因為高中同學相比起初中同學更重視學業，而且需要面對更多的測驗、考試等等，因此有更大壓力，並會出現一些負面的情緒。這反映在調查結果中，受訪高中同學在評價自己的心理健康時，學業的壓力亦更會成為他們如何評價自己心理健康的因素。

Excerpt 9.2.4: Kim's: Improper Data Collation and Causal Analysis; Basing Conclusions on Unsupported Claims

Survey Respondents: Students in a Secondary School in Tai Po

Total number of questionnaires collected: 90 copies

性別:

男	女
51%	49%

年齡分佈:

低年級	高年級
32%	68%

2.2 青少年對結婚的看法

- 青少年如何看婚姻？（問卷第一部份：Q 1 – Q 2）

(圖 1.1)

(圖 1.2)

把對象分為低年級與高年級後，低年級有 28%（圖 1.2）的受訪者都不清楚自己會否考慮將來結婚，而高年級只有 16.3%（圖 1.2）的受訪者不清楚自己會否考慮將來結婚。相比下發現高年級的學生對自己將來會否結婚比較清楚。可見隨著年紀的不同對婚姻的看法也會有所影響。

小結：

根據問卷第一部份：（Q 1 – Q 2）的調查結果，發現不清楚自己會否考慮將來結婚的情況，低年級的受訪者比高年級的多。相比之下，高年級的學生對自己將來會否結婚比較清楚。（圖 1 – 1.2）。而且，不同年級的受訪者對適婚年齡的標準也不同。可見，年紀不同對婚姻的看法也會有所影響。

總結及建議

我透過播閱文獻及問卷調查，得到的一手和二手資料令我更了解這個題目及得到了我希望得到的答案。

根據調查所得，現時的青少年大部份都會有結婚的打算。但當把對象分為低年級與高年級來分析後，發現高年級的學生對自己將來會否結婚比低年級的學生較清楚。可見隨著年紀的不同對婚姻的看法也會有所影響。而大多數現時的青少年都認為適婚年齡是在 18 – 25 歲及 26 – 30 歲之間。可見，現今的結婚趨勢漸趨向年輕化。

Excerpt 9.2.5: Pearl's: Uncritical Use of Literature as Authority

5. 文獻回顧

心理學對父母管教子女的模式做過很多研究¹，發現很多時候，父母都會不知不覺間慣用了一些固定管教子女的方法和步驟，這些方式可以以專制型 (Authoritarian)、寬鬆型 (Permissive)、冷漠型 (Neglecting)、權威型 (Authoritative) 四種管教模式來歸納。我認為這四種管教模式為我的研究介定了基本的背景知識。

根據雅虎搜索得出的資料，十多歲的年青人已建立了基本的價值觀，思想雖然稚嫩，但已不讓父母干預他們的世界。他們寧願在網絡中迷失，也不願和父母多談幾句。父母總是說孩子性格偏執，不知如何溝通。須知孩子的性格深受父母的管教模式影響，你如何管教，便如何塑造孩子的性格。心理學家將管教模式分為專制型、威信型、容許型和忽略型四種，不同的教養方式就孕育出不同的性格。這些管教模式大致上與上一份文獻的意思相同。

根據雅虎搜索得出的資料，家庭是情緒單位的概念，有着緊密相扣或互相影響的關係網絡，所有人類行為背後的驅動力來自家庭生活的漲潮與退潮，亦即家庭成員之間遠離與親近的推力與吸力，致令家庭成員在思想、情感與行為上與家庭關係系統連結。這個文獻讓我了解到家庭成員在思想、情感與行為上都與家庭關係系統有所連結，即子女都深受家庭管教模式影響。

愛的教育是一種教育哲學，倡導施予溫情關懷，不能以體罰的管教方式來教育子女²。古語有云：「嚴父出孝子，慈母多敗兒」。所以「愛的教育不是寵孩子，而是要細心地愛他、教孩子懂事、懂理」這份文獻讓我知道專制型和寬鬆型都不是好的管教方式。

以上文獻幫助我清晰了解分別四種不同的管教方式，加深了我在這份專題研習上的基礎背景知識，有助我介定不同的管教方式，以便作專題研習的深入探討之用。

¹家庭問題研究

(http://res.hkedcity.net/html/uni_edu/pri_teacher_train/playdemo/character/charresfam_article05.htm)

² 中華民國教育基本法第 8 條：「學生之學習權、受教育權、身體自主權及人格發展權，國家應予保障，並使學生不受任何體罰，造成身心之侵害。」

Excerpt 9.2.6: Wincey's: Improper Data Collation and Casual Analysis; Making Irrelevant Conclusions and Recommendations

7. 總結及建議

根據調查所得，「起底」文化在青少年階段已經變得很普遍。在文獻分析中不同的資料都顯示出，「起底」文化已經愈來愈嚴重。在問卷調查中發現受訪者一般都認為起底問題的情況嚴重（圖3），這能令文獻資料帶出的結果更加肯定。另外，在調查發現中，「起底」文化對社會上的青少年帶來很大的衝擊。由於青少年認同「起底」是欺凌的一種（圖3），這反映出「起底」加重了青少年遭網上欺凌的情況。同時，由於青少年在此階段需要別人的認同及肯定，部份人誤會認為透過「起底」可以引起別人的關注。還有在「起底」文化下，較多青少年會選擇向不認識的人作出批評或回應、加入起底等行動，相反認識的就不會，可能因不受任何法律的監禁和他人不知你是誰的原因。

其實只有很小的青少年在「起底」事件中的角色是起底者或受害者，大部份的都是旁觀者，或是沒有加入起底行動，但有旁觀及留言的人。由此可得知其實起底者及被起底者只是一小部份的人，很多青少年都是旁觀，目擊「起底」的發生（圖1）。大多數受訪者看過「起底」事件後都選擇看過就算（圖6a）；而導致有以上的選擇的主要原因是對事件沒有興趣及不想有麻煩。只有不足20%的受訪者會有實質的行動（圖6），他們有行動的原因是覺得無傷大雅及看到短片引起網民的熱烈討論，所以加入；而不是因不認同事主的觀點，沒有真正不同意的原因。不過這不代表旁觀的沒有受到影響，由於沒有限制下吸收資訊，他們覺得容易被潛移默化；觀點/看法容易受他人影響，依賴「起底」為吸收資訊的方法及以觀看/嘲笑他人的相片、影片和資料為一種娛樂。

在「起底」文化出現之前，青少年喜歡於網站上放出自己或他人的相片、影片和資料，與其他網上朋友分享。但是現在因有起底的關係，青少年把資料上載之前都要擔心會被起底。同時因資訊太流通沒有限制，在網上不認識的人都可看到你的資料，未曾見都可成為朋友。而且不少人會透過「起底」行為去獲得別人的認同。與其他人當起底是比賽，看誰人可以取得更多資料，令自己在網絡世界得到別人的認同。

還有改善「起底」文化的情況上，我覺得透過父母/學校的教育及立法禁止網站上載情況可以得到改善。如果父母及學校可以多留意青少年在網上行為，教導他們尊重他人的私隱，最好由小做起，建立一個良好的習慣。我建議如果風氣持續的話，那麼便應用立法的方法禁止網站上載「起底」的內容。

Excerpt 9.3: HKEAA Sample A1: Teenage Suicide in Hong Kong and Ways for Prevention

5. Findings and Analysis

5.1 Causes of teenage suicide and self-harm

Potential reasons for interviewees to harm themselves

Fig. 1

Fig. 2³

³ Figure 1 shows data on the question asking teenagers the possibility that they would harm themselves because of the listed reasons. The data of Figure 1 is collected from all 60 respondents of the questionnaire, while Figure 2's data is based on those who have or have friends attempted suicide and self-harm. The different questions are designed as a controlled measure for the possibility that there might be a big difference between the real and predicted reasons for those who have and have not attempted suicide respectively.

5.1.1 Emotional problems

Emotional problems rank as the most possible factor for teenagers to harm themselves. This may be due to the changes occurring to a teenager. During puberty, the hormonal change in a teenager's body is rapid and this will lead to mood changes. It is hard for teenagers to cope with this because they cannot alter their hormones easily. Lerner suggested that 'adolescence is a period of major change in body, mind and behavior. The basis of adolescent self-definition lives in the combination of these major changes.'⁴ This shows that teenagers must cope with these changes well so that they can have a smooth life and those who do not will handles the changes well will have problems in their moods and emotions.

Marks awarded and Comments:

Title: Teenage Suicide in Hong Kong and Ways for Prevention

Stage III

Marks: 8-9

Comments: This is an example of good enquiry and organization skills. The candidate is able to perform triangulation with data collected from different sources, i.e. the survey, interviews and secondary sources, demonstrating multiple perspective thinking and formulating well-supported arguments in the discussion of the findings. Besides, relevant concepts are applied as basis for the data analysis and cross-referencing.

A conclusion well-grounded on the findings is drawn, responding to the focus questions.

Furthermore, the candidate evaluates the limitations of this study and makes some valid suggestions for further study of the issue.

Endnotes

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- ⁱ The four key tasks of the Education Bureau's educational reforms are Project Learning, Moral Education and Civic Education, Reading to Learn, and Information Technology for Interactive Learning.
- ⁱⁱ In this thesis, 'social education' refers broadly to teaching and learning in terms of social matters. In Hong Kong, social education at the junior secondary level is offered mainly through subjects in the PSHE KLA, which includes EPA, Social Studies, IH, and LS. At the senior secondary level, social education is provided mainly through the core subject, LS.
- ⁱⁱⁱ The Curriculum Development Committee was a free-standing advisory body in Hong Kong responsible for developing teaching syllabuses recommended for use in local primary and secondary schools. The Curriculum Development Committee was re-organized in 1988 and renamed the Curriculum Development Council (CDC). Despite the name change, the body's scope of duties remained basically the same. Throughout this study, it will be referred as simply the CDC. (<http://cd1.edb.hkedcity.net/cd/cdc/en/page01.htm>)
- ^{iv} Under the present curriculum reforms, secondary school subjects are restructured and placed under different KLAs. D&T is placed under the Technology Education KLA whereas metalwork and woodwork were completely removed from the Hong Kong school curriculum; A&D has been restructured into a new subject, Visual Arts, placed under the Arts Education KLA. Biology, chemistry and physics are placed under the Science Education KLA.
- ^v Quote in Chinese: “專題研習根本不是「所有」學習，這種誘發學生學習動機，要求學生掌握自我學習和探究能力的方法只佔全部學習的某一個百分比，我們為甚麼還要為評核而困擾” (Chiu, 2006, p.14)
- ^{vi} In September 2009, LS was introduced in addition to Mathematics, Chinese language and English language, forming the four core subjects of the new senior secondary curriculum. The official curriculum aims of LS is for students to 'explore issues relevant to the human condition in a wide range of contexts', 'to understand the contemporary world and its pluralistic nature', '[to] us[e] knowledge and perspectives from other subjects to study contemporary issues, for the purpose of connecting knowledge and concepts, and develop cross-curricular thinking. The ultimate goal is for students 'to construct personal knowledge of immediate relevance to themselves in today's world' (CDC 2007:2).
- ^{vii} Under the Education Bureau's curriculum reform, a new senior secondary academic structure and a new school curriculum were established in September 2009. Students who finish the three-year junior secondary education (S1-S3) can do another three years of senior secondary education (S4-6) and take one public exam, the HKDSE. The very first HKDSE was conducted between March and May 2012. Secondary school education thus comprises six years (3+3), instead of the previous seven years (3+2+2), which involved two public exams: the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) at the end of the two-year senior-secondary schedule, and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) at the end of the subsequent two years of matriculation. With the introduction of the HKDSE, the HKEAA discontinued both the HKCEE and the HKALE for school candidates in 2012, and in 2013, the HKEAA will hold the last HKALE, this time only for private candidates (<http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/>).
- ^{viii} In the old secondary academic structure, students who preferred a university

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- education would continue their studies for two years of matriculation, and take the HKALE at the end of the two-year matriculation process.
- ix The purpose of IES is for students ‘to integrate knowledge acquired from the Areas of Study [in the Liberal Studies curriculum] and ... to synthesis knowledge in general through enquiry into issues of interest to individual students. It encourages students to appreciate the complexities of the modern world, develop critical thinking skills and make informed decisions’ (CDC, 2007, p.12).
- x The IES adopts the school-based assessment which means assessments are administered in schools and marked by the students’ own teachers. It will account for 20% of the subject grade, while the remaining 80% is the written assessment. Schools are required to submit to HKEAA IES scores for each student at three stages of the IES work, namely, Project proposal, Data collection & Product, across the 3-year senior secondary schooling.
- xi Apart from the name of the researcher, all names in this paper are fictitious to protect the privacy of participants.
- xii All interviews and focus-group discussions quoted in this thesis are transcribed into English from oral Chinese.
- xiii Upon school teachers’ request, the HKEAA developed IES exemplars and published them on the HKEAA website in September 2010, one year into the new senior-secondary curriculum. In total, nine IES exemplars were developed from projects completed by students participating in the old LS program, which was an elective under the old HKALE. These exemplars come with marks and comments serving to demonstrate how IES projects both in written and non-written forms could be assessed according to the SBA criteria. (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/SBA/sba_hkdse_core/LS/IES/sampleA.html and http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/SBA/sba_hkdse_core/LS/IES/sampleB.html)
- xiv Yip, S.Y.W. (2007, July 15). “Other Learning Experiences: A Catalyst for Whole-person Development” retrieved Jan 5, 2010, <http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?langno=1&nodeID=6094>

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