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Perceived Benefits of a Life and Career Development Program adopting Positive Youth Development Approach in Hong Kong

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Abstract: This paper presents a qualitative evaluation study which examined the subjective experience and perceived benefits of 57 Secondary 3 students who had participated in a life and career development project using the positive youth development approach in a Tier 2 Program of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in Hong Kong. Focus group methodology was adopted in the study. Results showed that the students had very positive views about the program. They expressed that the program enhanced their intrapersonal competence (self-confidence, courage, resilience and future aspirations) as well as interpersonal competence (cooperation and communication skills of the students through teamwork). The students had reflections of their past lifestyles and were motivated to make positive changes. They became more forward-looking on their future paths, and showed eagerness to establish their life goals, formulate their future plans, and research more information on their future aspirations. The present study provides evidence on the effectiveness of the use of positive youth development programs in nurturing the holistic development of Chinese adolescents through life and career development programs.

Keywords: life and career development, perceived benefits, adolescents, positive youth development, qualitative evaluation

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Introduction

“What do you want to be in the future?” is a question that most of us encountered when we were young. Different occupations such as policeman, teacher, farmer, doctor, nurse, etc. have appeared in the compositions and drawings of the kids. As expected, people may change their occupational aspirations when they grow up and acquire more knowledge about the nature of different careers, information on the changing world, as well as self-understanding about their personalities, interests and competencies (1,2). As such, the developmental task of “career” seems to accompany us in our development.

Career is the “time extended working out of a purposeful life pattern through work undertaken by the person” (3, p. 6). Based on Super’s lifespan-life space approach of career (2,4), an individual undergoes different stages of career development in compliance with the personal life-span development. In each stage, one may need to fulfill the life and career tasks so as to transit to another stage. During the stage of adolescence, one may transit from the growth stage to the exploration stage, which is characterized by the development of one’s self-concept in terms of competence, interests, attitudes and needs. Hence, positive youth development is critical to adolescents in their life and career development, and the positive youth development attributes are the building blocks of the future career competencies of an individual. This also echoes the trait-factors theory (5) that posits the importance of congruence between one’s personal styles and the occupational environment. Indeed, self-understanding is crucial for identifying the personal traits of an individual.

Gysbers and colleagues (6,7) expanded the ideas of career development to include life development. Life career development is defined as “self-development over the life span through the integration of the roles, settings, and events of a person’s life” (6, p. 648). Rather than taking a narrow perspective of “vocational development” and “career counseling”, life career development takes a more comprehensive perspective to integrate human development across the life span (2). Hence, life and career development enhances the development of life competencies, attitudes and values so that an individual can master his/her own life.

From this point of view, life and career development aligns with the concepts of positive youth development. Positive youth development emphasizes the importance of assets, strengths and competencies of adolescents (8,9). Benson (10) identified 40 developmental assets. Lerner et al. (11) identified six “C”s of positive youth development, namely competence, confidence, connection, character, caring and contribution. Catalano et al. (12) proposed a systematic framework of adolescent positive youth development and highlighted fifteen positive youth development constructs, namely bonding, resilience, cognitive competence, emotional competence, moral competence, behavioral competence, social competence, spirituality, beliefs in the future, clear and positive identity, self-determination, self-efficacy, prosocial involvement, prosocial norms and recognition of positive behavior. The competency-building paradigm provides a strong conceptual framework for the design of a life and career development program.

This study examined the perceived benefits of the participants who joined a life and career development project using the positive youth development approach under the Project P.A.T.H.S. (Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programmes). The Project P.A.T.H.S. adopts the positive youth development approach to implement a large-scale positive youth development program for junior secondary school students (i.e., Grades 7 to 9) in Hong Kong. There are two tiers in the Project. Tier 1 Program is a structural universal curriculum to enhance psychosocial competencies of all junior secondary school students, whereas Tier 2 Program targets students with greater psychosocial needs and makes use of diverse intervention strategies in helping the adolescents enhance their interpersonal and intrapersonal development. In the past few years, the majority of Tier 2 Programs employed

adventure-based counseling and voluntary services as the core program design (13,14). There is empirical evidence showing that Tier 2 Programs were effective in helping the adolescents develop their competencies (13-15).

The program reported in this paper adhered to the positive youth development paradigm of the Project P.A.T.H.S. and used a life and career development strategy to provide different learning opportunities for adolescents to develop their psychosocial competencies. The program aimed at developing the competencies and motivation of Secondary 3 students in their search of life goals and career development. The program covered eight sessions. The first two sessions took a whole form approach to introduce the concepts of life career planning to the students and increase their awareness of the importance of life goal formulation. The third to eighth sessions used a group-work strategy to provide different experiential opportunities for the participants to experience, reflect and learn. These programs included: a) adventure-based training program, b) an experiential life workshop; c) a visit to an enterprise and a sharing session with an entrepreneur, d) a simulated job interview for the students, e) a university hunt and a sharing session with university students, and f) an award presentation ceremony. Table 1 lists the objectives, nature and program details of the Project during the academic years of 2014-2015 and 2015-2016.

This paper reports the perceived benefits of the participants who participated in the aforementioned life and career development project using the positive youth development approach in Tier 2 Program of the Project P.A.T.H.S. Focus group interview strategy was employed in the study. Focus group is defined as “a qualitative research technique used to obtain data about feelings and opinions of a small group of participants about a given problem, experience, service or other phenomenon” (16, p. 414). Focus group is a useful and effective strategy to capture the views, ideas and experiences of the participants (17). As Kitzinger (18) suggested that focus group “capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data” (18, p. 299), this data collection strategy allows communication among participants to generate more ideas and rich content on the topic. The focus group methodology has been extensively used in the Project P.A.T.H.S. in the past years (19).

Methods

Participants and Procedures

The data were collected from the participants of the Tier 2 Program of the Project P.A.T.H.S. (i.e., life and career development program using the positive youth development approach) during the academic years of 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. They were Secondary 3 students in a government-subsidized secondary school. There were 36 and 35 students joining the programs in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 respectively. All students were invited to participate in the focus groups. Informed consent was obtained from both parents and students. Finally, 30 and 27 students joined the focus groups in the two cohorts respectively, forming a total of eight focus groups in the study.

The focus group interviews were conducted separately in different classrooms. In each cohort, the students were assigned to four focus groups based on their gender and class. There were six to eight students in each group. No other adults, except the trained researcher (i.e., the moderator of the focus group), were invited to join the focus group in order to allow students to talk more freely and openly. The moderator conducted the focus group interview according to an interview guide (Appendix 1). The students were encouraged to share their views and experiences of the program. The focus group interviews lasted for around an hour.

All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants, and the verbatim was transcribed by the student helpers.

Data Analysis

A general qualitative approach was employed in this study (20). Qualitative findings of the comments on the program effectiveness (i.e., Part 3 of the interview guide) were analyzed using theme analysis and pattern coding (21). The broad themes were extracted from the transcripts of the verbatim. Furthermore, the themes were further matched with the 15 positive youth development constructs highlighted in the Project P.A.T.H.S. (9).

Moreover, the responses to the last question “If you are invited to use three descriptors to describe the program, what three words will you use?” (Part 4: Overall comment) were also analyzed. The descriptors used by the students to describe the program were categorized into “positive”, “neutral” and “negative” responses. This would give us an overview of how the students perceived the program.

Results

Table 2 shows the responses of the students on the perceived benefits of the life and career development project using positive youth development constructs. It is not surprising to find that students showed enhancement in self-efficacy (e.g., researching more information for life goal formulation and making future plans), spirituality (e.g., setting clear and unswerving goals) and cognitive competence (e.g., more understanding of job nature and entrepreneurship), as these were the important elements of life and career development. From the sharing of Student A and Student B, they reviewed their lifestyles in the past and realized the importance of life goal formulation and planning for the future.

“We have to cherish the time. The time of our secondary school life is short. Only six years; it flies in the blink of an eye. I do not want to feel regretful after six years. I have to cherish the six years and develop myself. After joining the program, I understand more about myself. I am different from who I was in Secondary 1 and 2. I used to play and relax after finishing my homework at that time. Now, I have to take action. After joining the program, I know more about myself. I start to formulate my life goals. I must make good use of these three years to set my goals and make plans...I hope I can achieve my goals through actions. Otherwise, after graduating from the secondary school, I might still get lost.” (Student A)

“After joining the program, I find myself more mature. In the past, I always had this thought: ‘what subjects to select (for DSE)? I can decide later’. But in fact, time is running so fast and we will be in Secondary 4. Subject selection is very important to me. I now learn it. I become more active in planning [my future].” (Student B)

At the same time, students showed that the program enhanced their self-confidence and psychological maturity, promoted their diligence in their study and built up their courage. The Project also enhanced the wellbeing of the students. The paragraphs below were some students’ reflections on their changes:

“I am a person who easily gets stressed. But I am better than the previous ‘me’. In the past, I felt stressed whenever I handled different tasks, and was frightened that I could not complete them. But after joining the Project, I become more confident. When I face a new task, I am firm to say, ‘Good, I can do it’. I am not as hesitant as before.” (Student C)

"I become less passive [after joining the program]. When there are activities, I will join. I learn more and play more...After joining this program, I found myself happier. It's different from the past when I was depressed and always stayed at home. After participating in a series of activities, I would attempt to gain more experience. I become more active to join activities, and share my opinions." (Student D)

"I used to think that we have to play hard and enjoy everything when we are young. When someone asked me to go out, I would join. But now, I become hardworking. I have something that needs to be fulfilled. I become more aware of my academic performance." (Student E)

Regarding interpersonal competence, the program showed great impacts on building teamwork among the students, enhancing their cooperation with others, and improving their communication skills with others. The paragraphs below highlight some students' sharing on their growth in interpersonal competence:

"I understand that it is important to cooperate with others. For instance, in the 'university hunt', we needed to find out the answers by ourselves. We were divided into different groups. You could not do it by yourself, and refuse to share with others. You needed to seek help from others. With the limited time, cooperation is very important." (Student F)

"I am a person with very few friends. I always think that two or three friends would be enough for me. But in the 'university hunt', we performed teamwork, and the task was beyond one's capability to be accomplished. And there were more activities that needed cooperation with other persons. I started to realize that I have to open up myself and make more friends. I started to expand my social circle." (Student G)

In addition, Table 3 shows the descriptors used by the students to describe the Project. The students were very positive about the program. Out of 164 descriptors expressed by the students, 160 were positive descriptors (97.6%). The frequently cited descriptors were "amusing", "happy", "exciting" and "interesting", which represented the students' affective responses to the program. At the same time, the students described the program as "practical", "solid" and "meticulous", which illustrated the usefulness and well-organized design of the program. However, a few students found that the duration of the program was too short and the program was too difficult for them. The negative responses (3 out of 164 = 1.8%) were far fewer than the positive responses.

Discussion

This study examined the perceived benefits of the students after they joined a life and career development program adopting positive youth development approach in Tier 2 Program of Project P.A.T.H.S. In summary, there are several observations of the study. First, analyses of the descriptors of the respondents suggest that the students had very positive responses about the program. Second, aligned with the positive youth development paradigm (8,9,12), the life and career development program promoted the psychosocial competence of the students. Regarding intrapersonal development, the program enhanced their self-confidence, courage, resilience and future aspirations. For interpersonal competence, the program strengthened the students' cooperation and communication skills through teamwork. Third, the students had more reflections of their past lifestyles and were motivated to make positive changes. Fourth, the students were more forward-looking in their future paths, and showed eagerness to establish their life goals, formulate their future plans, and research more information on their future aspirations.

Adolescence is the developmental stage when adolescents search for self-identity, independence, intimacy, peer relationships and connections with the outside world (22). It is the time when they develop their competencies so as to make preparation for their transition to adulthood. However, it is also the time when they experience identity confusion, self-doubt, instability and chaos (23,24). Hence, life and career planning is essential for adolescents to enhance their self-understanding, and formulate their life goals and career development along their life paths. Unfortunately, life and career development programs have been criticized for their narrow scope of information dissemination of educational and vocational opportunities in Hong Kong (25), without taking a wider perspective on the whole-person development. In fact, from the developmental perspectives, life career development is essential for building adolescent self-identity, positive outlook and self-efficacy (6,26,27). The present findings also illustrate the effectiveness of the life and career development programs in enhancing the psychosocial development of adolescents, providing strong support for the integration of positive youth development paradigm and life career development model in the adolescent guidance and development programs.

There are several theoretical and practical implications of the study. Theoretically, the integration of positive youth development perspective and life career development is innovative and important to tease out the essential elements of life career development for the adolescents. The findings provide support that adolescents developed their psychosocial competence after participating in the program, and were motivated to pursue their life goals in their future paths. In the rapidly changing and competitive society, adolescents face a lot of challenges that may alter their career choices. Programs merely focusing on vocational development are inadequate and useless (6). What is more important is to develop adolescent competencies and resilience to meet the developmental and ecological challenges. As pointed out by Savickas et al. (28, p. 241),

“A major consequence of the interconnectedness between the different life domains is that we can no longer speak confidently of ‘career development’ nor of ‘vocational guidance’. Rather, we should envision ‘life trajectories’ in which individuals progressively design and build their own lives, including their work careers. Not only adolescents will encounter the big question: What am I going to make of my life? This question is at issue for everyone as they negotiate a series of major transitions in their lives occasioned by changes in health, employment, and intimate relationships.”

In their views, the importance of positive youth development constructs in determining the essence of life and career development is obvious.

Practically, the participants appreciated the creativity, diversity and usefulness of the program, which gave some threads on the program design of a life and career development program. Rather than using the conventional means of career talks, seminars and exhibitions, teachers and social workers should make use of different program means such as adventure-based training, visits to enterprises and sharing with entrepreneurs, simulation exercises, university visits to arouse adolescents’ interest and motivation in their life and career development.

There are several limitations of the study. First, the study was based on the qualitative data collected from focus groups in one secondary school in Hong Kong. There is a need to replicate the study in different schools and community settings. Second, focus group interviews were conducted once at the end of the program. It is recommended to have ongoing evaluation to capture the processes of changes during the intervention. Third, the students were shy and less expressive to share their feelings in a group; more time and encouragement from the moderator would be needed. An alternative is to conduct individual interviews. Fourth, peer checking and member checking were not performed due to the time

and manpower constraints, which may reduce the creditability of the study (20). Fifth, more qualitative data collection techniques such as case interviews and reflective journals can help to understand the subjective experiences of the students more deeply.

Despite the limitations, the present study examined the perceived benefits of a life and career development project using the positive youth development approach to enhance the psychosocial development of adolescents in Hong Kong. Essentially, the findings provide important insights for educators, researchers and social workers in the formulation of the future lifelong, holistic, contextual and preventive (28) life and career education in Hong Kong.

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Table 1. Program Content

	Program session	Objectives	Capacity	2014 Program	2015 Program
1	Talk on life and career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To arouse interest of the students on life and career development ➤ To build up students' knowledge on concepts of life and career development 	All Secondary 3 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talk on concepts of life and career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talk on concepts of life and career development
2	Workshop on life and career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To arouse interest of the students on life and career development ➤ To enhance students' understanding on the importance of life and career planning 	All Secondary 3 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Experiential exercise: The mini society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Experiential exercise: The mini society
3	Adventure-based training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To enhance resilience and problem-solving skills of the students ➤ To build up team cohesion of the group 	A group of Secondary 3 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Day camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Day camp
4	Advanced training workshop on life and career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To enhance self-understanding of the students ➤ To introduce the life course of career development ➤ To motivate the students on life goal formulation 	A group of Secondary 3 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advanced workshop on life and career development – experiential games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advanced workshop on life and career development – experiential games
5	Exposure program – a visit to an enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To let students learn from the experience of others on entrepreneurship ➤ To motivate the students on life goal formulation 	A group of Secondary 3 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A visit to a local hotel and interview with the hotel manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A visit to a local cafe and interview with the cafe owner ➤ Workshop of a hand-made leather production and interview with the owner-cum-instructor
6	Job interview workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To build the expression skills and confidence of the students 	A group of Secondary 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Experiential exercise: Job application and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Experiential exercise: Job application and

	Program session	Objectives	Capacity	2014 Program	2015 Program
		➤ To enhance the students' self-motivation	students	interview	interview
7	Exposure program – the university hunt	➤ To enhance the problem-solving skills of the students ➤ To let students get familiar with the university life ➤ To motivate the students on life goal formulation	A group of Secondary 3 students	➤ A visit to a university and an adventure-based university hunt	➤ A visit to a university and an adventure-based university hunt
8	Graduation ceremony	➤ To reinforce and award the students for their effort and participation ➤ To conduct program evaluation	A group of Secondary 3 students	➤ Award presentation and program evaluation	➤ Award presentation and program evaluation

Table 2. Responses of the students on their perceived benefits from the Project

Positive Youth Development Construct	Responses	Frequency	Examples of the Narratives
Beliefs in the future	Be optimistic about the future	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find myself more optimistic about the future...I like to make leather products. But someone told me that I could not earn a living from that ...I was lost about my future. But this time, the instructor [from the leather product workshop] shared her stories about entrepreneurship...She managed to fulfill her dream... The most important thing is whether you find a job that you like most, and feel satisfied with the job.
Cognitive competence	Know more about job nature and entrepreneurship	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before joining the program, I know nothing about job seeking and entrepreneurship. After joining the program, I know more about different jobs. Then I feel less anxious.
	Be conscientious in your work	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have to do the things with conscientiousness. If I do things in a “hea” [not conscientious] manner, I would lose the opportunities.
	Know more about the selection of subjects	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program helped me understand more about my future career and what subjects I should select...We have to plan even when we are in secondary school. We need to choose the subjects that we are interested in.
	Make better judgement with more information	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand more about the external environment. Then I will find out what is suitable for me and what is not. I can make better judgement.
	Increase creativity	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This made me become more creative.
Behavioral competence	Be diligent in study	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must be diligent from now on. If we were not diligent, we could not find a good job in the future. • In the past, I found that “happiness” was the most important thing, and I did not think of how I could enter the university... Now, I need to study hard...This will change my future.
	Self-discipline	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After listening to the sharing of the university students on how they manage themselves...I learn [the importance of] self-management even if no one monitors you.
	Increase the skills of job interview	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They taught you how to attend a job interview... how to respond to the questions and be polite ... I learnt the basic principles of attending a job interview, and would not be innocent in the interview.
Self-efficacy	Make plans for the future	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I found the program enhanced my capacity to plan for the future. • I have a dream, and I decide what I need to do in the future...But now I need to research more my chosen occupation and my selected university, etc...I need to gather more information about the future, and make myself clearer [in my future plan].
	Be more active	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I waited for someone to tell me what to do [in the past]. But now, I become active to find the way out.
	Become more courageous	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find myself more courageous. I used to be timid in the past.
Spirituality	Understand the purpose of life	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What we treasure in life is not wealth or money. Happy and simple life is fine.
	Set up clear and unswerving goals	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think each person should have an unswerving goal. We should not change [the goals] too frequently. For example, you want to be a teacher, and then you want to

Positive Youth Development Construct	Responses	Frequency	Examples of the Narratives
			be a chef. Then you will waste your effort. Therefore, I think we need to have a consistent goal so that we can fulfill our dream.
	Develop your interest and find your dream	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will develop your interest, and find my dream.
	Find a direction and follow your dream	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I started to follow my dream [in my future plan].
Resilience	Get out from the challenges	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When we face adversity, we can think that the situation may not be so bad, that means we can think how to solve the problems. We need not keep thinking on the bad situations. We need to be optimistic.
	Be adaptive to different situations	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case you are in a different environment, you must learn the attitudes to adapt to different situations.
	Prepare alternatives to prevent things from getting worse	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need to see what you want to do in the future, and keep in mind that there may be unexpected scenarios. I need to prepare for the worst and find another way out.
Self-determination	Choose a suitable job	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When we grow up, we have to make a lot of choices. But how can we make a choice for a suitable job? ... We have to consider many possibilities.
Clear and positive identity	More mature	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I become more mature... I search for the materials from the website of the Labour Department... [In the simulation exercise] when I saw the job requirement, I found myself innocent... I did not meet the requirement... This inspired me to study hard in the future.
	Enhance leadership	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program enhanced our leadership... as we can achieve a breakthrough together.
	Increase self-confidence	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have confidence to tell my classmates why I want to do that job in the simulated job interview. I become more confident... I was shy in the past.
	Understand my weaknesses	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I become more aware of my weaknesses, and I need to make improvement on them... I was a silly person in the past.
	Enhance self-understanding	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I know more about myself... through the psychological assessment.
Emotional competence	Become happier	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I become happier and less depressed than before as I always stayed at home in the past.
	Enhance empathy	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I start to understand other people's feelings.
Moral competence	Courage to admit wrong deeds	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I was young, I did things without thinking of the consequences. But after joining the program, I know that I have to bear the consequences for my deeds. For instance, when I am wrong, I should admit it, and should not deny.
	Think of consequences before you act	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the past, I was impulsive in doing things... and would not consider other people and the consequences. After joining the Program, I learnt to consider whether my actions would affect others and those I did not know.
Social competence	Enhance teamwork	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to have teamwork even if you own the business. You need others to help you and serve your business, and you should treat them well as a team... Teamwork, we started to learn in the adventure-based training program... If we have team

Positive Youth Development Construct	Responses	Frequency	Examples of the Narratives
			<p>spirit, we can achieve a breakthrough in the difficulties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you fail, the team would fail. In case we need to be successful, we need to work together.
	Cooperate with others	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program enhanced my cooperation with others. In the tour to the university, we were divided into different groups. We needed to discuss, play and complete the tasks together. I learnt to be cooperative.
	Enhance communication skills	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learnt how to communicate with those who I was not familiar with... The instructor deliberately separated those who always played together and assigned them to different groups. • I was introverted in Secondary 1 and 2... When I talked to others, I was just like talking to myself...I was afraid to talk to others...Now I am bolder.
	Trust other people	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learnt to trust others, and this made us more united.
	Understand the roles	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand my roles and know how to support others.
Bonding	Enhance relationship with peers	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My relationship with my classmates is improved.
	Seek help from friends	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learn to seek help from my friends. They will help me and bear my load.

Table 3. Descriptors used by the students to describe the Program

Descriptions	Response			Total
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	
Amusing	14			14
Happy	14			14
Interesting	9			9
Practical	8			8
Solid	6			6
Exciting	6			6
Amazing	5			5
Meticulous	5			5
Unforgettable	4			4
Diverse	4			4
Open my eyes	4			4
Inspiring	4			4
Beneficial	3			3
Satisfying	3			3
Gratitude	3			3
Good	3			3
Creative	3			3
Novel	3			3
Enjoyable	3			3
Challenging	3			3
Special	3			3
Enhance confidence	2			2
Caring	2			2
Fantastic	2			2
Meaningful	2			2
Rich content	2			2
Courageous	2			2
Attractive	2			2
Make me hardworking	2			2
Ichiban	1			1
Fast-paced	1			1
Accompanied with me	1			1
Enhance my wellbeing	1			1
Refreshing	1			1
Make me want to try once more	1			1
Relaxing	1			1
Responsive	1			1
Quite good	1			1
Excellent	1			1
Entertaining	1			1
Achieving	1			1
Positive	1			1
Without negative emotions	1			1
Clear	1			1
Friendly	1			1
Responsible	1			1
Educational	1			1
Good timing	1			1

Descriptions	Response			Total
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	
Humorous instructor	1			1
Experiencing	1			1
Wonderful	1			1
Precious	1			1
Cherish	1			1
Understandable	1			1
Touching	1			1
Well-knit	1			1
Long-lasting	1			1
Applicable	1			1
Realistic	1			1
Well planned	1			1
Persistent	1			1
Influential	1			1
No regret	1			1
Difficult to choose		1		1
Short-term			2	2
Difficult			1	1
Total count (N)	160	1	3	164
Total (%)	97.6%	0.6%	1.8%	100%

Appendix 1. Interview Guide of the Focus Group

Part 1: Experience of students' participation in the program

- How did you realize this program? How did you enroll in the program?
- What were your expectations before you joined the program? From a retrospective view, how far did the program fulfill your expectations?
- In the program, which part did you like the most? Why?
- In the program, which part did you dislike the most? Why?
- Can you share an occasion/event that you think very impressive? What makes this occasion/event to be the most impressive one? What do you learn from the experience?
- Do you think you are involved in the program? Why or why not?

Part 2: Comments on the program process

- What are your comments on the instructors?
- What are your relationships with the instructors? Do you feel friendly with them?
- Did you know the groupmates before the program?
- Did you have any changes in the relationships with your groupmates? If yes, what are the changes?

Part 3: Comments on the program effectiveness

- What do you benefit the most from the program?
- Did you have any changes after participating in the program? If yes, what are the changes? What makes you have the changes?
- Do you think the program has helped your development? If yes, what are they?
- Do you think the program has helped your adjustment in your school life? If yes, what are they?

Part 4: Overall comments

- Overall, what do you appreciate the most in the program?
- Do you have any suggestions on how the program can be improved?
- If you are invited to use three descriptors to describe the program, what three words will you use?