

Abstract of thesis entitled
**Education for Sustainable Development in Liberal Studies:
Perceptions from Teachers in Hong Kong**

Submitted by

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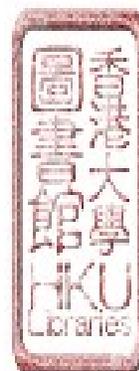
for the degree of Master of Philosophy

at The University of Hong Kong

in March 2015

The period 2005-2014 was the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Many countries, especially those in European and North America have been implementing or looking for ways to implement education for sustainable development (ESD) in their education system. In Hong Kong, Liberal Studies (LS) is an important new channel for ESD. It is the only compulsory subject in secondary schools which required students to learn about sustainable development (SD). There are a lot of similarities between LS and ESD in terms of goal, perspectives, values and attitudes, pedagogy and the development of skills, however, both LS and SD are new to many LS teachers. This study aims to examine LS teachers' perception of SD and ESD and the ways they implement ESD through LS in order to identify opportunities and constraints for implementing ESD through LS and find out what can be done to further promote SD in schools. Apart from desktop research, first-hand data were collected mainly from questionnaires and interviews with LS teachers. Interviews were also conducted with some relevant government officers and LS teacher educators working at universities.

This study finds that LS teachers generally support SD and ESD and have developed some common understandings on SD and ESD. They pay special attention to preservation and conservation and the controversial nature of SD issues. They put special emphasis on helping students see SD issues from multi-perspectives and balance different interests. They are able to recognize the importance of experiential learning, place-based education and active and



participative learning approaches to ESD. LS teachers generally agree that LS is a very important channel for ESD as it raises students' awareness and sensitivity to current SD issues and can help students think about SD across modules by applying the concept on different geographical and time scales. However, there are a number of factors limiting the effectiveness of ESD in LS. This study shows that there are four major types of constraints affecting the implementation of ESD through LS, including conceptual constraints, LS curriculum constraints, resource constraints and the over-reliance on LS. This study also identifies some opportunities to improve ESD in LS. Base on the study findings, some general recommendations for improving ESD in the Hong Kong education system are made followed by some specific recommendations for improving ESD in LS.

