Intergenerational Learning in Hong Kong:

A Narrative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to examine the intergenerational learning behaviour within the family between Generation X parents and their Generation Y teenage children. This study was designed to investigate the nature of intergenerational knowledge exchange, to identify the characteristics of learning behaviour and culture in such 'learning families', and to find out the subject areas that parents could learn from their teenage children.

The sample of this study was made up of ten pairs of middle-age parents with their teenage children coming from middle class families. A narrative inquiry approach was adopted and individual interviews were conducted when participants were asked to recall and tell stories describing their personal intergenerational learning experiences. A questionnaire was also employed to collect their opinions and experience on intergenerational family learning.

Results showed that 80% of all the participants thought their family was a 'learning family'. All the parents and 90% of the

teenagers found that learning experience in their family was happy. Overall, 80% of all the participants gave a score of 7 or higher when they were asked to rate their family, with a score of 10 representing an ideal 'learning family'. All the parents realised that they had something to learn from their children. The Generation X parents could learn from their Generation Y children on trendy issues such as fashion, sports, recreation, music and western cultures. More importantly, almost everyone recognised that information technology (IT), computer knowledge and skills were the stronger areas among the teenagers. Among all the narratives told, 37% were episodes describing parents learning IT skills from their teenage children.

The data obtained from this study suggests that intergenerational family learning can be bi-directional. The families studied did engage in bi-directional intergenerational learning. Parents did learn from their teenage children. A positive family learning culture was found to facilitate intergenerational learning especially in the Generation Y to X direction. Intergenerational family learning was reported to be happy experience and it helped improve communication and understanding

between the two generations. The participants pointed out that the learning methodology differed between the two generations due to societal changes and differences in their upbringing. Mothers and fathers play slightly different roles for intergenerational family learning according to their individual personality, interest and expertise, though mothers were believed to be more receptive and open to intergenerational learning, especially in the Generation Y to X direction.

There is a close relationship between 'family learning' and 'lifelong learning'. Ideas from the participants were collated to define the concept of 'learning family', 'family learning' and 'intergenerational family learning'. From the data obtained, a conceptual framework of intergenerational family learning in relation to lifelong learning and a developmental learning profile were drawn.

The results indicate that parents should foster positive learning attitudes and intergenerational learning culture in the family early at home. It is important that teenagers are empowered to share their

knowledge and views. The government also has a role to play in re-defining teaching and learning practise in schools and promoting intergenerational learning in families for a knowledge society.

Key words:

family culture, family learning, Generation X, Generation Y, intergenerational learning, learning, learning family, lifelong learning

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PREFACE

We are living in a 'knowledge society' which is sometimes referred to as a 'learning society' (Cribbin and Kennedy, 2002; Jarvis, 2001; Coffield, 2000:28; Dearing, 1997). The world has been changing rapidly over the past decades. The knowledge cycles become shortened and we have to keep on learning in order to cope with and survive the changes. Nowadays, we prefer to work in a 'learning organization' so that we can keep pace with all the changes, thus both the employees and the organizations can leverage on their knowledge to become successful in the highly competitive society. In addition to learning at the workplace or through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) much learning takes place in the family, the process of which we may not be aware of. I believe a 'learning family' also assists and supports us to survive and function better in the ever-changing world.

There are relatively few publications on the 'learning family' as compared to the vast amount on 'learning organization'. It seems that the concept of the 'learning family' has not yet been recognised or well-established. Detailed literature search fails to provide an agreed

definition on 'learning family', 'family learning' or 'intergenerational learning'. These areas remain largely unexplored.

Although there are a number of family learning programmes organized in various developed countries (such as in the U.K. and U.S.A.), they mostly focus on training parenting skills or equipping parents for better involvement in their children's education and development. Alexander and Clyne (1995), in the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) publication '*Riches beyond price: making the most of family learning*', recognised that families are the main context of learning for most people. Learning within the family is usually more lasting and influential than any other forms. Family life provides a foundation and context for all learning. They use the term 'family learning' to encompass a wide range of informal and formal learning activities that involve family members in developing an understanding of, and the skills involved in, family roles, relationships and responsibilities.

Parents who gain their knowledge from such family learning programmes subsequently play the role of an educator in the family. Parents become actively involved in educating and developing their children. However, I believe learning in the family can mutually benefit both adults as well as children. It is also possible for parents to learn from their children, especially the youngsters in the family. Children and youths are often characterised as being curious, creative, innovative, flexible and sensitive. They are quick to pick up and to respond to changes. They are more willing to take risks. These are all attributes needed in this fast changing world but which unfortunately often diminish as one ages. Banner and Cannon (1999:47) commented that as one ages one becomes self-conscious about one's curiosity and begins to fear asking questions, especially publicly. Jarvis (1995:13) also thought adults appear to ask fewer questions as they have been socialised into the objectified culture of the society.

To regain these valuable attributes, it is high time adults play an active learner role within the family with the help of their own children. With mutual learning and the free flow of ideas among family members,

a 'learning family' can be built. I believe an open learning attitude and lifelong learning culture can be nurtured early at home. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (2003) publication also pointed out that family learning serves as a powerful stimulus to developing a true culture of lifelong learning amongst adults and children.

Tung Chee Hwa, the former Chief Executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), stated in his 2002 Policy Address that half of the Hong Kong population over 15 years of age had educational levels equivalent to only secondary school Form 3 level and that only 13% of the population had a university degree. According to the statistics published by the Hong Kong Census Department for year 2006 (www/censtatd.gov.hk,2007), the educational levels of the general public are a bit low for Hong Kong to become a knowledge society. With a six million population over 15 years old, 7.1% of them attained no school or only pre-primary level, 18.3 % at Primary 6 level and about 19% at lower secondary school level. Still, nearly 45% of the post-15 population (about 2.7 million in number) are below upper secondary school level attainment and may experience

difficulties surviving in this knowledge intensive world.

To narrow the divide between the learning rich and the learning poor, the government needs to promote or initiate vigorous learning within the families and within the communities. Our society should be able to tap into this potential knowledge pool from the younger generation who are still at school and who can transfer their knowledge to their parents at home. Bi-directional family learning and learning among family members may be useful to break the cycle of low achievement present in some families where the parents' formal learning ended when they left school with minimal qualifications, and with no regard for the benefits of continuing education.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong conducted a study in 1996 (Apple Daily, 4 April 2007) in which 104 children and 89 parents were interviewed. The results revealed that 81% of the children and 76% of the parents reported that they experienced conflicts at home. It is important for family members to realise the problems and the cause of them, and to try to improve their communication and

relationship. Bi-directional intergenerational learning might be an effective means to benefit both generations.

Being a parent of three youngsters, I have obtained first-hand experience learning from my children. I have been deeply impressed by what the younger generation can offer in the family in terms of new knowledge, skills and culture. In this study, I would like to explore the possible extent of intergenerational learning and the characteristics of a 'learning family'. It will be interesting to explore the kind of knowledge and values that are transferred within the family. I believe a 'learning family' can serve as a functional space and breeding ground for lifelong learning and a 'learning family' is a growing and happy family. I hope to promote the idea of 'learning family' and bi-directional 'intergenerational learning', and at the same time arouse parents' awareness and motivation to play an active learner role in the family in conjunction with their traditional superior teaching role.

CHAPTER 1:   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

LEARNING FROM THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Peter Drucker (2004), who is a leading theorist in the field of management, is respected as the most influential management thinker in the second half of the 20th century. He claimed himself to be, and remained a student until he died. He learned even from conversations with his juniors during his old age. He never stopped learning. He was humble enough to learn from the younger generation though he was very knowledgeable and prestigious.

The former British Prime Minister Tony Blair also learned from his children. In order to shorten the distance between him and the younger citizens, he learned to use short message service (SMS) from his then 16 year-old daughter so that he could communicate using SMS. The Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom also learned to use voice mails with her mobile phone from her two grandsons.

Many stories illustrated that there are areas which the older generation can benefit through learning from the younger generation.

MY OWN INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING STORY

I always feel that a positive family culture established early in the family can facilitate learning and communication among family members and across generations. In my family, we are used to having dinner without any disturbance from the television, (most Hong Kong families have meals with their television set on). Members in my family are enthusiastic to exchange ideas and share experience or feelings during meals at the dining table. Our young children report events at school and we, as parents share our stories from work. We also exchange information and viewpoints on current and political issues. We share stories, experience and feelings. Meal time is a relaxed and enjoyable time for mutual sharing and learning in my family.

Being a lifelong learner myself, I have been taking various courses to expand my scope of knowledge and horizon. Without the help of my children I might not have been able to finish my assignments and studies so smoothly. When I was doing my Master course in Knowledge Management, I had to attend online classes and needed to use various collaborative tools and to download computer softwares in

order to do my assignments. Without formal training on computer skills at school, I experienced difficulties and frustration working online and with the computer. With the coaching and assistance from my then 12 year-old son, I was able to complete the assignments and achieved very good results. My son also learned something about knowledge management while coaching me. Both of us were very happy with the outcome and enjoyed very much the experience learning together. The relationship and communication between me and my son also improved during the course of my study.

To face the technological challenges at home, my children help me learn to use various electronic appliances such as MD, MP3, even digital watch and mobile phone, which all possess more functions than I can handle. I still require assistance to operate some other home appliances, and there are many opportunities for me to learn from them.

The youngsters are often very good at surfing the Internet and the Web. My children learn new skills and absorb new knowledge much faster and by different means, not just from teachers at school. They

often help me learn and search through the Internet for information plus other explicit knowledge that I need for my study. They taught me to input Chinese characters into the computer. I did not learn these skills at school during my school days; I learned them from my teenage 'teachers' at home.

In terms of language and communication, my children let me realize and recognize the changes happening around me which I was not aware of. Even the English grammar we learned previously has changed. Some of the Chinese characters are different from those we learned when we were young. Students now learn Putonghua (Mandarin) at school and they are fluent using this language. While I was taking my Putonghua course, my children helped me practise at home and they corrected my pronunciation. There are also many new terms coined as a result of electronic communication among the youngsters (e.g., ttyl, be4). These changes and new knowledge have been introduced to me by my children.

Socially, many new cultures have been developed in the arena of fashion, sports and activities (hiphop dances), entertainment (new formats of songs, music and movies) and even food (Japanese and Korean food are popular now in Hong Kong). New or different cultures may not be bad at all, if we get to understand them more. We do not need to reject all youth cultures, the way our parents did to us when we were young.

I have always enjoyed learning from my children and found the interactions happy and positive. By learning from each other, we can eliminate generation gaps and bring mutual understanding and harmony within the family. A positive learning atmosphere is created with every member adopting an open attitude and willing to share their knowledge. With a meta-learning framework, we get to be more aware of what is being learned and what we need to learn. We can talk openly about what we are learning and what we want to learn.

Through this study, I hope to examine how and what other families learn through intergenerational interactions. By promoting the

concept of intergenerational family learning and paying special attention to the learning direction with Generation X parents learning from their Generation Y children, I anticipate that more families will benefit and become learning families.

INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

Due to the diverse application by different disciplines, it is very difficult to find a consistent and precise definition for 'intergenerational learning', 'family learning' and other related terminologies used to describe the learning taking place among family members and across generations. I could hardly find relevant papers specifically addressing the learning relationship between middle-age parents (generation X) and their teenage children (generation Y) taking place at home. The use of various terms is still very fluid and inconsistent in the literature.

To many academics, workers and researchers in the social service field, 'intergenerational programmes' often imply programmes for the elders (Strom and Strom, 2000). Very often, intergenerational learning is associated with ageing. Studies, research and programmes have been

conducted and geared towards serving the needs of the elderly. Reports on intergenerational programmes are abundant, but the programmes mostly cater for the very young and the very old. It is evident that intergenerational programmes had neither been designed for middle-age parents with their teenage children nor are they focusing on the exchange of knowledge and experience within the family setting.

As stated by Kaplan (2001), 'intergenerational programmes' are usually one of the following types: children and youth serving older people, elders serving children and youth, or adults and youth collaborating in providing services. He thought that successful intergenerational learning fulfils age-appropriate developmental needs of youth and adults, is relational and reciprocal, drawing on the strengths or assets of each generation. There is no doubt that providing services is a learning experience but I think intergenerational learning should mean more than providing services to a particular generation cohort by another.

According to Kaplan, Henkin and Kusano (2002), 'intergeneration' means younger to older adults or aged adults. Intergenerational programmes are also conducted for aged adults to meet the challenge of the ageing society. Those programmes involved are visits to elderly centers, childcare by the elderly or volunteer services. They found these programmes help to transmit values from generation to generation and at the same time promote understanding and tolerance across the younger and the elderly generations.

The International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes (www.icip.info)**,** based in the Netherlands, was launched in 1999 with the objectives to promote and develop the study and practice of intergenerational programmes and to coordinate the systematic development of intergenerational programme theory and practice. Intergenerational programmes as defined by the International Consortium of Intergenerational Program are '*social vehicles that create purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations.*' Intergenerational policies include investment in the education of the young, financial security for

older adults and support for the families as they care for their members. Again this only addresses the political aspect of intergenerational programmes, without any focus on the learning aspect among various generations.

The Center for Intergenerational Learning, Temple University, USA (templecil.org) also provides many intergenerational programmes but again they are mainly catered for the very young and the elder generation.

In Japan, intergenerational programmes are termed 'intergeneration interaction activities'. The activities are defined as events where people from various ages get together to do something in an extra-familial setting (Kaplan and Thang, 2002). They have a connotation of three-generational interaction including the middle generation. However, the programmes typically involve cooperation, interaction or exchange between people over 60 years of age and people under 21, with little, if any, involvement of the middle generation.

The development of these types of intergenerational programmes actually comes as a result of the ageing society, demographic and social changes which lead people to increase attention to these issues and provide intergenerational programmes addressing the physical and social needs of the elderly. Intergenerational programmes are found to be effective in reducing stereotypes of the young and the old, and they can improve mutual understanding and trust between the young and old generations. Studies show that there are more positive perceptions of ageing and the elderly among children and youths while they also changed perceptions of youth on the part of the older adults (Kaplan, Henkin and Kusano, 2002). Unfortunately the middle generation has not been involved.

Lawton (2004) conducted a study on 'Artstories: perspectives on intergenerational learning through narrative construction among adolescents, middle-age and older age adults'. She realized and was concerned about the existence of generation gaps. Her case study examined the nature of the learning and the social relationships that

evolved among three generations of women and girls previously unknown to one another, working together on a collaborative narrative based on their life experience. A participatory action research methodology was adopted within a narrative inquiry framework. Nevertheless, the aim of her study was to develop an age-integrated arts learning programme across generations, while intergenerational learning issues among family members were not addressed.

I have no doubt that those 'intergenerational' initiatives are beneficial to the elderly as well as to the young. Nevertheless, I feel that 'intergenerational' activities should not be only confined to the very young and the very old, nor should they just be some sort of social services. Unfortunately there is a lack of studies addressing the learning aspects of intergenerational activities taking place between the middle-age parents and their teenage children in the family.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The objectives of this study are to examine the phenomenon of intergenerational learning within the family between parents (Generation X) and their teenage children (Generation Y). It also aims to study the nature of intergenerational knowledge and experience exchange, to identify the characteristics of the learning behaviour and culture within the family and to explore the subject areas that parents can best learn from their teenage children. I would also like to look at how knowledge and skills are shared and transferred from the younger generation to their parents. This study also examines the similarities and differences regarding the perception and attitudes towards 'lifelong learning' and 'learning family' between the two generations.

Babbie (2004:12) pointed out that social theory is to do with what is, not what should be. This paper, being a social study, was conducted mainly to describe and understand social reality, in this case the learning behaviour between the two generations in the family. It is not the intention of this study to give judgements regarding what and how they should be done.

The participants, through their involvement in this study may benefit from the potential of drawing their awareness to intergenerational knowledge exchange and learning. This study processes may trigger them to re-visit and evaluate their knowledge sharing and learning experience at home, thus increasing their insights for further intergenerational learning among family members.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are relatively few studies available addressing the issues of intergenerational learning within the family, especially between parents and their teenage children. We know little of the extent to which intergenerational family learning between these generations is taking place. As there were limited analytical studies conducted to examine the learning relationship among family members between generations, there exist many gaps and unknowns in this particular subject area.

This paper will study intergenerational learning behaviour between the middle-age parents (Generation X) and their teenage children (Generation Y) in the family. Their perception on 'intergenerational learning', 'lifelong learning', 'learning family' and the relationships between those concepts will also be explored. This study is going to address specifically the following research questions:

1. Are families engaging in bi-directional intergenerational learning?
2. Are parents learning from their teenage children?
3. What are the contents of intergenerational family learning?
4. Does the learning methodology differ between the two generations?
5. Are mothers playing a more important role for intergenerational family learning?
6. What are the characteristics of a 'learning family'?
7. Is there a relationship between 'family learning' and 'lifelong learning'?

The following are some of the assumptions for this study. They are formulated based on personal observation, experience and intuition. I believe that it is human nature that we learn and that we all love to learn. We learn much more often than we are aware of. People also love to share what they know. There are intergenerational learning events (teaching and learning) taking place in the family where parents can learn from their teenage children. Those are natural and happy experience. Learning in the family can be bi-directional between

generations, and parents should expect that they have something to learn from their children. There are areas which the younger generation is more exposed and learns better, knowledge of which they can share with their parents. I assume there are some common characteristics that can be found in 'learning families'. I also believe that 'intergenerational learning' or 'family learning' is one important form of 'lifelong learning'.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, relevant literature on intergenerational learning and learning family is reviewed. First, the definition and characteristics of both Generation X and Y are studied with reference to various countries, upbringing and backgrounds. Secondly, the concepts of learning families and family cultures were explored, drawing comparison with those of more established concepts in 'learning organizations'. The impact of information and communication technology on intergenerational learning was also looked into. The relationship of family learning and intergenerational learning with lifelong learning was examined. Finally, the social learning theories and the mental model theory were studied drawing their application in explaining some of the intergenerational learning characteristics related to the research questions in this study.

GENERATIONS

"The old believe everything. The middle-aged suspect everything.

The young know everything."   *-Oscar Wilde*

Each generation adopts different attitudes and learning behaviour. Nevertheless, it appears that 'generations' cannot be simply defined by a very formal process; rather they seem to be self-applied labels. The demarcation is often not clear. In order to define the specific generations involved in this study, the Generation X and Y classification is adopted. In this study sample, the parent participants fall in the 'Generation X' category while their teenage children belong to the 'Generation Y'.

Every generation develops and adopts specific characteristics and behaviour which are mostly shaped by their childhood experience and then defined later by their peer actions. Each generation may consciously or unconsciously adopt or reject some of the attitudes and practices of its prior generations. Thus generation gaps inevitably exist.

Generation X

The term 'Generation X' was coined in 1964 as a result of a study of British youth by Jane Deverson and it was used by the Americans in the 1990s. 'Generation X' is a term applied to a cohort of people born

following the post-World War II baby boom. The Online Dictionary of

Social Sciences (http://bitbucket.icaap.org/dict.pl?alpha=G) defines

'Generation X' as those people born approximately between the years

1960 and 1970, at the end of the baby boom and caught in the forces of

economic restructuring and globalization. This term is used in

demography, social sciences and marketing as well as in popular

culture. Douglas Couplands (1991) popularized this term in his novel

'*Generation X: Tales for an accelerated culture*'. He referred to

Generation X as those born between 1958 and 1966 in Canada or

between 1958 and 1964 in the United States. Later he also included into

Generation X anyone considered as 'twenty something' in the years

1987 to 1991.

Barnard, Cosgrave and Welsh (1998) in their book '*Chips and Pop:*

decoding the Nexus Generation' called the Xers a 'Nexus Generation'

because they are a 'bridge between the boomers and their children, as

well as between the industrial and the information ages'. They are

described as an optimistic and responsible group, different from the

aimless negative generation portrayed by Douglas Coupland.

In Japan, there is also a generation similar to this Generation X, which the Japanese calls 'shin jin rui'.

Generation Y

Generation Y is the cohort of people born immediately after the Generation X, in the 1980s and early 1990s. With respect to the American and Canadian generations, Generation Y is generally considered as the last generation of people born in the 20th century. Using the broadest definition commonly cited, 'Generation Y' currently (as of 2006) includes those in their mid and early 20s, teenagers and children over the age of six (Savage, 2006; Sheahan, 2005; Sutherland and Thompson, 2003).

Other terms synonymous with Generation Y include 'Generation Why?', 'Net Generation', 'Millennial', 'iGeneration', 'Google Generation', 'My Pod generation', 'Generation Next'…,etc. Douglas Coupland (1992) also called them the 'global teens'.

With deeper understanding of the characteristics of the Generation Y children by their Generation X parents, better communication can be fostered and their talents better recognized. West (2005) found that the Generation X'ers were subject to the cane, bullying and memorising time tables but the Generation Y wanted to dig beneath the conventional ideas and discover for themselves. The Y generation is less likely to accept the 'canon'. This finding brought me into thinking that the two generations might learn differently and they might have adopted different learning methodologies and strategies. This is one of the areas to be investigated in this study.

The widespread use of personal computers and the Internet with advanced information communication technologies plays a very important role in defining the characteristics of the Generation Y population. Most of them spend extensive time in front of their home computers surfing the Internet. They use the Internet as a tool for learning as well as for socialization. The favourite activities enjoyed by most of the Generation Y include listening to music (MP3), socialising with friends, going to the movies, dining out and watching television

(Barrett, 2000). They are ambitious, demanding and they question everything but they are also self-absorbed, gregarious, multi-tasking, and optimistic, with a craving for those 'electronic decorations' (Hira, 2007). McLester (2007) called them 'Digital Native' whose learning is typically multimedia oriented and web-based and they are egocentric, with less fear of failure and they are multi-taskers. They are the first generation to use e-mail, instant messaging (IM) and cell phones since childhood and adolescence (Tyler, 2007).

Neuroscientists discovered that parts of the brain - specifically the prefrontal lobes, which are involved in planning and decision making, reasoning and storage of knowledge - continue to develop well into the late teens and early twenties (Hill, 2001). Tyler (2007) suggested that cell phones and computers have changed brain development, as technology brings the Generation Y closer to their parents and friends. This might prohibit independent creative problem-solving and decision making. Some experts believe that the Generation Y struggles to make decisions independently as ICT has exerted both positive as well as negative impact on their development.

Generation Y in the United States

The Generation Y in the United States has grown up in an era when the Internet and information technologies have been rapidly developed and utilized. They are used to music downloads, instant messaging and multi-function cellular phones. They are also the first generation to grow up with modern media choices enjoying abundant television channels. They have become interactive on line as the Internet has changed the way they interact with their media environment.

Some people believe that many of these generational characteristics are related to their exposure to abundant extra-curricular activities and relatively expensive technologies such as personal computers and other electronic gadgets. Therefore this generational description may only be applied to wealthy members of the society or at least the broad middle class families.

Generation Y in Australia

Peter West (2005) considered young Australians born after 1985 as a computer generation, a switched-on and cynical generation. They are far more technically competent than their school teachers. They tend to learn from the television, websites and popular music. They are critical and dislike fake idealism and moral talk of public interest. Australian Generation Y youths are aware of their body image but the trends show that one-third of them will be obese by 2013. They are well informed about diet and exercises but many spend hours in front of the computer and the television without regular physical exercises.

Sheahan (2005) based his work on his research with 'talented' Australian Generation Yers born between the years 1978 and 1994, described the Generation Yers as 'street smart, aware, lifestyle centered, independently dependent, informal, tech savvy, stimulus junkies, skeptical and impatient'.

Generation Y in China

Generation Y is the first generation in China (similarly in India) to benefit from western modern influences due to the rapid economic development of the last two decades. According to Michael Stanat (2005), the author of the book '*China's Generation Y: understanding the future leaders of the world's next superpower*' (His book is the first book written on China's Generation Y written by a teenager.), China's Generation Y consists of approximately 200 million young individuals born between 1980 and 1989.   He mentioned that China's Generation Y follows an unprecedented journey from a young generation in a communist country to an emerging global capitalist, and consumerist market. They are significantly more entrepreneurial and capitalistic than their parents. They are far more connected to the outside world through the Internet and mobile phones than their parents used to be.

Hong Kong is a capitalist city with its sovereignty returned to China in 1997.   It is a city where eastern and western cultures merge to make it an international and modernized city. Most of the Generation Y in Hong Kong has grown up using computers and regard texting,

messaging and blogging as second nature. Their usual style of communication is informal and 'chatty' (Brushfield, 2007). He also pointed out that generation Y in Hong Kong did not want to just follow instructions and they expected to learn from someone they can respect. In this study, the characteristics of the Generation X and Y in Hong Kong are compared with those of their counterparts in other parts of the world.

FAMILY LEARNING AND CULTURES

A classic definition of 'family', according to anthropologist George Murdock (cited in Parkin, 1997:47), is 'a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults.' The Merriam-Webster definition of 'family' is 'the basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children'. A nuclear family consists of merely parents and children.

We all belong to a family. Besides the structure, the concept of 'family' also carries cultural distinctiveness. Covey in his book '*The seven habits of highly effective families*' defined family culture as

> *the spirit of the family -- the feeling, the 'vibes', the chemistry, the climate or atmosphere in the home. It's the character of the family -- the depth, quality and maturity of the relationships. It's the way family members relate to one another and how they feel about one another.*
>
> (Covey, 1997:20)

I strongly agree that the relationships among family members play a very important role in nurturing positive family culture and family function. Each family member is interdependent of each other in the family.

Covey (1997:20) further described 'beautiful family culture' as a 'nurturing culture where family members deeply, sincerely, and genuinely enjoy being together, where there is a sense of shared beliefs and values, where they act and interact'. In this study, one of the objectives is to identify specific family cultures or practices which might facilitate intergenerational learning among parents and their children. I believe 'learning families' will also enjoy a similar 'beautiful family culture' as illustrated by Convey.

Chinese families have been handed down many typical or traditional cultures and values by their ancestors. All these beliefs would very much affect their behaviour. The typical Chinese value 'xiao' is equivalent to the western term 'filial piety'. 'Xiao' is a very important component of the traditional Chinese cultural framework in structuring intergenerational relationships, especially within a large extended family. The younger generations are obliged to respect, obey and care for the older family members, while the older family members are reciprocally expected to provide guidance and support for the young. Among all Confucian virtues, 'filial piety' is central to the social organization of Chinese society (Kaplan et al., 2002).

Chinese people put much emphasis on the harmony in family and social relationships (Allison, 1997). Chinese families are also more hierarchical in structure than families in Western cultures (Ho, 1996; Shek and Lai, 2000). Face-saving is an important concern in solving family or social problems (Ting-Toomey, 1988).

Chinese traditional cultures and interaction among family members are influenced deeply by filial piety. Parents are expected to be respected by their children. Parents are superior and they are the authoritative figures in the family. There is a Chinese proverb '我食鹽多過你食米'- 'I have eaten more salt than you have eaten rice', meaning that parents are considered old enough to have more knowledge and experience than the younger generation. Very often, the youngster is required and expected to learn from and follow the practice of the older generation. The younger generation is not encouraged to express their own views or argue with their parents. There is a top-down relationship between parents and their children. As a result, parents in traditional Chinese families are not expected, nor are they ready, to actively learn from their children.

In regard to the Hong Kong education system, one of the tertiary educators commented that the filial piety culture also affects the way we learn:

> *Hong Kong students display almost unquestioning acceptance of the knowledge of the teacher or lecturer. This may be explained in terms of an extension or transfer of the Confucian ethic of filial piety. Coupled with this is an emphasis on*

strictness of discipline and proper behaviour, rather than an expression of opinion, independence, self-mastery, creativity and all-round personal development.

(Murphy, 1987:43)

Other studies also revealed that Hong Kong students learn in highly authoritarian classrooms where the main thrust of teaching and learning is focused on the preparation for external examinations (Biggs, 1996:147; Beeby 1966, Morris, 1985).

Nevertheless, with the rapid and remarkable social, political and technological changes experienced throughout the last decade as a result of globalization, this traditional attitude and practice has been challenged, even though the road to effectively change these deep-rooted cultures could be long and winding. As a matter of fact, Hong Kong residents are quite westernised (Shek, 2002). They have been inevitably influenced by the western cultures inspired during the last hundred years of British governance. There is also another Chinese saying '學無前後達者爲師', meaning that it is not the one who learns earlier who would be the more knowledgeable, rather, the more knowledgeable should be the teacher. I think by adopting this more

open attitude, learning from the young who may learn later seems to be so natural and necessary. There are areas or subjects that the younger generation is more knowledgeable than the older generation where the youngsters can play the teaching role.

Weick and Westley (1966) highlighted three subsystems of cultures where knowledge is embedded: language, artifacts, and action routines. Anthropologists also agree that cultures are always changing, because environments are changing (Naylor, 1996). Family cultures also change inevitably in response to the drastic changes in the society. Our communicative language, fashions, behaviour and routines also change within the family and between generations. Those changes I believe are gradually evolving and are largely led by the younger generation. In Hong Kong, the structure of the family has also shifted from the traditional extended family with three generations living together to a nuclear family structure. The average domestic household size was 3.9 in 1982 and has remained 3 since 2004.[1] The voice of each family member thus becomes more important and accepted in a

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[1] .www.censtatd.gov.hk/hong_kong_statistics/statistical_tables/index.jsp?subjectID=1&tableID=005

small family. There has been a power and authority shift within the family. The traditional Chinese hierarchical culture has been challenged and most Hong Kong families are now nuclear families. Our values, beliefs and behaviour have inevitably changed although we may not be aware of the changes until they gather critical mass.

The realities that we construct are based on our prior knowledge and are the beliefs and values we hold. Only by changing how we think can we change deeply embedded attitudes and practices. Nevertheless, very often we tend to see the changes we need to make as being in the outside world, not in our inner world. As Senge (1994: xv) stated, 'We *are* our mental models. Mental models are the medium through which we and the world interact.' We must therefore redesign the internal structures of our 'mental models' in order to change our attitudes and behaviour. As parents in the 21st century, there is a need for us to alter our established mental models in regard to our authoritative role in the family; then we can establish a more harmonious and balanced relationship with the younger generation. The Hong Kong Generation X parents used to be brought up in a more traditional Chinese family

model and may not be comfortable with these changes. Learning what changes our mental models and behaviour is immensely challenging. Moreover it is very difficult to articulate our mental models conceptually and it entails a profound cultural shift for changes to take place. Parents need to revisit and consciously work on changing our mental models in regard to family cultures and practice in order to recognize family learning needs. Then together with our Generation Y teenage children we can make our family a 'learning family'.

People are continually learning how to learn together. The dynamic quality of knowledge reaffirms the need for a shift into accepting the fact that there are often no simple right or absolute answers. The younger generation may have their answers to offer and knowledge to share too. Senge (1994: xv) suggested that 'in building learning organizations, there is no ultimate destination but a lifelong journey'.   I think the same also applies to building a 'learning family'. There will not be model answers or standard manuals for it; rather it is a continuous lifelong process in which two generations learn how to learn and change together.

Successful organizations in a knowledge society are found to have developed strong sharing and learning cultures among their staff members. It is often the soft knowledge which is tacit in nature that permeates people's decisions and actions. There exists typical ways of thinking, presumptions, governing principles and values within the organization. These together are known as 'organizational cultures'. To facilitate learning, organizational cultures should be able to reduce the change anxiety by providing a psychologically safe place for people to learn, even allow them to make mistakes and learn from errors, and chances to take experiments (Senge, 1994).

It seems to me that the family is exactly the right environment to facilitate this kind of learning and foster a sharing culture. A family is supposed to be a safe place in which members enjoy mutual supports for learning. Family members should experience no fear of making mistakes or taking challenges, if face-saving is no longer a problem for the 21st century parents.

Relationships between teenagers and their parents are often reported as stormy. Erikson (1997) viewed adolescence as a time of crisis while it is also a critical time for their physical, emotional and intellectual development into adulthood. The adolescents develop their own independent identities and their philosophies of life and values based on what they learn from their family and school. Then they become more autonomous and independent entering into adulthood. Generally, the adolescent Generation Y tends to spend more time with friends than with their parents.

It seems that parents' direct influence on their teenage children decreases as the children move through adolescence. I believe a different and harmonious relationship might need to be established between parents and their children at this stage for mutual growth and personal development. A positive intergenerational family learning relationship may facilitate communication and understanding between the two generations as Generation Y teenage children move towards adulthood and their Generation X parents go through the middle-age crisis.

We go through different developmental stages and phases in our life course. In each phase, we are faced with different challenges and subsequently we need to respond effectively to the changes in order to grow and become successful. From the developmental perspective, the parents in this study are in their middle-age phase while their teenage children are at adolescence. Understanding their respective developmental characteristics helps us identify the challenges each of the two generations faces.

Middle-age is that stage in life when physical decline has started but a person cannot yet be called *old*. It is at around the third quarter of the average life span of human beings. The Collins Dictionary defines middle-age as '... occuring approximately between the ages of 40 and 60'. The Oxford English Dictionary gives a similar definition that it is '... the period between youth and old age, about 45 to 60'. The American Census lists middle-age as including both the age categories 35 to 44 and 45 to 54. Erik Erikson (1980) considered it ending a little later and defines middle adulthood as between 40 and 65.

In this period of life, a person is expected to have developed their sense of identity and status in the world. He or she is raising a family and has established career and financial stability. It is also a period often associated with a stage of transition in terms of family or work and potential onsets of mid-life crises (Hess and Markson, 1991: 56). In addition, the Generation X middle-age parents are also faced with unprecedented challenges that the information and technological age brings.

On the other hand, adolescence is the chronological period between puberty and early adulthood. The ages of adolescence vary by culture. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as the period of life between 10 and 19 years of age. In the United States, adolescence is generally considered to begin somewhere between ages 12 and 14, and ends at 19 or 20. Rose (2005) defines adolescence as around 10 to 12 years of age, going into adulthood in the early twenties with attainment of personal autonomy and becoming a separate person. Adolescence is also regarded as a time of rebellious, emotional crisis or self-centeredness (Rogoff, 2003:172).

As there is varied interpretation as to who is considered an 'adolescent', the word 'teenager' is more easily defined. It describes a person who is 13 to 19 years of age. During this period of life, most children go through the physical stages of puberty. It is the transition from childhood to adulthood. In this study, the terms 'teenagers' and 'teenage children' are used to describe this group of participants.

Marcia (2002) thought that 'adults rely on children to confirm them in their sense of generativity and children rely on adults to help them in their developmental tasks of trust, autonomy, initiative, industry and identity.' All psychosocial developmental tasks involve intergenerational mutuality. Thus both generations rely mutually on each other for their respective psychological development.

When young children with little life experience do not have access to the knowledge of the world, they certainly need and rely very much on their parents for guidance and security. As a result, young children idolize their parents – they think their parents are the best and their way of dealing with the world is also the best. Nevertheless, as children

grow older, they suddenly see themselves, the world and their parents differently. Their self-awareness increases and at times they feel embarrassed by their parents. The cherished parental status of being smart and wise is much reduced. Teenagers suddenly think they know everything, and their parents know nothing (Gray, 2000). This development through adolescence actually brings a hard time for every parent but this does force parents to realize that changes and adjustments are inevitable.

Intergenerational difficulties do exist as it is natural for the younger generation to reject many traditional ways of life and practices. They have different cultural experience and develop different values, fads and crazes which may not be easily accepted by their parents. There are changes in their lifestyle such as electronic music, popular video game consoles, seeing the popularity of online journals or Blogs, and going to Social Networking Websites such as My Space, Friendster.com and even initiating Rave culture, etc. There are also value changes such as internationalism, multiculturalism and consumerism. Gender roles or parent roles might also have to be

adjusted and re-defined to bridge the gaps and smooth the intergenerational differences. Intergenerational learning between Generations X and Y as well as knowledge or experience sharing among family members could be a good means to achieve these goals.

LEARNING FAMILY AND FAMILY LEARNING

In this section, the literature on 'learning family' and 'family learning' is reviewed. Due to the limited amount of articles on these topics, I have therefore also tried to review literature on 'learning organizations' and 'organizational learning', hoping to find similarities that could be applied to 'learning family' and 'intergenerational family learning', and to borrow some of the ideas and concepts from the more established theoretical framework on 'learning organizations'. I assume that a learning family may share some characteristics similar to that of a learning organization, probably on a smaller scale.

Learning Organization

There is not yet a universally accepted definition for a 'learning organization' that can be widely applied to all organizations (Reynolds and Ablett, 1998). It is after the publication of Peter Senge's book '*The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*' in 1990 that the concept of learning organization became widely accepted. The terms 'learning society' and 'learning economy' also became popular after that. The importance of learning in the knowledge economy was also highlighted in 1996 by the United Nations' Organization for Economic and Co-operative Development (OECD) and the European Community.

Peter Senge (1994), who was one of the early advocates of organizational learning, believed that a 'learning organization' is one which is continuously expanding its capacity to create its future. Similarly, Pedler et al. (1991:2) defined it as 'an organization which facilitates the learning of all members and continuously transform itself'. The term 'learning organization' has become a metaphor for managing change (Hailey and James, 2002:399).

There are different types of definition for 'learning organization'. The philosophical view presented by Senge (1994:14) is that a learning organization is

> where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.

Garwin (1993:78) adopted a mechanistic view that a learning organization is 'an organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights'. The educational definition by Bennet and O'Brien (1994:42) described a learning organization as 'an organization that has woven a continuous and enhanced capacity to learn, adapt, and change its culture. Its values, policies, practices, systems and structures support and accelerate learning for all employees'. Dixon (1994)'s adaptive viewpoint is that an organization should continuously transform itself through adaptive and innovative thinking'. From an organic point of view, a learning organization is like a living organism, consisting of employees, living in symbiosis.

Learning is a natural and continuous process, and the content of a learning organization also constantly evolves over time. I think the same happens to learning families. Learning within a family is a continuous and lifelong process. The learning contents would vary with time and with the persons involved. Learning families are made up of members living and learning together interdependently.

Organizational Learning

As with 'learning organization', there is still no consensus on the definition of 'organizational learning'. It is considered a complicated concept as it touches upon a variety of disciplines and topics. It may involve contributions from sociology, psychology (both cognitive and behavioural), organizational development and management, anthropology, epistemology and also education theories.

Organizational learning may start from the individual employee level but it also involves learning in a collective pattern. Organizational learning can be seen as a collective phenomenon in which new knowledge is acquired by the members of an organization with the aim

of setting and developing the core competences in the organization, taking individual learning as the basic starting point (García and Vaòó, 2002). I believe intergenerational learning in the family also begins with learning by individual family members and then becomes collective learning.

The terms 'organizational learning' and 'learning organization' are often used interchangeably. Although 'organizational learning' and 'learning organization' are closely related, the focus is different. Ang and Joseph (1996) looked into the difference between organizational learning and learning organization. 'Organizational learning' focuses on the process, whereas 'learning organization' focuses on the structure of the organization to acquire the learning and realize its objectives. By structure, this refers to the task and the authority relationship within which the communication, decision making and social interaction occur. According to Marquardt and Reynold (1994), 'learning organization' focuses on the 'what' of an organization (i.e., its systems, characteristics, and structure to support learning), whereas

'organizational learning' focuses on the 'how' (i.e., the learning methods and process used by an organization). 'Organizational learning' is therefore a concept to describe the kind of activities that takes place in an organization and is concerned with behaviour. Subsequently, 'learning organization' becomes the outcome of organizational learning when it has arrived at a certain optimal level.

In the case of intergenerational learning in the family, the learning also focuses on the process and the content. The family involved in this kind of intergenerational learning will become a 'learning family' when it achieves a certain family structure with its specific cultures and authority relationships. Moreover, I think 'learning family' can also be considered as an outcome of continuous lifelong family learning.

Senge's (1994) approach is close to the constructivist theory of learning which emphasizes the role of the active learner, the mental model of the learner, and the latent power (personal mastery, shared vision, team building, etc.) of the learner to drive the process, whereas

the cognitivists only try to observe, understand, imitate, and manipulate the constructs of systems outside the system itself. The constructivist view is that one has to be a part of the system in order to understand it, therefore the active first-hand involvement of the learner is most important for learning. If parents are actively involved in intergenerational learning and learning from their teenage children, the chances of them gaining maximum benefits will be greater.

Again there is not as yet a consensus regarding a widely accepted learning theory for organizational learning. Various models, practices, and typologies of learning organizations are reported in the literature, such as that of Redding (1997), Senge (1994) and Woolner (1992). However, these are mostly concerned with the methods, constructs, or process to becoming a learning organization and are not in themselves a theory of organizational learning. Huber (1991) pointed out that there is still a lack of a multi-disciplinary effort to synthesize organizational learning research. Much research is needed to actually apply those learning theories at the individual level and the organizational level to explain, predict and test the collective learning behaviour. The same also holds true for research on intergenerational family learning.

Family Learning

In simple terms, 'family learning' covers all forms of informal and formal learning that takes place in a family which may involve more than one family member or generation. This gives an intonation of an intergenerational component to family learning.

Family learning is learning as, or within, a family. It is learning that helps people function better in a family. A study based in Lancashire, United Kingdom was conducted in 2004 to investigate the impact of adults' participation in family learning. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) of the United Kingdom established various funds to promote family learning. The Parenting Fund and the Adult and Community Learning Fund provide family learning programmes with parenting skills and literacy programmes for adults. The family learning programme providers attempt to involve a member/members of a family in learning, which then plays an interactive part in family life, through the transfer, sharing or practising of skill/expertise (NIACE, 2003).

In the United Kingdom, the term 'family learning' describes a large range of projects and programmes where parents, grandparents, children and carers get involved in learning. Family learning programmes cover several areas including literacy, numeracy, information communication technology (ICT) skills and parenting. It is considered as an effective method of recruiting adult learners, breaking down barriers to learning that may have existed since parents left school. Family learning is believed to have many educational, social and economic benefits to offer the learners and even be able to break the cycle of deprivation often passed on between generations. Certainly, providing family learning opportunities is worthwhile governmental investment. Nevertheless, these programmes are conducted outside the family, and taking learning as something outside the learners.

Haggart (2000: 81-2) noted that 'family learning has been taking shape fairly quietly on the margins of adult education, school improvement, early years and basic skills… The picture emerging is one in which family learning is steadily gaining legitimacy.' It is

encouraging to find that family learning is now acknowledged by both government and non-government bodies as being an important aspect of lifelong learning. As reported, family learning services are becoming more widespread both within the context of the formal education system, and in terms of community-based learning opportunities. In fact, the majority of the United Kingdom's library services recognize family learning as a key component of lifelong learning (Kirk, McMenemy and Poulter, 2004). However, most of the programmes have been mainly concerned with providing 'family learning services' or as part of a wider social inclusion agenda, and the concept of 'family learning' has become activities and outcome oriented.

Moreover, most of the family learning programmes organized by the social or educational institutions focus mainly on childcare or school learning while others focus more on training parenting or literacy skills. The so called 'intergenerational learning programmes' are present but again they are mostly about the elders taking care of the young. Programmes such as having older volunteers (age 55+) to provide in-home support to families or caring for children with special

needs are those typical 'family learning' programmes (www.temple.edu/ci/Familyfriendshome.htm).

The definition developed by Gloucestershire Local Education Authority(LEA) is that 'in family learning, providers attempt to involve a member/members of a family in learning, which then plays an interactive part in family life, through the transfer, sharing or practising of skills/expertise.' It should therefore be a process, not a product.

The national Learning and Skills Council (LSC) of England defines family learning as 'learning as or within a family, which complements the border parental involvement agenda and learning to help people operate as or within a family and the promotion of lifelong learning for the whole family' (Horne and Haggart, 2005). Family learning should also include opportunities for intergenerational learning.

To me, intergenerational family learning is an informal lifelong learning process, and not simply a programme or a product. Moreover,

there is a reciprocal aspect to family learning that individual family members can function as a teacher/educator as well a learner. Family members play both the teacher and the learner roles at different times under different situations. It is evidenced that children can teach their parents and even relatives ICT knowledge and skills. Many believe that family learning involves parents learning either with or through their children and vice versa. Much of this kind of family learning is informal and may not have been recorded systematically.

Learning Family

To a certain extent, family is a small learning community or organization. It is a functional system that governs the beliefs and the behaviour of its members. It is a dynamic system like a living organism, in which individuals can collectively learn to adapt to the changing environment. There should always be exchange of knowledge and experience among family members. Family members actually live and learn together in symbosis. I believe that an ongoing commitment to learning and adaptation with the changing internal as well as external environments is very important. A family will be greater than the sum

of its parts and it functions best as a continual learning unit.

Revans (1993) argued that an organization's very survival is dependent on its capacity to learn. He recognized that in a turbulent environment, an organization's rate of learning has to be equal to, or even greater than, the rate of change in its external environment if it is to remain relevant and effective. With the same token, the family as a small organization has to adapt in order to survive the changes and challenges that its members are facing. Family members should have a shared vision and commitments in order to learn together to manage the changes so as to develop new healthy family cultures in accordance with societal changes.

FAMILY LEARNING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection suggested that it is not the strongest that will survive, but the ones which can adapt themselves to the rapidly changing environment. It is 'survival of the fittest'. Learning is the very process that enables us to change our behavioural patterns to cope with the external changes imposed upon us.

In order to survive, the speed of learning should actually be greater than or at least equal to the speed of the changes. To survive the remarkable environmental changes and uncertainties we are facing in this informational and technological era, we cannot stop learning even after we have left formal education. Generally, in addition to receiving formal education at school or learning at the workplace, we also learn informally in other settings such as the family. Learning by its nature is a spontaneous, dynamic and continuous lifelong process in human beings.

Stehlik (2003) introduced a notion that parenting is a vocation which in itself provides a meaningful context and framework for lifelong learning. He also discussed the developmental aspects of lifelong learning. Becoming a parent is one of the most significant life events for an individual. This transition starts a process that leads to continuous learning and changes over time. Mezirow (1996) realized that social changes can take place in the family, the community or the workplace. Yet, such sites for learning, particularly the family, are not always associated with formal adult education strategies, structures or

techniques. Instead, they are associated more with informal, self-directed and incidental learning. Therefore, becoming a parent is actually a lifelong learning journey. The type of learning experience and learning strategies required are very much different from what we learn from formal education at school. Unfortunately, we are not equipped with parenting skills from our formal education system, nor is there any specialized training on how to continue our learning as parents, though it is a lifelong process. We can only learn when we are already on the 'job'.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong learning is a very popular term used widely by educators as well as the public nowadays. Its importance has been highly regarded by various governmental and country leaders. Yet different people may think of lifelong learning differently. There are a vast variety of definitions of 'lifelong learning'.

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP, 2005) advocates that a broad definition of lifelong learning

should incorporate concepts such as 'cradle to grave', 'learning to learn' and 'citizenship'. Lifelong learning should encompass pre-16 formal compulsory education as well as post-16 education. Pre-16 learning produces the students for post-16 learning, who are equipped with learning skills to learn, basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Nevertheless, I think the division between pre and post-16 learning should only be seen as one of predominantly administrative convenience in many governments. To me, lifelong learning is more than just acquiring learning skills and should not be confined to only 'formal education'.

The more dominant interpretation of lifelong learning in the nineties was retraining and learning new skills that would enable individuals to cope with the demands of the rapidly changing workplace (Medel-Anonuevo, Ohsako and Mauch, 2001:4). More recently, the emphasis of lifelong learning on the learners themselves might be interpreted as assigning more responsibility to individuals in contrast to 'lifelong education' in which structure and institutions is emphasized.

I admire Dawson (2003) who challenged the dominant policy discourse about lifelong learning as a tool for economic productivity and competitiveness. The dominant discourse of lifelong learning often focused on learning as acquiring skills to serve the needs of the economy but neglecting the other aspects of life and learning. I believe lifelong learning should encompass much more than economic returns. Lifelong learning is a process of 'learning to be' as first proposed in Faure et al's landmark UNESCO report (1972:181). The report also proposed 'the idea of lifelong education as the keystone of the learning society'. However, many professionals and researchers have hijacked the discourse of lifelong education in economic terms such as 'investment' or 'consumption', as having 'inputs' and 'outputs' and is measured by 'rate of return' (Coffield, 1999:504). Thus lifelong learning becomes more a matter of 'learning for a living' than of 'learning for living' (Martin, 2000:258).

A more comprehensive definition of lifelong learning was presented by the European Commission (2001:9) stating that

all learning activities undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence within a personal, civic, social and/or employment related perspective'.

Longworth and Davies (1996:22) defined lifelong learning as the

development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments.

The editors of the International Journal of Lifelong Education (Editorial,

2005: 284) also tried to give their definition as follows:

Lifelong learning is the combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person -- body (generic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) -- experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the person's individual biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person.

Even though these very broad definitions try to encompass many

aspects of lifelong learning, they still cannot provide a comprehensive

or complete picture as lifelong learning itself is a very complex and

complicated process. This study looks at lifelong learning from an

intergenerational family learning perspective, hoping to add another element to the whole picture.

The two terms 'lifelong learning' and 'lifelong education' are often used interchangeably but they actually carry different meaning. Education institutes providing 'lifelong education' are often criticized for only giving training but not education. Actually, I think soft skills such as communication, language, analytical and lifelong learning skills cannot be formally trained or 'educated' in traditional classroom settings. Instead, family and other social situations would be better venues for developing lifelong learning skills.

The importance of lifelong learning has gained recognition due to the rapid changes in the workplace and there is a need and demand for us to constantly update our skills and knowledge. Speedy changes have brought with them a tremendous rise in complexity and uncertainty. The Internet and computer technology have changed our lives enormously. Advanced technologies allow us to access vast quantities of information and powerful communication and collaboration tools.

We are forced to face and cope with all these challenges. Lifelong learning is the only way to assist us to keep up with these societal changes and improve our quality of life. At the same time, lifelong learning encourages more involvement of the individuals in the society. In the complex and ever-changing world, we might need to adopt new visions of the learning society and lifelong learning, particularly given Hong Kong's shift from a manufacturing to service economy

INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING (IGL) AND LIFELONG LEARNING (LLL)

Knowledge and practices have been transmitted from one generation to another throughout human history, often informally or incidentally. In the past decade, some systematic and formal intergenerational learning programmes were organized with growing recognition of their integral relationship to lifelong learning and broader social purposes (Hanks and Icenogle, 2001). Ideally the generations involved can derive mutual benefits from participation in these programmes and that learning is reciprocal.

The family environment is critical in providing a foundation for developing a good learning culture. The values of the family in respect to learning are key in ensuring that the base for lifelong learning is established (Medel-Anonuevo et al., 2001).

Intergenerational learning builds social capital. The family is typically the individual's initial source of social and cultural capital. Yet, the social changes of the past decades are having an impact on this source. Changes such as the change of family structure, increased life expectancy, greater mobility, and a more age-segregated society are exerting changes in intergenerational relationship (Bostrom 2003, Lowen 1996). Economic and social changes have resulted in 'changes' in the social contract and evolving expectations about the relative position of generations in society (Hanks and Icenogle, 1999: 53). If there is mutual acceptance of obligations, exchange of ideas and information and action in the family, it is for the common good of the family members (Schuller et al., 2002).

Technology and Lifelong Learning

We are living in an era in which technology has literally transformed every aspect of our lives and of the society. The rapid advancement of ICT has greatly changed the landscape of lifelong learning. It increases the needs and demands for people, adults as well as youngsters, to keep on learning. The ICT also widens the participation in lifelong learning, generating more opportunities for knowledge transfer and creation. Information and communication technology-based learning can be seen as 'a catalyst for educational diversity, freedom to learn and equality of opportunity' (Forman et al., 2002:76). I think it actually revolutionizes the meaning and the mode of teaching and learning.

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) conducted a survey in 2002 of 5,885 households, focusing on the learners' access to technology and the role that technology played in facilitating learning. The findings reveal that whether or not an individual participates in learning is a lifelong pattern, already presaged at school leaving age, and intrinsically related to long-term social,

economic and educational factors. Access to ICT does not in itself make people anymore likely to participate in education and engage in learning. Access to ICT continues to be largely patterned according to long-term pre-existing social, economic and educational factors (Gorard, Selwyn and Madden, 2003). If this is true, I think a positive lifelong learning attitude should be cultivated early in life, having adults setting a good example for the young. Moreover, I do believe that ICT can act as a powerful means for communication and learning. At the same time, I also support Kennedy-Wallace (2002:49) that 'whether learning online in the workplace, in college or at home, e-learning is still about learning and culture, not just technology and infrastructure'. Therefore, how we parents set ourselves as good examples and demonstrate that we are lifelong learners and also cultivate learning culture within the family are as important, if not more than, advanced technology.

DEFINING LEARNING

Learning is defined as 'the action of receiving instruction or acquiring knowledge' by the Oxford Dictionary. From the

psychological perspective, learning is a process which leads to the modification of behaviour or the acquisition of new abilities or responses, which is additional to the natural development by growth or maturation.

Bierly et al. (2000: 597) defined learning as 'the process of linking, expanding and improving data, information, knowledge and wisdom' from the knowledge management perspective. The individual learning process is actually very complicated involving many aspects of human nature and the individual's interaction with the environment. I believe learning starts very early in life and begins in the family environment.

At the individual level, I trust learning brings a continuous personal transformation. To Smith (1982:35), learning is a personal and natural process. Learning is an intrinsic process of every organism, system or organization. Learning happens all the time (Cowan, 1995). Learning has therefore become part of our day-to-day activity. It should be an ongoing process and does not always necessarily depend on a qualified teacher or expert. To me, learning should be much more than

receiving instruction and acquiring knowledge. Learning may also be intentional or unintentional (Rogers, 2003:12). Learning takes place anywhere and at any time, even at the dining table or on the road. It also involves building up relationships between teachers and learners.

Life is full of learning events, whether incidental, accidental or purposeful. Rogers (2003:13) called those events 'learning episodes'. 'Learning episodes' consist of individual occasions of learning that occur from time to time. They are different from 'learning practices' which consist of cultured and structured ways of learning that each of us develop for ourselves such as formal learning from school. I realize that a large number of learning events and episodes that take place in the family often go un-noticed. This study aims to collect family learning episodes and study intergenerational learning practices and behaviour among family members.

The word 'learning' itself can be both a verb and a noun. When it is used as a verb, it refers to the *process* (e.g. learning a subject). As a noun, it refers to what the learner has learned and is the *outcome*, the

result, or the *product* of the learning process. For intergenerational family learning, the process is more important than the outcomes.

There are different levels of learning. The word 'learning' carries different connotations. 'Meta-learning' is learning about learning. It is important for us to understand what exactly happens, or when and how learning takes place. Then we can learn to think in a new ways and revolutionise the ways we learn (Hardy, 1998).

We are very used to learning from the older generation and from our school teachers but we, as adults may not be very familiar learning from our younger generation. In this paper, I would like to look at how, when and where 'teaching and learning' or 'knowledge sharing' takes place in the family between the X and Y generations, particularly when parents are learning from their teenage children. Perhaps by learning to learn differently, we, as parents in the 21st century, are able to modify our behaviour and the way we deal with our Generation Y children. Thus we might be able to better understand and define 'family learning' or what can be expected in a 'learning family'.

There are different types of learning according to the various ways of classification or categorization. They include formal, informal or non-formal learning, incidental, acquisition (Rogers 2002:18, Hager, 2001:80-81), unconscious or task-conscious learning and adult learning etc. Each might describe certain aspects of learning but not a single one of the descriptions gives a comprehensive picture of what 'learning' is all about, nor illustrate the meaning of 'family learning'.

To describe 'family learning' within this study, it is anticipated that we might encounter some of the above concepts in regard to various learning types and characteristics such as informal, unconscious, incidental and task-conscious adult learning.

LEARNING THEORIES

There are few classical schools of thoughts on learning theories. They are mainly categorised into 'Behaviorism' (represented by Pavlov, Skinner), 'Cognitivism' and 'Constructivism'. 'Behaviorism' looks at learning as conditioning behaviour and as a response to stimulus. 'Cognitivism' borrows the principles from computer science in

information processing. Cognitive psychology studies the act and the process of learning from the information processing perspectives. The functions of a human brain are taken as the analogy of a computer such as coding, storing, and retrieving of information. Learners are seen as active processors of information. The 'Constructivist' learning theory sees learning as searching for meaning. It stresses the relationship between the knower and the known. In the case of intergenerational family learning, the relationship between members of different generations does play an exceptionally important role.

Illeris (2002) suggested that learning comprises of three integrated dimensions: the cognitive, the affective and the social. As a matter of fact, learning involves complicated interaction between many elements. That is why there are so many different learning theories with each of them focusing on one or some of those elements. I believe family learning and intergenerational learning might also involve the interaction of the above three dimensions.

After all, not all learning theories can be labeled as behavioural, cognitive, or constructive. The behavioural theory and the constructivist theory are at the extreme in the wide spectrum of learning theories. There is considerable overlapping among all the theories in the spectrum. Each theory of learning has its scope and limitation in providing explanations. It does not imply that constructivism is superior to behaviorism or cognitivism. The applicability of each learning theory depends on the learning situations in which it is intended to describe. With this in mind, I think intergenerational learning in the family is largely social and constructive learning.

I do not agree with Piaget's theory which stated that the learning cycle peaks at early adulthood. Rather I truly believe in lifelong learning and that changes can be possible resulting from learning at any age. Adults still have much potential and room for continual learning, provided that they are aware of their learning needs and they maintain good social interactions and are building social capital continuously.

The Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1994), now known as the Social Cognitive Theory, emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviour, attitudes and emotional reactions of others. People learn indirectly by observing the behaviour of others, as well as the consequences of their own behaviour. Through imitation, learners develop consciously or subconsciously the observed behaviour model of performance, which can be a direct, synthesized, symbolic or an abstract model. This theory spans both the cognitive and behavioural frameworks. On-the-job practical training is one example of social learning while intergenerational family learning may be another.

Sociology of Learning

Learning, especially learning in the family, is not just processing information. Learning occurs in relationships and in every interaction. Relationships and interactions become very important, so do skills that help individuals improve them. Those skills include communication and social skills, giving instructions and accepting feedback…, etc. The skills of interdependence might also include learning more about learning and developing everyone's learning skills (Cowan, 1995).

Laszlo and Laszlo (2005) proposed the idea of an evolutionary learning community. They suggested the integration of work, learning and enjoyment throughout life (i.e. intergenerational learning) and in all communities (e.g. family, neighbourhood, organizations). Evolutionary learning focuses on life-long learning and the development of human potential. It promotes self-directed, flexible and ongoing collaborative learning. Evolutionary learning enables the learner to cope with uncertainty and change, renew perspectives, and creatively design new forms of social systems (Banathy 1996:138). It appears that a 'learning family' is also an evolutionary learning community.

Social Construction of Knowledge

Knowledge is socially constructed. Bruffee (1993) called this non-foundational knowledge. Historically, the purpose of education has been the transmission of knowledge, norms-dominant ideologies and cultural heritage for the maintenance of the existing society. This concept is based upon the assumptions that society will remain pretty much the same from generation to generation and also that the society's

elders know what knowledge and skills are necessary for maintaining the cultural status quo. This view also assumes that there is an identifiable body of knowledge that can be packaged and passed on to new learners (Elias and Merriam, 1995). Nevertheless, this should become history now and the assumptions cannot hold true any more as the changes we face are so overwhelming and there is new knowledge everyday. Furthermore, old knowledge may become obsolete very quickly as the knowledge cycle has become much shortened.

Non-foundational knowledge as described by Bruffee (1993) was based on the social construction of knowledge and he assumed that there were no absolute or universal answers. The answers and knowledge belong to the specific communities, which are developed based on the communities' particular language, history and situation. This may be used to describe the changes in the construction of social values and behavioural practices happening between generations in the family which in itself is also a specific community. This non-foundational knowledge might contribute to the building up of specific family culture and values.

'Cultural capital' is a sociological concept first articulated by Pierre Bourdieu in 1973. He identified three types of capital -- economic, social and cultural. Cultural capital acts as a social relation within a system of change that includes the accumulated cultural knowledge which confers power and status. He focused his description mainly on educational systems and inequalities (cited in Barker, 2004:37; Bourdieu, 1990:128). Nevertheless, he also believed that parents could provide children with cultural capital, the attitudes and knowledge that made the educational system a comfortable familiar place in which they could succeed. I would like to include positive lifelong and intergenerational learning attitudes as cultural capital to be established in the family.

Adult Learning and Mental Models

In order to understand how and why parents can learn from their teenage children, some of Knowles' andragogy might be considered. Knowles (1989: 83-4) found that adults needed to know why they need to learn. For adults, internal (intrinsic) motivation is more powerful.

Self-directed learning and using their experience could be seen as learner attributes in adults. Knowles thought that adults are problem-oriented in learning while children are subject oriented. Nevertheless, my argument is that I find both children as well as adults learn better from a problem-based and self-directed approach.

In this study, parents are adults who do possess some of the above attributes for learning. They have to be aware of their learning needs and know why they need to learn in order to be motivated to learn, especially learning from a younger generation, their children. Besides, their learning tends to be self-directed and experiential. However, I strongly feel that sometimes we adults need to actually unlearn what we have learned or experienced in our past so that we can be open-minded enough to learn and accept new knowledge from the youngsters.

From the teenagers' perspective (they might actually be considered as mini-adults), if they understand their parents' learning characteristics and needs, they will be able to 'teach' or share their knowledge more effectively with them in the family.

Different generations may demonstrate different learning patterns or behaviour. The mental model theory may be used to explain certain adult learning characteristics. Senge (1994:8) defined mental models as 'deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action'. Very often, we are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects they have on our behaviour. Only by changing how we think can we change deeply embedded thoughts and practices. Only by changing how we interact can we share new visions, understandings, and capacities for development. He argued that we have a deep tendency to see the changes we need to make as being in the outer world, not in our inner world therefore we tend to change what is outside of us, such as the other's attitudes or behaviour instead of changing our own attitudes and behaviour. Perhaps we have to sometimes unlearn or eliminate old knowledge and experience so that we can redesign the internal structures of our 'mental models' in order to change and learn.

Senge (1994: xv) believed that, 'We do not have mental models. We are our mental models'. Mental models are the medium through which we interact with the world. He made a metaphor by saying that the discipline of working with mental models start with turning the mirror inward, learning to uncover our internal pictures of the world, to bring them to the surface and hold them vigorously to scrutiny.

We might therefore need to revisit our mental models at times in order to change our learning behaviour. Parents have to review their old beliefs and practices so as to accept the younger generation as their 'teacher' who is capable of introducing to their parents new knowledge and skills. We need to make changes in our behaviour and attitudes in order to alter our mental models and to becoming an active learner for intergenerational learning, instead of sticking to our old mental models and behaving as superior and authoritative parents.

Tacit and Explicit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge is subjective, intimately bound up with individual experience, contextualized and unique (Polyani, 1966). As we can see, knowledge transferred between generations among family members is mostly tacit in nature. Explicit knowledge on the other hand includes book knowledge we learned from school and other written or even audiovisual materials from the Internet. Explicit knowledge is abundant and easily transferable, especially with modern technologies. On the contrary, tacit knowledge is not easily transferable and requires personal contacts for transfer. In fact, it is the tacit knowledge that is more valuable in a social system. Intergenerational learning involves mainly the transfer of tacit knowledge and sharing of experience.

To investigate the characteristics of intergenerational learning behaviour and their influence on family learning and lifelong learning, parents and their teenage children in Hong Kong families were recruited. A study framework was constructed making use of a few relevant methodologies. The details of the study design and procedures are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In this chapter, the ontology and epistemology of this study are briefly discussed. Then the research design and methodology are presented in details with introduction of various research instruments and procedures. The theoretical background of the methods employed in this study particularly on narrative inquiry is also reviewed.

ONTOLOGY OF LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE

Ontology is the study of the philosophy of reality. It is a conceptual schema made up of terms that describe the concepts and the relations among the concepts. Social scientists tend to adopt one of the four major ontological approaches. 'Realism' is the belief that facts are out there waiting to be discovered; 'Empiricism' is the belief that one can observe the world and evaluate those observations in relation to facts; 'Positivism' focuses on the observations themselves and attends mainly to claims about the facts than to the actual facts. Finally, 'Post-modernism' is the belief that facts are fluid and elusive, thus one should focus only on the observational claims (Churchman, 2005).

As learning itself is a personal experience and knowledge is ever changing, the data we can obtain from this study is bound to be fluid and elusive. For this reason, our analysis and discussion can only be focused on those observational and obtainable 'facts'. Similar to many other social studies, a post-modern approach is adopted in this study focusing on describing the facts and the relationships between various concepts in relation to learning in the family between Generation X parents and their Generation Y children.

At this stage, this study neither aims to build a perfect theory, nor to give a comprehensive or perfect definition for 'family learning', 'learning family' or 'intergenerational learning'. Instead, I hope to identify the characteristics and build a 'learning family' model with a meta-learning framework and at the same time address the research questions in chapter one (refer to page 14). Data analysis and discussion presented are intended to resemble reality as much as possible, to offer insight, enhance understanding and provide suggestions for future studies.

In the context of learning, neuropsychologists study our brain and try to correlate the physiological process of the body with behavioural changes; computer science models treat learning as an information processing system; anthropologists and sociologists study the roles of myths, metaphors, ritual roles, language, and symbols in the transmission of knowledge; whereas philosophers try to understand the nature of being and how we construct meaning from it. I think all the different disciplines do contribute to defining what learning is. To me, learning not only involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills, it is also a means and an end. Learning helps us to understand our inner as well as the outer worlds, and allows us to become aware of our own existence. Despite different approaches in defining what learning is, most researchers agree that the outcome of learning always results in a relatively permanent change in our behaviour (Atkinson, et al., 1993). I think what we have learned in our childhood from the family forms a repertoire of behaviour preparing us for further learning in the 'real world'. Learning is also considered as a subjective phenomenon and happens within the context of social practices. Knowledge does not exist on its own in the outside world. I truly believe that learning in the

family does not end when we enter school for formal education. Learning is actually a lifelong process. The differences could be in the focus and the ways knowledge is transferred or exchanged. Family upbringing and our early learning experience do influence our attitudes and learning practices later in life.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is a branch of western philosophy that studies the nature and scope of knowledge and belief. It means the theory of knowledge to the philosophers and they try to answer the question of how one knows certain things to be true and others false (Churchman, 2005). It addresses the questions such as what knowledge is, how knowledge is produced and acquired, and what people know. In the realist view of epistemology, knowledge is considered as an 'object' that can be transferred from one person to another. Knowledge can be organized into hierarchical structures in a rational way determined by the structure of the subject matter. Knowledge is thought as a 'matter' existing independent of the learners. It is believed that there exists an

objective reality corresponding to an idea that a teacher can teach. Therefore, the task of the teacher is to provide the right kind of knowledge and information for the learners. However, with the changes we experience and ICT advancement, the role of the teachers and the relationship between the 'teachers' and the 'learners' may have to be re-defined. Knowledge does not necessarily require person to person transfer any more, unless it is tacit knowledge. Intergenerational family learning actually involves the transfer of tacit knowledge from one family member to another across generations.

The Cognitive Information Processing Theory turns its attention from external environmental factors to internal cognitive structures of the human brain (i.e., the mental process of selecting, encoding, and retrieving information). The cognitivists regard knowledge as something objective and common to all if the process is the same.

The Constructivist theory of learning is highly represented by cognitive psychologists such as Jean Piaget on child development and learning, James Bruner in his discovery learning theory, and Lev. Vygotsky in his social learning model. It goes beyond the information

associated with the cognitive process. According to the constructivist theory, knowledge is subjective, provisional, and evolutionary.

We construct our own understanding of the world we live in. In other words, knowledge is constructed according to each individual's rules and 'mental models'. Belief is also a part of the knowledge which predicts whether it will prove to be useful or successful in the same sense. Knowledge is therefore a distinct category of belief.

Knowledge is also created or transferred through the relationship between the 'teacher' and the 'learner'. The world as we understand it depends on the interpretation of our own experience. Learning is searching for meaning, and is both a *personal* construction (cognitive oriented constructivist theories) and a *social* construction of meaning through our interactions with the environment (socially oriented constructivist theories). The social relationships between parents and their children and the interaction between them within the family thus determine the extent and the quality of intergenerational learning.

THEORETICAL FOCUS OF THE METHODOLOGY

A narrative inquiry approach was adopted as the major methodology in this study. In addition, an interview, a questionnaire and a small quiz were also employed as ancillary procedures to collect relevant information. Data obtained from the questionnaire and the interviews in addition to the narratives allowed the researcher to understand the specific meaning which the participants assigned to particular sub-topics**.**

Narrative Inquiry (Story-telling)

Story-telling has a very long history. Before printing was invented, oral history was the primary tool for passing down the collective wisdom and useful experience of the tribe from generation to generation. Besides, human beings learn best from stories. Karl Weick (1995: 127) stated that 'people think narratively rather than argumentatively or paradigmatically'. Narratives were the best way to teach and learn complex 'stuff' (Davenport and Prusak, 2000:82). Moreover, people find it easy to tell stories of personal events, activities and experience using natural language as those are concrete experience.

Narrative inquiry has been a very useful tool in the field of knowledge management and organizational learning to capture and transfer tacit knowledge. The narrative approach to knowledge management was originally introduced by Thomas Davenport and Laurence Prusak and popularized by Snowden and Denning, formerly of the World Bank. This approach asserts that the use of stories to communicate knowledge is very powerful in conveying the rich context of knowledge and experience. Stories convey not just content but also the meaning of experience from one person to another in a way that the recipient can easily understand and recall. Research shows that knowledge is communicated most effectively through narratives. Most importantly, life stories have an inherent validity in the context if the story teller is allowed to speak in their own words (Nermien Al-Ali, 2003:97).

Merely writing down or typing words in order to develop a central database do not improve learning as these are not the usual ways people want to share experience and knowledge. There have to be trust and context around information in order to give it meaning. Story-telling is

a means to change the traditional methods of sharing knowledge and experience. Narrative is actually the driving idea behind the now popular weblogs or blogs (Sumner, 2005)**,** a new technology which allows stories to be uploaded to the Internet and shared among an unlimited number of readers. The Generation Y is very used to this type of knowledge and experience sharing. Children grow up with conversational narratives and they also tell stories around them (Kyratzis, 2005).

Stephen Denning (2001) believed that story-telling enables an idea to take root and flourish. It is a separate mode of cognitive functioning, comprising a distinctive modality of understanding not reducible to abstract thinking. Story-telling also enables us to understand the reality. This is the primary way in which we make sense of the world, and it is a central method by which we grasp the meaning of the past and imagine and create our future.

When people are offered a chance to speak freely from an integrated personal perspective, it opens the opportunity to capture a

highly textured, information rich portrayal of the central issues, together with the underlying driving forces (Humpries, 2001). By contrast, using targeted questions runs the risk of predisposing answers and reducing the probability of bringing the real issues to the surface. In this study, stories that participants chose to tell reflected what they thought were important or what impressed them most. Besides, they were able to comment on or express their feelings towards the stories they recalled.

Karl Wigg (2004) listed many merits of narratives: stories tie together concepts, judgements and other objects into mental spaces that provide meaningful structure, organization, and relationships. Stories cover many abstraction levels such as the how-to, know-that, know-why, patterns and metaphors. Stories thus provide the basic structure and often the origin of mental reference models.

Stories are good for effective communication and help us learn. Stories are the natural and the most effective way of providing the context, structure, real meaning, and overall understanding of complex

topic areas, and also their relations to other knowledge and experience.

A story is established when something happens. And it is the story that is often told and remembered. According to many researchers, story-telling is the best way to make the leap from *information* to *knowledge* and also it is the surest way to capture and transfer tacit knowledge. Most people find it easy to tell stories of personal events, activities and experience using natural language rather than to write them down. Dave Snowden (www.cognitive-edge.com) also called our attention to the serendipitous information we may be able to obtain from narrative inquiry.

For intergenerational learning, the learning contents and events would not usually be written down or passed on as explicit knowledge; rather they are buried in our daily life. The events could be remembered and later be recalled and told as stories. Therefore requesting the participants to recall and tell their intergenerational learning stories would be an effective way to capture their learning experience

Shawn (www.anecdote.com.au) pointed out that narrative was not analysis. There could be many interpretations and no correct answers to narratives. Rather, they should be used to identify patterns. The pattern and behaviour of intergenerational learning happening between Generation X parents and their Generation Y children are exactly what this study aimed to investigate. It is not the intention of this study to analyse the detail of the narratives or to give any judgements on the content and the learning behaviour.

What is a Theory? What is a Definition?

A theory is a systematic explanation for observations related to a particular aspect of life (Babbie, 2004). Theories explain the observations by means of concepts. Concepts are abstract elements representing classes of phenomenon within the field of study. The concepts are the 'building blocks' of the theory. The role of a theory is to structure and codify already proven practices and behaviour. I think we do practise learning all the time and everywhere even though we may not realize it. 'Learning family', 'family learning' and

'intergenerational learning' exist and happen even without well recognized theories explaining their occurrence and relationships.

A *definition* gives the precise meaning of a word, phrase or term. In defining concepts, we are imparting meanings. However, the form which meaning takes can be unique for each person. I strongly feel that to 'define' a concept will actually 'confine' ourselves to describing only certain aspects of a particular idea. It is quite impossible for us to give precise and at the same time comprehensive enough definitions for concepts such as 'learning', 'intergenerational learning' or 'lifelong learning'. Despite these recognized limitations we will experience when defining concepts, we still need to work with definitions and meanings, so long as they are well declared and the usage is consistent, before we change our interpretation. When doing studies, somehow we need to give some operational definitions of the concepts we are going to investigate. Nevertheless, we must be aware that we can always change and re-visit our interpretation of the definitions. This exactly becomes part of the learning process itself.

As there is still no definite or universal accepted definition for 'family learning' or 'intergenerational learning', in order to describe it, we might need to draw references from the definition of terminologies such as 'learning organizations', 'organizational learning' and, 'sociology of learning' and 'lifelong leaning', etc. Besides, there is not yet an established theory on 'learning families' or 'intergenerational family learning' for us to explain the phenomenon or make predictions.

A *model* is a mental picture that helps us to visualize or understand concepts in which we cannot directly experience on schema. It is the mental model that guides how we make decisions and take actions. Our mental models are our subconscious knowledge set, which is shaped by language and discourse and are culturally specific. From this study, I hope to build a learning family model so that better understanding of various concepts involved can be facilitated.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This is a qualitative study based primarily on a narrative inquiry approach. As this study involved several aspects of intergenerational learning and lifelong learning, in order to address the seven research questions (as listed on page 14) in a more comprehensive manner, a mixed design of methodology was employed. Data was gathered through individual interviews, a questionnaire, and a quiz in addition to the collection of anecdotes on intergenerational learning episodes.

Before the actual study started, a focus group was conducted to collect preliminary data and ideas on the topic. This was intended to serve as a preparatory step in developing the research instruments.

Focus Group

A small group composed of five secondary students from the same school was invited to informally discuss, during a social gathering, intergenerational learning issues. They were from a similar background and were studying in the same class (Form 3). As they knew each other well, they were able to discuss freely. They participated actively in the

discussion and gave their experience and viewpoints on this particular topic.

The discussion was conducted with a few open-ended questions on the topic. The meeting lasted for about one hour and the entire session was audio-taped and later transcribed into text format (Appendix 1 Focus group discussion report).

The objectives of conducting this focus group were to gather preliminary data and to identify subject areas which teenagers found they had better knowledge than their parents. Their attitudes towards 'lifelong learning' and their ideas on 'learning family' were also looked at. The data obtained was used to refine the questions for the questionnaire and to identify areas for detailed investigation. The data gathered would also be used for triangulation.

Pilot Study

The draft questionnaire and the quiz were given to two adults and five teenage secondary school students for them to fill in and comment on. The objectives of the pilot study were explained to them and their feedback was collected and acted upon to improve the study design and the research instruments.

The feedback from the pilot study revealed that the methodology using videotaping was strongly rejected though most of participants found audio-tape recording acceptable. As a result, the original plan to videotape actual intergenerational teaching and learning events was abandoned. According to the oral feedback received, it seemed that the teenagers particularly enjoyed doing the quiz. Preliminary analysis of the quiz results indicated that the teenagers in general scored higher than the adults.

The number of questions in the questionnaire was reduced after the pilot study in response to the comments received. Guiding questions were incorporated at the end of the questionnaire so that participants

could mentally prepare their intergenerational learning stories before the interview. They were not required to write extensively as more valuable data could be obtained through their talking than writing.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

1. Narrative Inquiry and Interview

Conducting an interview is thought to be a useful way to get a wide variety of information quickly and systematically. In this study, either a one-to-one face-to-face or phone interview was conducted with each individual participant. Participants could choose between face-to-face versus phone interview according to their preference. Nevertheless, it is recognized that face-to-face interview would yield better results as it allows better rapport to be established between the researcher and the interviewee.

Besides, a narrative inquiry method was also employed to extract the life story learning events from the participants. They were asked to recall three incidences when intergenerational teaching and learning had taken place between the two generations. They were

encouraged to describe the specific learning events in detail, to comment on their teaching, learning or sharing experience, to discuss and reflect on their past actions and experience of learning in the family.

As far as possible, the sessions were conducted in a causal way. The researcher tried not to interrupt or intervene when the participants were telling their stories. Prompting questions would be given only as requested by the participants. After the anecdotes were told, participants' views on the concepts of 'lifelong learning', 'family learning', 'learning culture' etc, were extracted.

Each session lasted for about 20-30 minutes and was audio-taped and then later transcribed. The transcription of the narratives and the interview content was then sent to the respective participant through email for amendments and further comments.

2. Questionnaire (Appendix 2)

A questionnaire was employed aiming to collect information for a more comprehensive analysis supplementary to other descriptive data obtained. It was given to the participants before the interview, and was accompanied by thorough explanation of the objectives and the procedures of this study. The purpose was to set the scene for the interview and story-telling session.

The content of the questionnaire covered demographic data and background information of the teenage participants as well as their parents. Guiding questions were included at the end of the questionnaire to prepare them for the interview and story-telling session in the areas of family culture, learning events, learning behaviour, attitudes and other attributes which might contribute to building a learning family. The questions were designed based on the assumptions and research questions of this study. Both positive and negative statements were included and they were randomly spaced out to avoid bias when completing the questionnaire.

Two sets of questionnaire with similar content but modified wordings were prepared for the parent and the teenager groups respectively. The questionnaire was filled in individually by each participant without influence by their counterparts. Moreover, they were encouraged to elaborate their answers to the statements though simple 'Yes', 'No' and 'Can't decide' options were provided.

3. Quiz (Appendix 3)

The objective of setting the quiz was to investigate whether there are 'knowledge gaps' between the Generation X parents and Generation Y teenagers. Both groups were asked to fill in the same quiz and their scores would be compared and analysed. The content of the quiz was made up of short-forms and abbreviations commonly used in the local context. The quiz consisted of two parts. Part A contained the short-forms and abbreviations extracted from a local newspaper (South China Morning Post, 9 February 2006). Part B consisted of abbreviations and symbols which were used by and popular among Hong Kong youngsters.

Participants were reminded not to communicate or discuss with their counterparts when doing the quiz. They were asked to finish the quiz in 15 minutes as they were not expected to search nor ask someone else for the answers.

TECHNIQUES

A close, trusting relationship was needed to elicit responses from the interviewees. The researcher therefore made every effort to build a trusting relationship and allowed the interviewees to tell their stories in a relaxed and comfortable environment. Guiding questions were given well in advance to stimulate them into describing the key concepts when telling their stories. They were given the research questionnaire before the actual interview was conducted so they would have ample time to mentally prepare their stories and answers.

For narrative inquiry to be professionally conducted, it was suggested that we had to unlearn about facilitation. It was harder than it appeared for the researcher to keep silent. The researcher tried not to interrupt or intervene when the participants were telling their stories.

Nevertheless, the teenagers sometimes requested questions to be asked to prompt them for further elaboration of their points. Prompting questions would be given only upon request or as required.

To foster a sense of ownership, participants were promised a copy of the transcript of the audio-taped stories and conversation. The transcript was sent through email and they were asked to confirm the accuracy of the content. Amendments or comments on the transcript were welcome. There were only minor amendments received and some of them expressed their interest in knowing the results of the study. (Refer to the feedback from participants in Table 29, p. 231) They would be given a copy of the abstract when the thesis is completed.

Confidentiality was strictly observed. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Data and transcription were all coded with no names identified. All the written as well as audio data were kept confidential and this was guaranteed before the recording of the session was started. Even the parents of the teenage participants would not have access to the teenagers' data.

Guiding Questions

Guiding questions were designed to stimulate and guide the participants into describing the key concepts addressed in this study when telling their intergenerational learning stories. They were open-ended questions and descriptive in nature so as to stimulate more in-depth thoughts. With these in mind, some guiding questions covering the concepts of our research questions were presented at the end of the study questionnaire. (Refer to the end of Questionnaire in Appendix 2)

SUBJECTS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

The questionnaire was given to and interviews were conducted with 10 pairs of parents and their teenage children. Informed consent was sought from each participant. The respective parents of the teenage child gave their consent both for themselves and on behalf of their child. Teenagers and their parents were interviewed individually.

Convenience sampling was adopted to recruit the participants. The selection criteria stipulated that the participants had to be able to master English competently as they had to read and understand the informed

consent, the questionnaire and the quiz all of which were written in English. Nevertheless, the verbal explanations would be given, and the interviews would be conducted in Cantonese, their mother tongue. Cantonese is a dialect spoken in Hong Kong. The transcripts of the interview content and anecdotes would also be written in English.

PROCEDURES

Ethical Issues and Data Protection

A brief statement of research and the informed consent form were submitted to the University of Nottingham Research Ethics Committee. Ethical approval was granted in January 2006.

Informed consent was sought both orally and in the written form. A letter of consent which included the background of the researcher, details of the study and the procedures, was presented. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Only the researcher herself and faculty members would have access to the data. The data will be destroyed seven years after the completion of the study.

The information sheet and the written consent (Appendix 4) were presented to both the teenagers and their parents. The objectives of this study were introduced and the research procedures explained thoroughly. Queries were answered in Cantonese, the mother tongue of the participants. Strict confidentiality would be observed and all names would be kept anonymous when the data was processed.

Data Collection

Besides from the questionnaire, data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with the teenagers and their parents separately. To begin with, each participant was asked to tell their stories and experience associated with intergenerational learning in the family. Their perceptions and opinions on 'lifelong learning' and 'family learning' and other related concepts were also obtained. The interviews and their stories were audio-taped and subsequently transcribed. The transcript would then be used for further analysis.

Point of Saturation

Data collection was stopped after the tenth pair of participants was interviewed as the content obtained from the new case was found to be repeating and demonstrated familiar patterns as the previous ones. The materials collected were considered adequate with valid findings.

Data Management

a. *Data Transcription*

The types of data collected include notes, questionnaire, quiz and audio-taped materials. The voice files obtained from audio-recording were transcribed. Data was organized according to a template with pre-defined attributes such as intergenerational learning, learning family, lifelong learning etc. (Appendix 5)

Data collected from the narrative inquiry and interviews were transcribed into a text-based format. The information was transcribed, codified and categorised soon after it was collected. Translation of the verbal (Cantonese) information into English was done at the same time with transcription. The data was coded to

ensure confidentiality before it was analysed. A copy of the individual transcript was sent to the respective interviewee for proof-reading and amendments. They were sent and received through email communication.

b. Data Processing

All data collected was processed. Answers from the questionnaires were tabulated, mapped and analysed. Coded data was used to group responses to questions or key concepts into larger, more generic typologies. Natural units of meaning were generated from the codified records. They were classified, categorised and ordered for analysis, and then structured and re-organized for interpretation.

Data organization was carried out as the data was collected. Data and information were processed manually. Both content analysis and discourse analysis were performed with the text data.

Cross-checking was carried out to verify and validate the data collected. Qualitative data obtained from the interviews and anecdotes was triangulated through correlating and comparing with

the patterns from the questionnaire analysis to discover deviants.
The deviants as well as similarities among various modes of data
would be discussed in chapter 4 where they were discovered during
data analysis.

c. Data Analysis

Theme analysis in the narrative inquiry is a respected and well
established method of qualitative analysis. There is a mix of
deductive and inductive method, etic and emic in theme analysis
(Spradley, 1980).

A deductive approach collects stories and sorts them by their
attributes into 'etic' taxonomy. 'Etic' refers to the categories of the
analysis drawn from a grand theory and imposed from the outside
viewpoint onto the other's world. The inductive approach to
narrative theme analysis imitates its taxonomy from the emic
categories in use by people who tell the stories. 'Emic' is the
insiders sorting their stories. In this study, the deductive approach
of theme analysis was adopted with the researcher, not the
participants, performing the analysis of the stories.

d. Data Interpretation

Evidence for and against the research argument would be presented and discussed. The importance of cultural context will be stressed in the discussion. Other constraints and limitations of the study and procedures will also be addressed.

One of the problems envisaged was on the language used in this study. All written materials used in this study were in English. The consent letter, questionnaire and guiding questions for narrative inquiry were written and presented in English. Nevertheless, the raw data obtained from the interviews and narratives was in Cantonese as all subjects were Chinese and their mother tongue was Cantonese, though they could read and understand English well.

To minimize the chance of misinterpretation in the translation process, the English transcript was sent to the participants for proof-reading and accuracy checking. This procedure was included to ensure that ideas were correctly presented when they were translated from the Cantonese audio into the English text format.

VALIDITY

Narratives are believed to have an inherent validity in the context if story tellers are allowed to speak in their own words (Nermien Al-Ali, 2003). In this study, participants were allowed to talk freely using their mother tongue. Efforts were made to minimize any interruption or interference from the researcher when stories were told so as to eliminate possible bias. Participants were reminded not to discuss with their counterparts when doing the questionnaire and quiz

To ensure the authenticity of the results, participants were promised that their response and contents of the interviews would be kept strictly confidential and not be reviewed to their counterparts. This was particularly important in gaining the trust of the teenagers so that they would express their ideas freely for more valid results. Moreover, the transcripts of the narratives and interviews were sent to the respective participants for comments and checking of content accuracy.

RESOURCES AND APPLIANCES

This study did not require special financial resources. The only equipment needed was a digital audio-recorder.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

Data collected from the narrative inquiries, interviews questionnaire and quiz were coded. Specifically, data obtained from the parents was coded with a suffix 'P' while that from their teenage child 'C'. In this chapter, data obtained are categorised and presented. It will then be analysed and discussed under various subheadings.

DEMOGRAPHICS

For Parents

Key: PT: Post-tertiary level; T: tertiary level

Code	Sex	Age	Education level	Yrs of formal education	Child Sex/age
1P	F	51	PT	20	M20,M14
2P	F	47	PT	18	F16,M14
3P	F	48	PT	18	M20,M14
4P	M	52	PT	19.5	M16,F12
5P	F	40-50	PT	20	F17,F13
6P	M	49	T	17	F17,F15
7P	F	47	PT	20	M15,F12
8P	F	49	PT	19	F17,F14
9P	F	46	T	18	M17,F14
10P	F	48	T	16	F18,F14
Total	F:8 M:2	45-52	PT:7 T : 3	16-20 yrs	All with 2 teenage children

Table 1: Demographic Data of Parent Participants
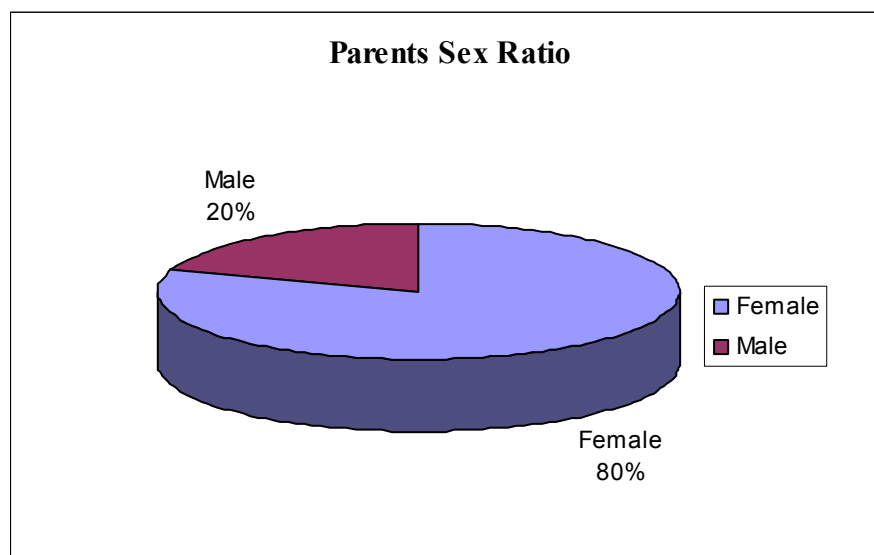
Figure 1: Sex Ratio of Parent Participants
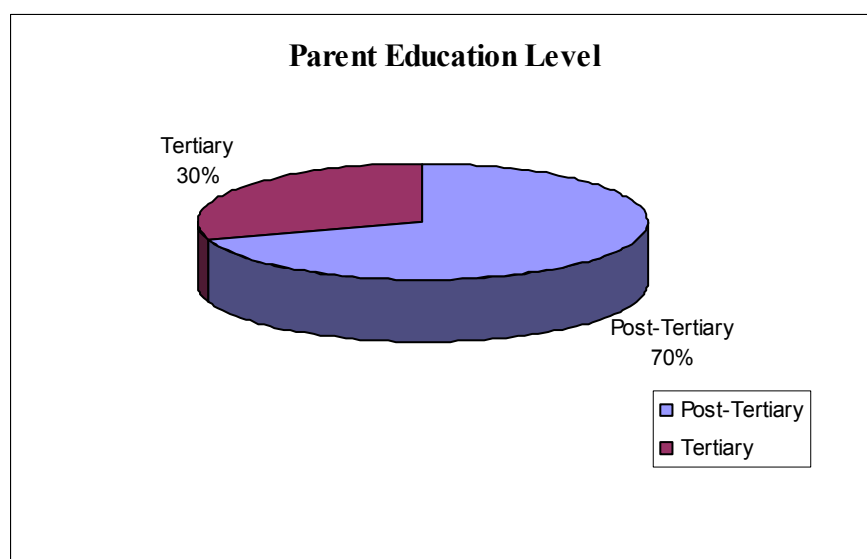
Figure 2: Education Background of Parent Participants

For Teenagers

Code	Sex	Age	Education level	Sibling Sex/age
1C	M	14	G9	M20
2C1	M	14	F3	F16
2C2	F	16	G12	M14
3C	M	14	F3	M20
4C	M	16	F4	F12
5C	F	17.5	G12	F13
6C	F	17	F5	F14
7C	M	16	G12	F12
8C	F	17	F7	F14
9C	F	14	F3	M17
10C	F	18	U1	F14
Total	F: 6 M: 5	14-18 14 :4 16 :3 17 :2 17.5:1 18 :1	F3-U1 F3 :3+1 F4 :1 F5 :1 G12*:3 F7 :1 U1 :1	All with siblings aged 12-20 F : 7 M : 4

Table 2: Demographic Data of Teenage Participants

Note:

* Grade 12(G12) in the Canada educational system is equivalent to Form 6 in Hong Kong
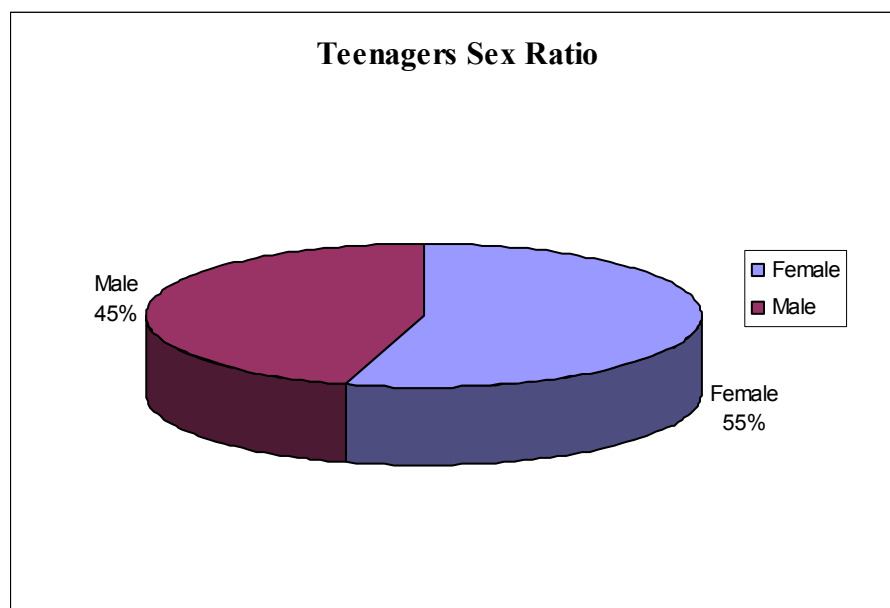
Figure 3: Sex Ratio of Teenage Participants
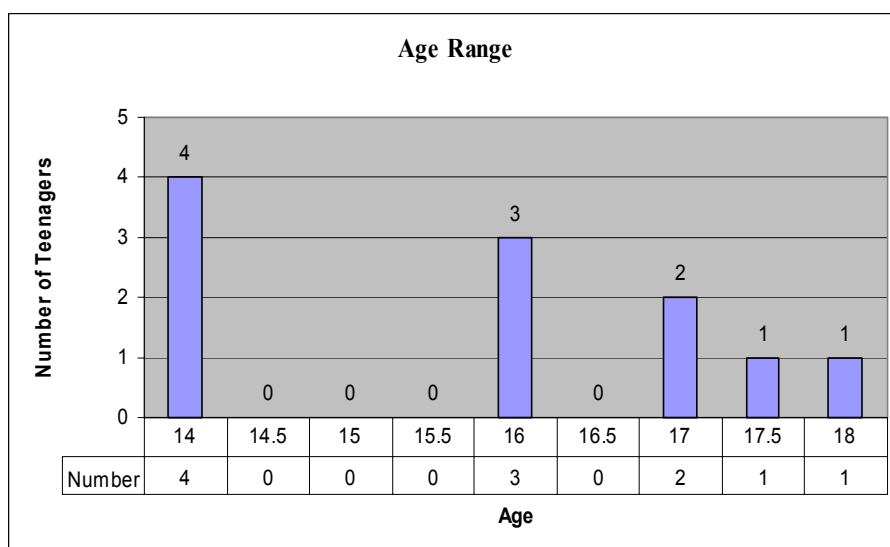
Figure 4: Age Range of Teenage Participants

Number of Participants

A total of ten families took part in this study. Ten parents with their respective teenage child were involved. The total number of teenagers involved however was eleven, with one of them (2C2) being the sibling of one of the teenage participants. Only the qualitative data of 2C2 would be referred. Her input in the questionnaire and quiz (quantitative data) would not be included for statistical analysis and her data was mainly used for triangulation.

Family Structure

Most families involved in this study were nuclear families made up of parents and two teenage children aged 12 to 20. One of them was a single parent family, and one was living with their paternal grandmother (that is three generations living together).

Age

The parents were from the middle-age group, ranging from 45 to 52 of age, while the teenagers were aged between 14 and 18. (Refer to Figure 4)

Sex

Among the parents interviewed, eight were females and two were males. The parent sample was dominated by female participants with a ratio of female to male 4:1. For the teenagers, six of them were girls and five were boys. One of them was the sister of a boy participant. (Refer to Figure 1 and Figure 3)

The participation to this study was recruited on a voluntary basis. It seems that the mother of the family was more interested to participate. Moreover, the reason for female dominance among the parent group could also be due to the snowball effect of sampling. Some of the parent participants were friends.

The sex ratio for the teenager group was more even. Apparently, not many of them knew one another.

Education Level

Most of the teenagers were studying in secondary schools while one of them was in the first year of university. Two of them were studying overseas in Canada, and came home for a holiday when the interview was conducted.

For the parents, all of them had received 17 to 20 years of formal education. All had achieved tertiary level education and seven of them had obtained a Master level qualification. All were working parents. They were considered highly educated and belonging to the middle class income families.

Siblings

All of the teenage participants had a sibling in the family. Seven of them had a sister and four of them had a brother. Most of their siblings were also teenagers. (Refer to Table 2)

Mode of Interview

	Face-to-face interview	Phone interview
Code	1P, 2P, 3P, 5P, 6P, 7P, 8P, 9P, 2C2, 5C, 7C,10C	4P, 10P 1C, 2C1, 3C, 4C, 6C, 8C, 9C,
Total	12	9

Table 3: Mode of Interview

In total, twelve face-to-face interviews and nine phone interviews were conducted. The conversation was audio-tape recorded. Interviews were arranged according to the preference of the participants in regard to the mode and time.

It was recognized that there could be differences in terms of quality and quantity of the data obtained when it was collected through face-to-face or phone contact. Nevertheless, the preference of the participants was respected. It seemed that more teenage participants preferred a phone interview (64%) than their parents (20%). The other reason could be due to operational convenience as they were busily occupied with their schoolwork and extra-curricular activities. Many of the phone interviews were conducted after school or at night.

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In this part of the study, participants were required to decide whether they agreed, did not agree or could not decide with the statements provided in the questionnaire. Their answers to the questions were presented and analysed under two subheadings:

Part A: family culture and practices

Part B: learning family and lifelong learning

Part A: Family Culture and Practices

Statement 1:
Parents enjoy full authority in the family

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	2,6, 9,10	40%	1,3,4, 5,7,8	60%		
Teenagers	4,7, 9,10	40%	1,2,3, 5,6,8	60%		

Table 4: Responses to Statement 1
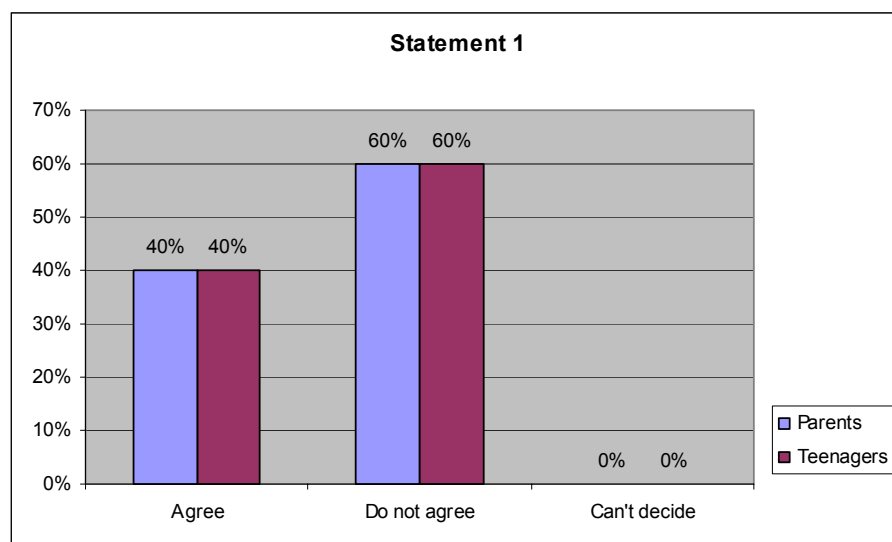
Figure 5: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 1

For both parent and teenager groups, 60% of them disagreed with the statement. Only 40% thought that parents enjoyed full authority in the family. It seemed that the traditional belief that parents should exercise full authority in the family was under challenge.

For cases 9P, 9C, 10P and 10C (two pairs), both generations agreed with each other that the parents enjoyed full authority in the family. Cases 1P, 1C, 3P, 3C, 5P, 5C, and 8P, 8C (four pairs) did not think that the parents enjoyed full authority.

The result here also indicated that the perception could be different between the parent and the child. In cases 2P and 6P, the parents (6P was a father) thought that parents enjoyed or should enjoy full authority in the family but their respective teenage child did not feel the same.

Conversely, in cases 4C and 7C, the teenagers felt that their parents were actually enjoying full authority or were authoritative at home but their respective parent did not perceive so. If the parents were perceived as an authoritative image to their children, it might hinder the exchange of knowledge and experience especially in the Generation Y to X direction.

A few parents realized that in order to facilitate intergenerational learning and to improve relationship in the family, they had to be humble and to adjust their attitudes and should not act authoritatively. (1P, 3P and 6P)

Statement 3:

Family members (between two generations) seldom share information and knowledge

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents			1,3,4,5,6, 7,8,9,10	90%	2	10%
Teenagers	7	10%	1,2,3,4,5, 6,8,9,10	90%		

Table 5: Responses to Statement 3
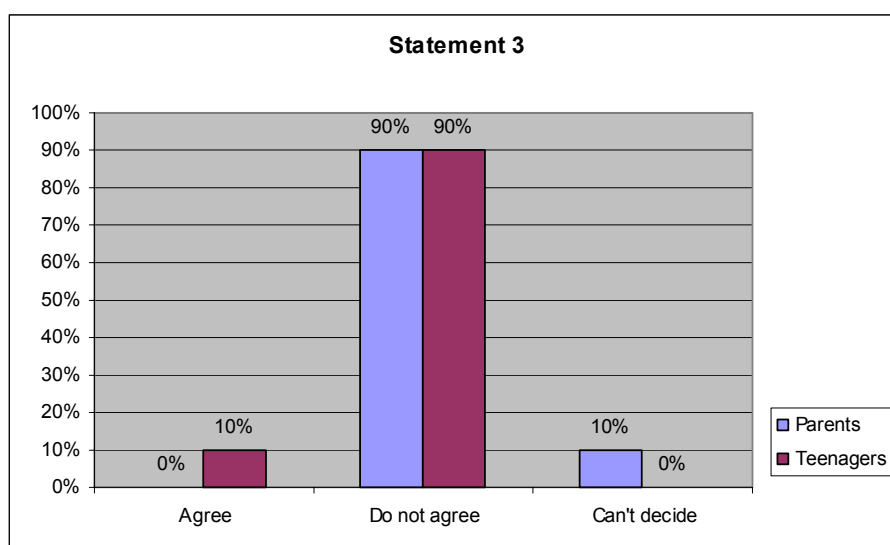
Figure 6: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 3

The majority (90%) disagreed with this statement, which indicated that there had been good sharing of information and knowledge among family members between parents and their teenage children. Case 7C agreed with the statement and when matching this with the answer given for statement 1 (i.e. parents are enjoying full authority), it could be deduced that the reduced sharing of information and knowledge might be due to the parents' authoritative style.

Statement 7:

I find learning experience in the family happy

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	1,2,3,4,5 6,7,8,9,10	100%				
Teenagers	1,2,3,4,5, 6,8,9,10	90%			7	10%

Table 6: Responses to Statement 7
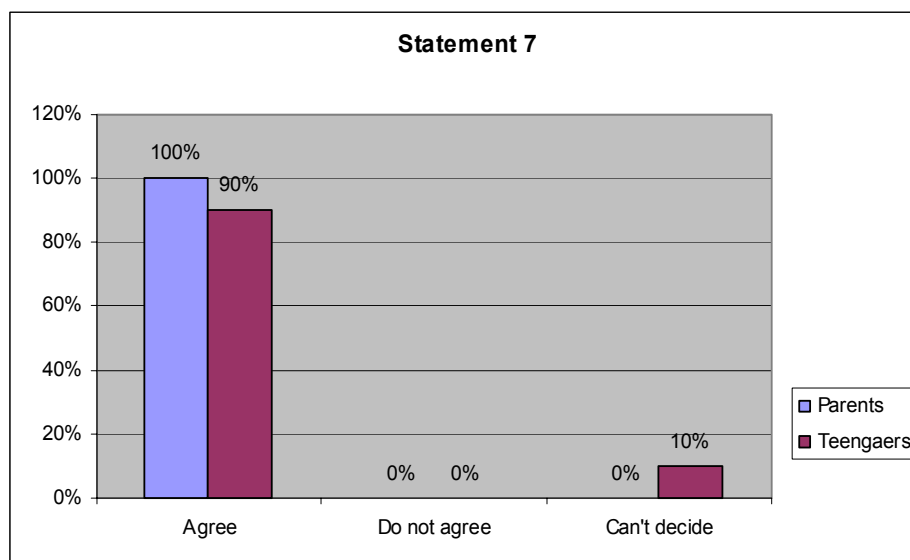
Figure 7: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 7

All parents (100%) and most of the teenagers (90%) found learning experience in the family happy except for case 7C, who was not able to decide. The reason could be the same as proposed above. He commented that sometimes arguments occurred in the family.

Statement 8:

Learning taking place in my family is always unilateral from older to younger generation

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	2	10%	1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	90%		
Teenagers			1,2,4,5,6,7,8,10	80%	3,9	20%

Table 7: Responses to Statement 8
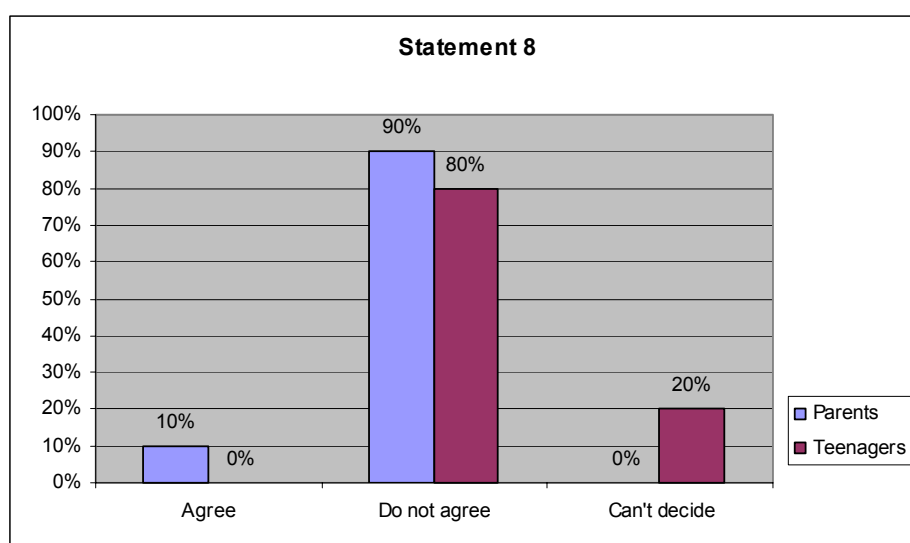
Figure 8: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 8

There are 90% of the parents and 80% of the teenagers did not agree with the statement that learning taking place in the family was unilateral from the older to the younger generation except for case 2P. Cases 3C and 9C could not decide. Probably they were not sure of the direction of learning. Case 7C added that 70% of the time learning was from the older to the young generation.

Statement 11:

I do not always agree with the comments/behaviour of my child/parent

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	1,4,5,6,7, 9,10	70%	3,8	20%	2	10%
Teenagers	1,2,4,5,6, 7,8,9,10	90%	3	10%		

Table 8: Responses to Statement 11
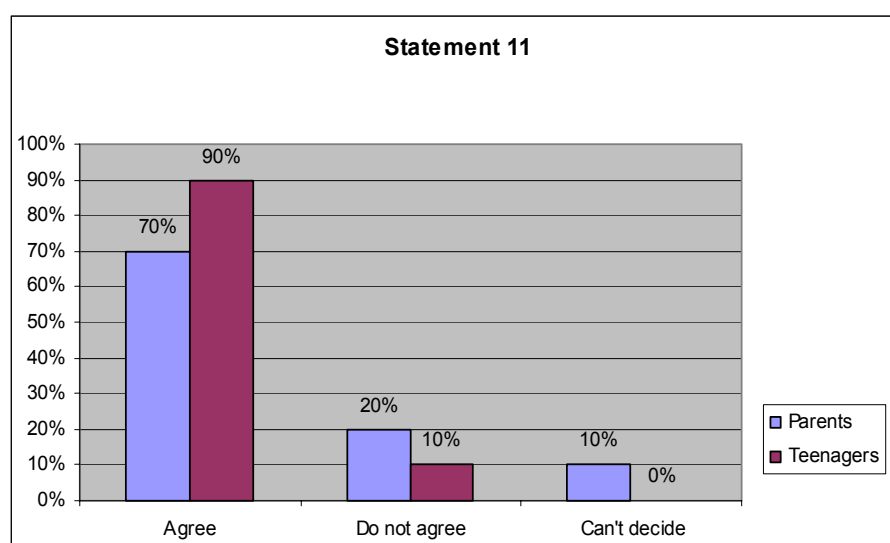
Figure 9: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 11

The results showed that 70% of the parents and 90% of the teenagers did not always agree with the comments and behaviour of their counterparts, implying that there could be discrepancies between the two generations in terms of values and behaviour. Only 20% (case 3P and 8P) of the parents and 10% of the teenagers (3C) always agreed with their counterparts. One parent could not decide whether she agreed or disagreed with the statement.

Statement 12:

There exist generation gaps in the family

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	1,2,5,6, 7,8,9,10	80%	3,4	20 %		
Teenagers	1,5,6	30%	2,3,10	30 %	4,7,8,9	40%

Table 9: Responses to Statement 12
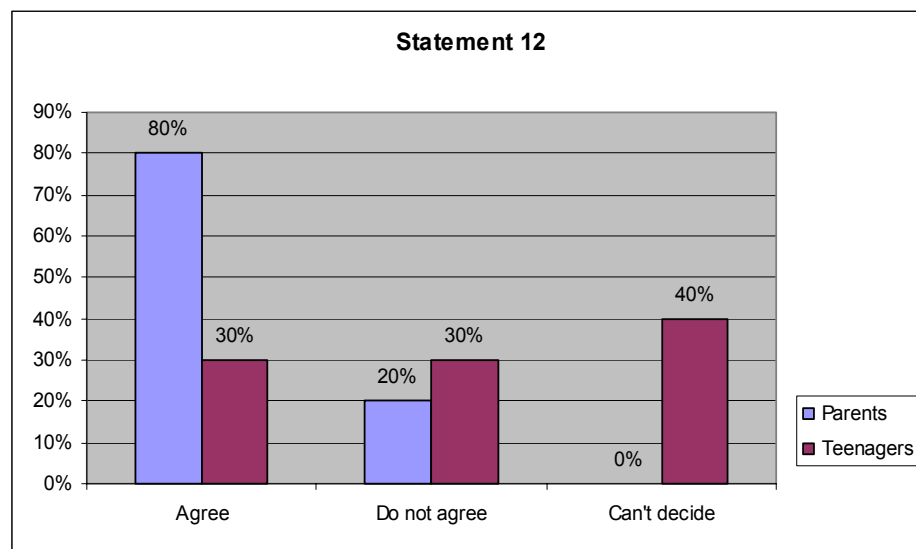
Figure 10: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 12

Among the participants, 80% of the parents and 30% of the teenagers thought that generation gaps existed between the two generations. Two parents (3P, 4P) and three teenagers (2C, 3C, 10C) did not think so. Interestingly, 40% of the teenagers could not decide. Perhaps they did not want to admit that generation gaps existed or they could not identify the gaps yet. Case 7P added that generation gaps

existed but not communication gaps. Obviously he could differentiate 'generation gaps' from 'communication gaps' although there could be a potential link between them.

The data suggested that parents, when compared with their teenage children, were more sensitive to the existence of generation gaps and thought they existed in the family. Perhaps parents were more aware of the risk of generation gaps or they had actually experienced significant gaps with their own parents when they were young and were anticipating them to exist now with their own children.

Statement 13:
Mother plays a more important role in intergenerational learning than father

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	1,2,3, 5,7,9	60%	4,6, 8,10	40%		
Teenagers	1,3, 5,7	40%	4,6, 8,9,10	50%	2	10%

Table 10: Responses to Statement 13
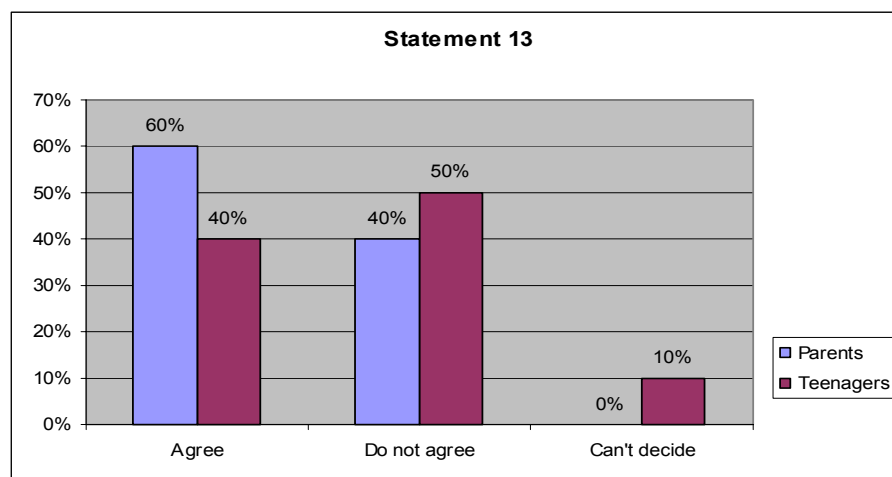
Figure 11: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 13

Among them, 60% of the parents agreed that mother played a more important role in facilitating intergenerational learning in the family. On the other hand, 40 % (including the two father participants) did not agree. As there were eight mothers and two fathers (4P, 6P) in this study population, the data obtained could be biased.

For the teenagers, 40% of them thought that their mother played a more important role but 50% of them did not agree. Probably teenagers felt that both their father and mother played an equally important role for intergenerational learning. There was a discrepancy between the two generations for case 9. Case 7P commented that her children had a 'lazy' father. This point would be further discussed in the results of the interviews on the same topic page 195-205.

Part B: Learning Family and Lifelong Learning

Statement 2:

My family is a 'learning family'.

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	1,3,4,5, 7,8,9,10	80%			2,6	20%
Teenagers	1,2,3,4, 5,6,7,8	80%			9,10	20%

Table 11: Responses to Statement 2
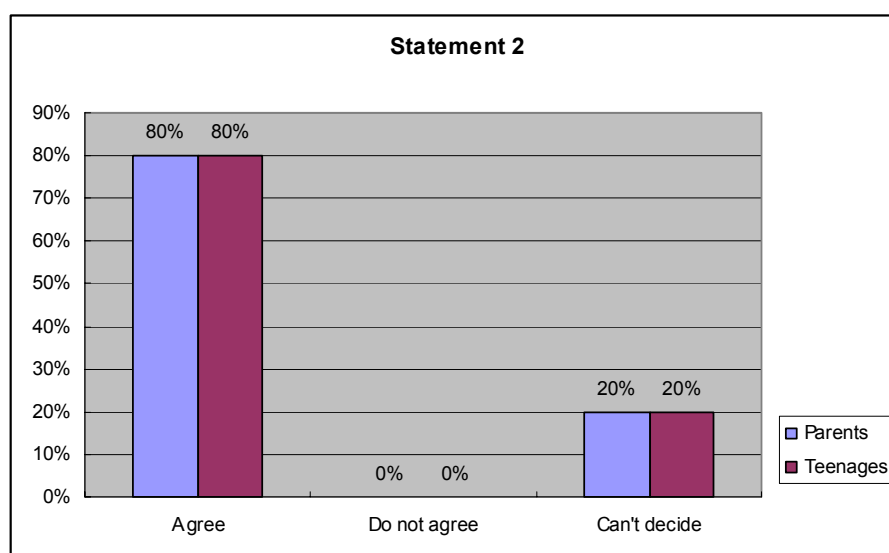
Figure 12: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 2

The majority of the respondents (80% of parents and teenagers) thought that their own family was a 'learning family' though the term 'learning family' had not yet been clearly defined. Their ideas and opinions for this term were further elaborated in the interviews (page 152-163). They elaborated their ideas on what a 'learning family'

should be. Case 2C defined a learning family as having '*family members willing to accept or take in knowledge from one another'*. Case 3P suggested that parents should be '*less authoritative, easy going and serving as teens' friend. Parents cannot adopt too much of the traditional Chinese authoritative practices*'. She also indicated that '*intergenerational communication is very important'* and she had seen changes in family culture. Case 6P thought that in a learning family, '*members can learn from each other and together. They have common interests and goals'*. Whether family learning happened or not depended on good relationship, as mentioned by many participants.

None of them thought that their family was NOT a learning family though 20% of them were undecided. Probably they were not too sure about what exactly was a 'learning family'.

Later, all participants were asked to rate their family in a 10 points scale with respect to the ideal learning family (refer to page 139-140). In general, they gave a very high score believing that their family was a 'learning family'.

Statement 4:

I am a 'lifelong' learner.

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8,9,10	100 %				
Teenagers	1,2,4,7,8, 9,10	70%			3,5,6	30%

Table 12: Responses to Statement 4
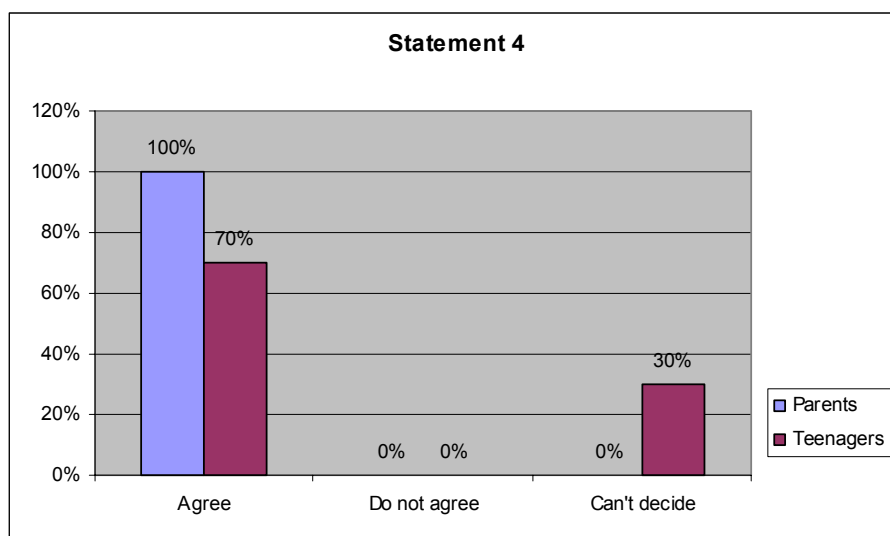
Figure 13: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 4

All the parents (100%) thought that they themselves were lifelong learners. For the teenagers, 70% of them believed that they were lifelong learners while 30% could not decide. For those who could not decide, probably they were not sure about the definition of a lifelong learner. Their ideas on 'lifelong learning' were further elaborated in the interviews and data presented (refer to page 146**)**.

Statement 5:

I think continuous learning is important for my family members

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8,9,10	100%				
Teenagers	1,2,4,5,7, 8,9,10	80%			3,6	20%

Table 13: Responses to Statement 5
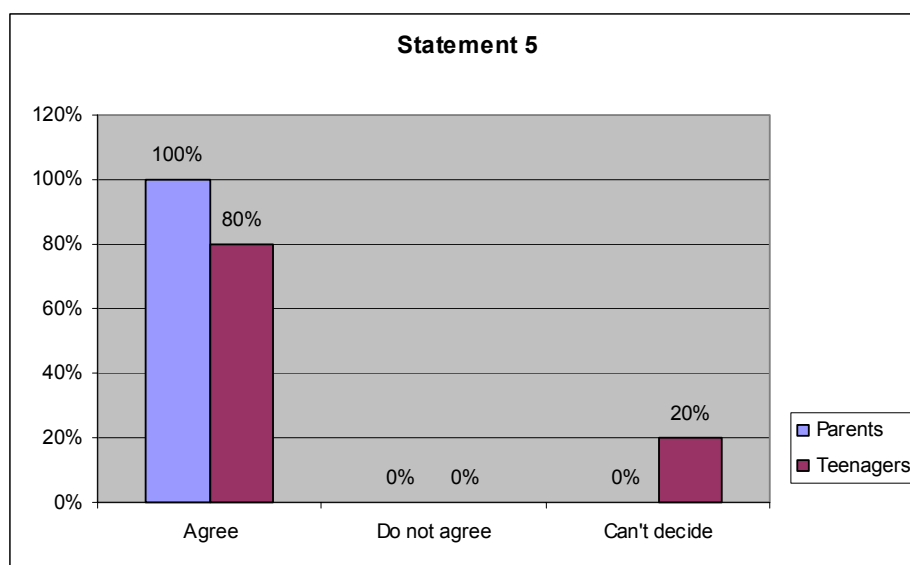
Figure 14: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 5

Again, all the parents (100%) agreed that continuous learning was important while 80% of the teenagers thought so with the remaining 20% unsure. They were actually the same respondents giving the same answer in statement 4 above in regard to 'lifelong learner'.

Statement 6P:

I have learned only from my supervisors and teachers

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents			1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8,9,10	100%		
Comment from 7P '*I have learned from friends, peers, children (clients and my own).*'						

Statement 6C:

I learn only from my school

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Teenagers			1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8,9,10	100%		

Table 14: Responses to Statement 6
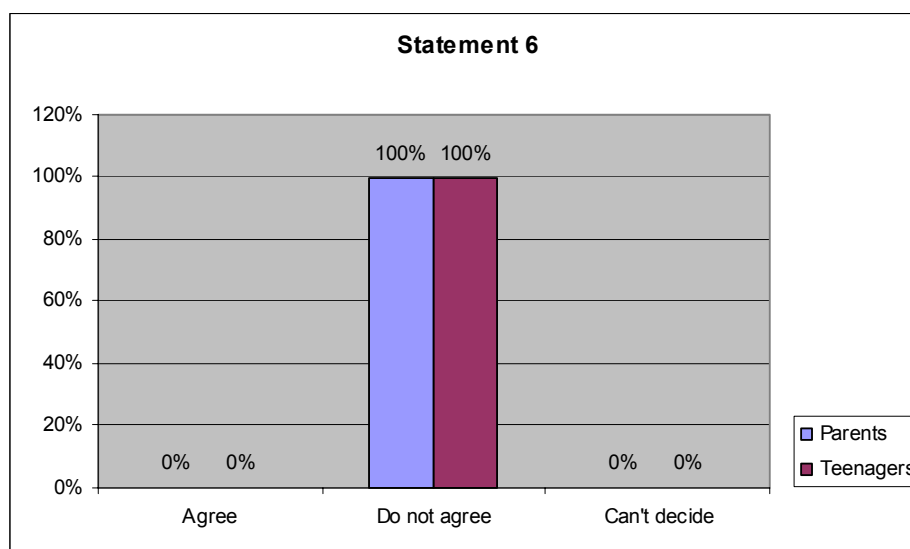
Figure 15: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 6

Both the parent and the teenager groups did not agree that they only learned from supervisors or teachers at school. There were someone else or under some other situations that they thought they could learn.

Statement 9P:

My children have much to learn from me at home

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	3,5,6, 7,8,9	60%	1,4	20%	2,10	20%

Statement 9C:

My parents have much to learn from me at home

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Teenagers	1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8,9,10	100%				

Table15: Responses to Statement 9
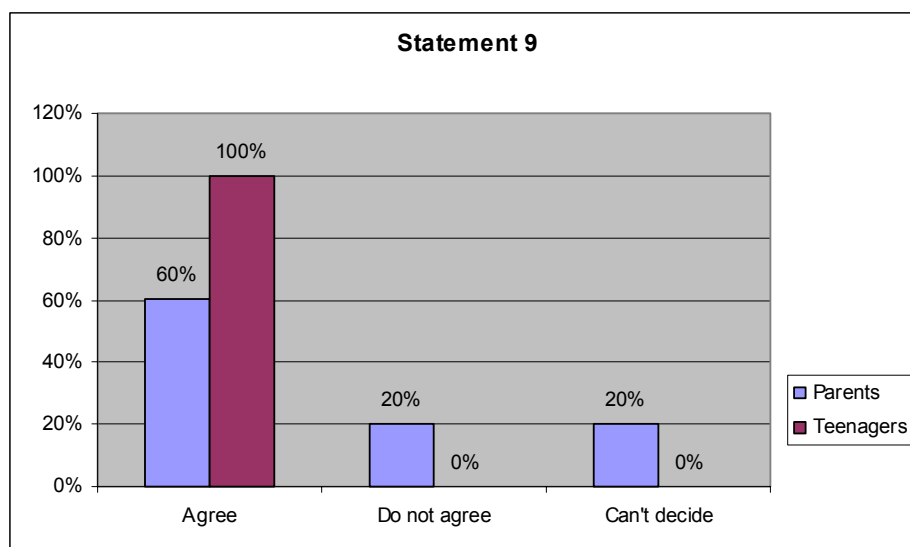
Figure 16: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 9

Among the parents, 60% thought their teenage child had much to learn from them at home but 20% did not agree. It is not sure whether these two parents were thinking that their teenage children did not have much to learn at home from them any more. 20% of the parents could not decide.

All teenage respondents (100%) thought their parents had much to learn from them. It might be interpreted that the teenagers thought they had much to offer at home to their parents.

Statement 10P:

I have something to learn from my children

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Parents	1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8,9,10	100%				

Statement 10C:

I do not have much to learn from my parents at home now

	Agree		Do not Agree		Can't decide	
Teenagers			1,3,4,5, 6,7,8,10	80%	2,9	20%

Table 16: Responses to Statement 10
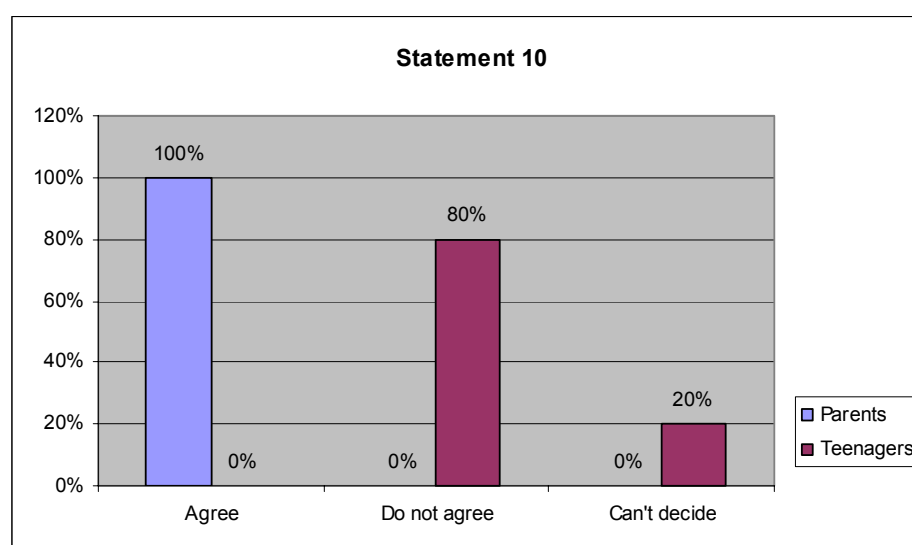
Figure 17: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Statement 10

Also, all the parents (100%) believed that they had something to learn from their teenagers. This echoed the responses we got from the teenagers from the last statement (Statement 9). Among the teenagers, 80% of them did not agree with this statement that they did not have much to learn from their parents at home. Apparently they were still prepared to learn from their parents. It was strange that cases 2C and 9C were unable to decide on this.

To sum up statements 9 and 10, all (100%) teenagers thought their parents could have much to learn from them and 80% of them thought they also had much to learn from their parents. This was a very positive response in terms of bi-directional intergenerational family learning.

Learning Culture/Atmosphere in the Family

Participants were asked to grade the learning culture for their own

family from excellent to poor.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Weak	Poor
Parents		1,3,5, 6,7,8,9 (70%)	2,4,10 (30%)		
Teenagers	5 (10%)	1,2,3, 4,6,7, 8,9,10 (90%)			
Mean	5%	80%	15%		
Additional Comments : '*Parents are always willing to accept our opinions. They might not agree 100% but we often discuss and learn from each other.*'(2C2) '*I think learning does not only mean obtaining knowledge and facts. It also includes sharing of experience. I think my family is having quite a good atmosphere which encourages the sharing of viewpoints on certain issues raised since we always have dinners and go on outings together. So we can easily have common topics to talk about,*' (10C)					

Table 17: Responses on Family Learning Culture/Atmosphere
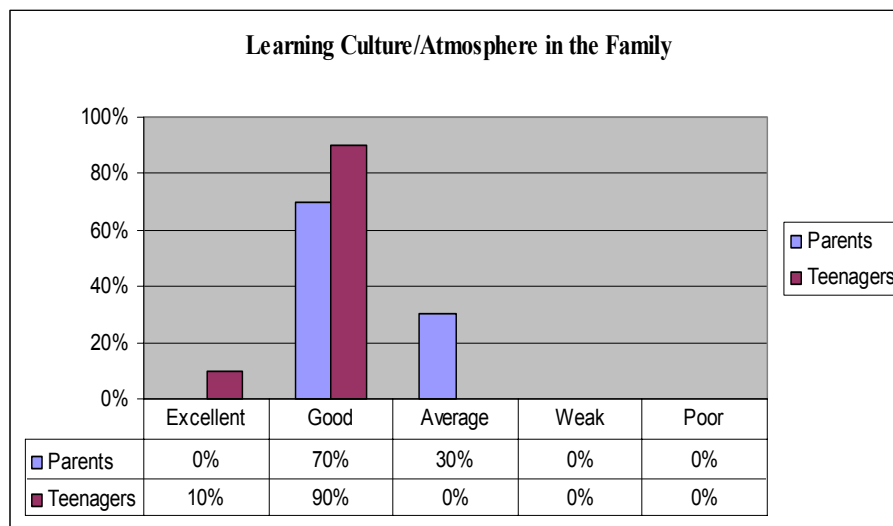
Figure 18: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses on Family Learning Culture/Atmosphere

Most of them (70% of the parents and 90% of the teenagers, average 80%) considered the learning culture and atmosphere of their family good and one teenager even graded it as excellent. The rest (30%) of the parents graded their learning culture at home as average.

Apparently, the teenagers were slightly more positive looking at the learning culture in their family. Overall, it was quite reasonable to infer that these families were mostly good 'learning families'.

Are 'generation gaps' equal to 'knowledge gaps'?

	Yes	No
Parents	1, 8 (20%)	2, 3, 4,5,6,7,9,10 (80%)
Teenagers	1, 9 (20%)	2, 3, 4,5,6,7,8,10 (80%)
Mean	20%	80%

Additional Comments:

'*It might not be knowledge gap only; generation gaps can also be communication problem. Sometimes the way that we inform one another might cause generation gap.*' (2C2)

'*To me, it is the difference in social, economic, cultural backgrounds from which we were brought up that causes the generation gap between my children and me.*' (7P)
'*Generation gaps may lead to difference in life style, not necessarily knowledge gap.*' (7C)

'*Difference in value, lifestyle and interest*' (10P)

'*I think knowledge gap is just one of the reasons for generation gaps. There may be other factors like living environment, communication skills of the two generations etc which also lead to generation gaps. But knowledge gaps alone may not definitely result in generation gap.*' (10C)

Table 18: Responses on Generation Gaps versus Knowledge Gaps
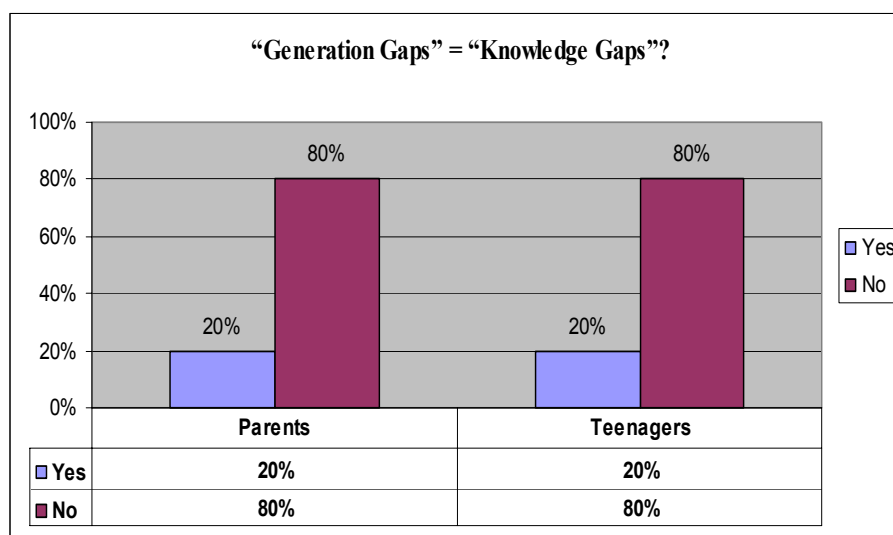
Figure 19: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses to Generation Gaps versus Knowledge Gaps

The majority of the participants (80% both for parents and teenagers) did not think that generation gaps were knowledge gaps. They offered very good explanation and pointed out that social, economic, cultural background and up-bringing would constitute generation gaps as well as knowledge gaps.

From statement 12, 80% of the parents and 30% of the teenagers thought generation gaps existed in the family. It would be worthwhile to explore further what were the gaps existing between two generations (refer to page 215-6).

Major Direction of Learning Taken Place in the Family

	Parent→ Child	Child→ Parent	Parent←→ Child
Parents	2, 4, 9 (30%)		1,3,5,6,7,8,10 (70%)
Teenagers	4 (10%)		1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10 (90%)
Mean	20%		80%

Additional Comments:

'When I and my brother were young, our parents would teach us skills and knowledge. As we grew up, we then can teach our parents more about new technology or skills, so I believe that learning in my family are from both directions, parents and children.' (2C2)

'60% is parent→ child and 40% child→ parent.' (8C)

'child→ parent not obvious, parent→ child obvious: about 70% of the time is from older→ young generation.' (7C)

'I think the most ideal direction of learning should be bilateral. But it depends on the topic concerned. There are always things that one side of the generations know more about or to have more say. In that situation, the knowledge transferal may be unilateral. But in general, parents and children do learn from each other.' (10C)

'At younger age, more from parent→ child than from child→ parent.' (7P)

'The parents have lots to teach. The parents need to open up to get message from the younger.' (10P)

Table 19: Learning Direction Taken Place in the Family

Major Direction of Learning Taken Place in the Family

	Parent→ Child	Parent↔ Child	Child→ Parent
☐ Parents	30%	70%	0%
■ Teenagers	10%	90%	0%
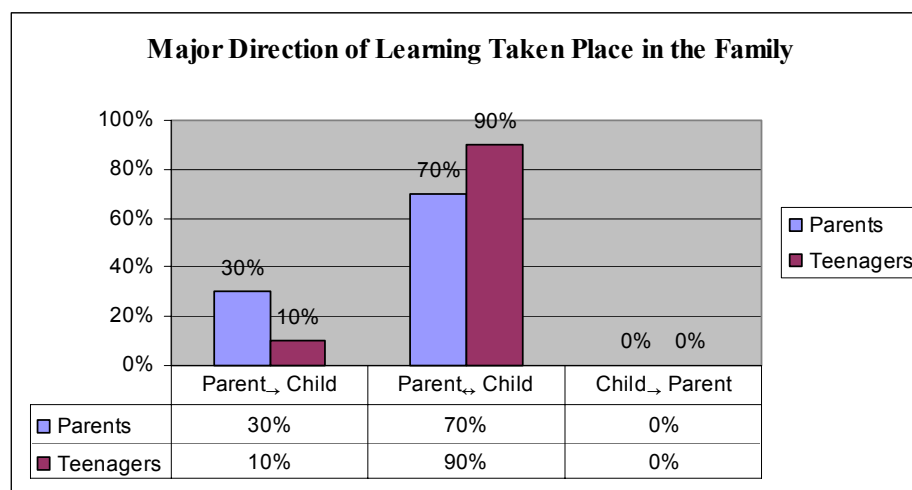
Figure 20: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Responses towards Direction of Learning Taken Place in the Family

Among all parent participants, 30% of them practised predominantly parent→ child (Generation X→Y) learning and 70% experienced it bilaterally (Generation X←→Y). A high majority of the teenagers (90%) thought learning in their family should be bi-directional (Generation X←→Y). No one chose the option 'child→parent' (Generation Y→X).

Overall, the majority of the respondents thought that intergenerational family leaning had been bi-directional. Nevertheless, even though they recalled many stories in which the teenagers were teaching their parents, not a single one thought that the Generation Y→ X direction was a major one in their family.

Learning Family Rating

Participants were asked to rate their own family as to whether they thought it was an ideal 'learning family' on a 10-point scale, with '10' being the most ideal and '1' being the least ideal.

	5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	10
Parents		9 10		1 4 5 6 7 8	2				3
Teens		9	6	2 5, 7		1, 3, 4 (mother)	10	4 (father) 8	
Total		2+1	1	6+3	1	3	1	2	1
parents		20%		60%	10%				10%
teens		10%	10%	30%		25%	10%	15%	
mean		15%	5%	45%	5%	12.5%	5%	7.5%	5%

Table 20: Results of Learning Family Rating
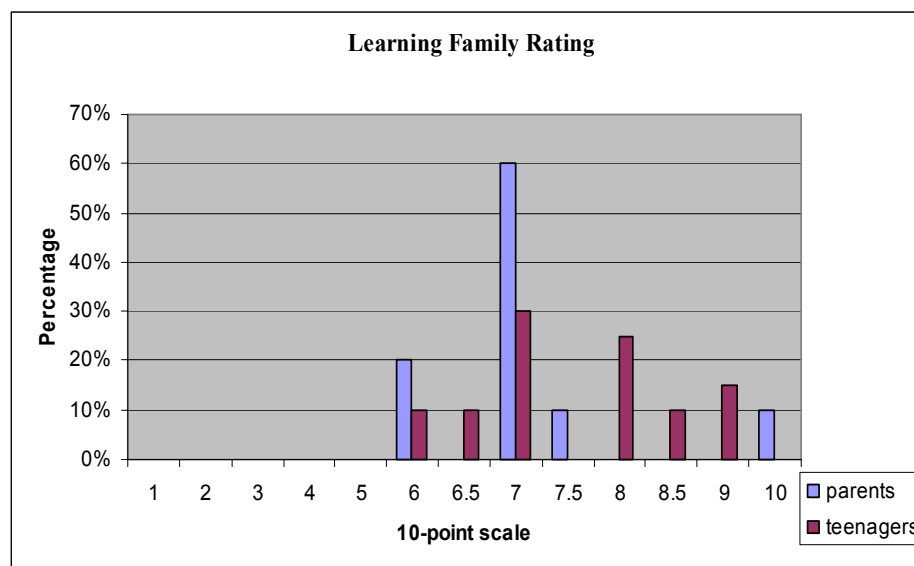
Figure 21: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Rating on Own Family as Learning Family

The score ranged from six to ten. One parent (3P) thought hers was a most ideal learning family indicating that she was very satisfied with her family in terms of intergenerational learning. Most of the others gave a score of 7 to 8. One male teenager specifically gave a higher score for his father than mother. This reflected that he might have a closer relationship with his father than with his mother in terms of learning and experience sharing.

Almost 80% of all cases gave a score which was equal to or higher than seven and 100% scored six or higher. This is a significantly high figure which implied that participants thought highly of their family as an ideal 'learning family'.

RESULTS FROM THE QUIZ

The quiz consisted of two pages (Part A and Part B). Part A of the quiz contained 25 abbreviations selected from a local newspaper script while Part B included 25 abbreviations and symbols commonly encountered locally by the two groups (parents and teenagers). All participants filled in the two quiz tables. They were reminded not to communicate with their counterpart or research for the answers from other sources when they filled in the tables.

Scores of Part A Items

For Parents

	1P	2P	3P	4P	5P
Estimated correct	24	23	25	22	22
Number correct	21.5	18	24	21.5	18.5
% correct	86	72	96	86	74
	6P	7P	8P	9P	10P
Estimated correct	25	24	20	25	23
Number correct	23.5	22.5	18.5	22.5	21.5
% correct	94	90	74	90	86
Mean: 84.8% (range 72-96%)					

Table 21: Results of Part A Quiz for Parents

For Teenagers

	1C	2C1	2C2	3C	4C	5C
Estimated correct	20	23	23	25	20	19
Number correct	17.5	17	22.5	24	20	17.5
% correct	70	68	90	96	80	70
	6C	**7C**	**8C**	**9C**	**10C**	
Estimated correct	20	15	19	20	23	
Number correct	17	23	17	16.5	22.5	
% correct	68	92	68	66	90	
Mean: 85.8% (range 66-96%)						

Table 22: Results of Part A Quiz for Teenagers
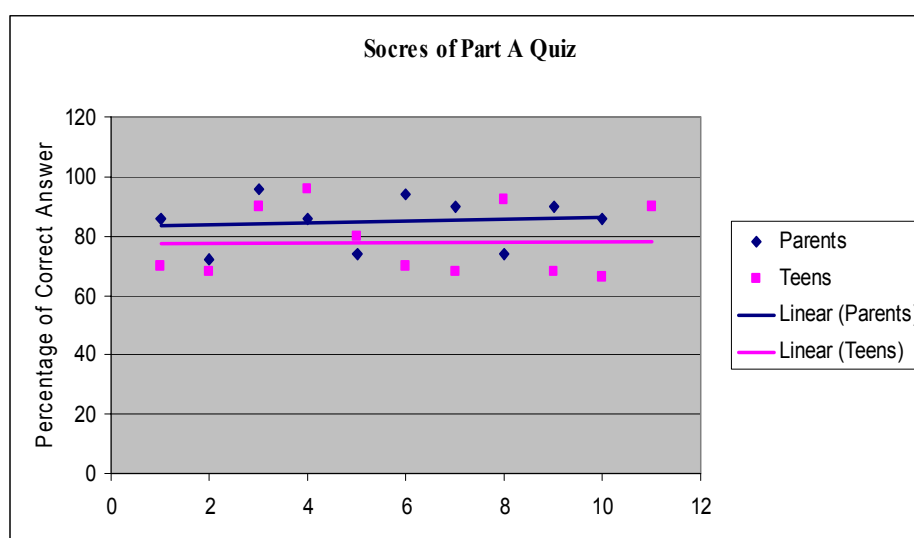
Figure 22: Graph Showing Parents' and Teenagers' Scores on Part A Quiz

From the results obtained in Part A, it appeared that there was no significant discrepancy between the two groups in their mean scores. They both got a mean score of 85-86% as correct answers.

Scores of Part B Items

For Parents

	1P	2P	3P	4P	5P	6P	7P	8P	9P	10P
Estimated correct	15	21	25	15	15	23	20	19	20	20
Number correct	6	16	22	14	12	15.5	16	11	15.5	15.5
% correct	24	64	80	56	48	62	64	44	62	62
Mean 56.6% (range 24-80%) 60.2% if data 1P is discarded										

Table 23: Results of Part B Quiz for Parents

For Teenagers

	1C	2C1	2C2	3C	4C	5C
Estimate correct	24	23	21	25	22	24
Number correct	22.5	16.5	18.5	23	19	21.5
% correct	90	66	74	92	76	86
	6C	**7C**	**8C**	**9C**	**10C**	
Estimate correct	19	25	19	23	23	
Number correct	17.5	24	17.5	20.5	22.5	
% correct	70	96	70	82	90	
Mean 89.2% (range 66-96%)						

Table 24: Results of Part B Quiz for Teenagers
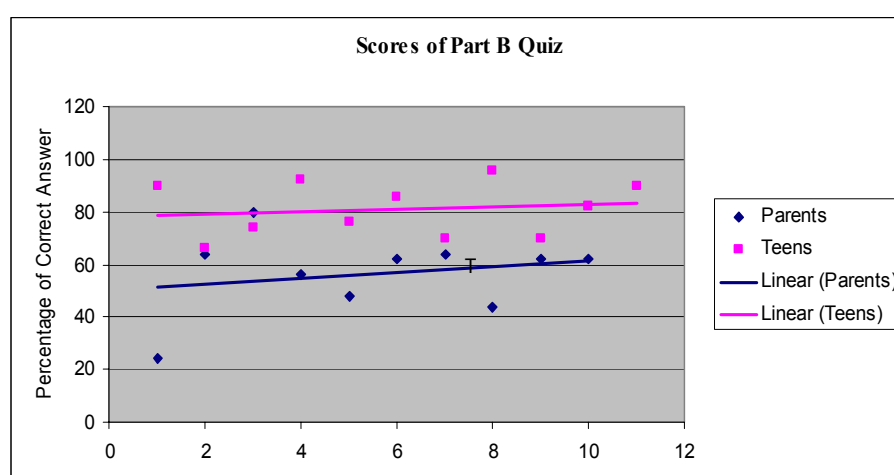
Figure 23: Graph showing Parents' and Teenagers' Scores on Part B Quiz

The results from Part B revealed that there was a significant discrepancy between the two groups: a mean score of 56.6% for the parent group and a mean score of 89.2% for the teenagers group. (Even when the skewed data in the parent group was discarded, the mean score was still low at 60.2%) For the majority of the parents, the number of items that they thought they knew (i.e. estimated correct) was much higher than their actual score as correct answers. They seemed to have over estimated themselves knowing the answers.

Interpretation of the Results of the Quiz

The teenagers did much better than the parents in Part B which consisted of abbreviations and symbols used extensively among the Generation Y group. Perhaps parents were not exposed to this kind of abbreviations as much as the teenage children. Teenagers often used those abbreviations to communicate among themselves for email, short message service (SMS) or Microsoft network (MSN) etc.

Implication

There were areas that the teenagers knew better than their parents. It is not always 'the older the wiser' (as the Chinese traditional belief) nor the vice versa. The reason for the teenagers scoring higher could be due to the fact that they had been more exposed to those items than their parents. If those abbreviations were used extensively and found to be effective for communication among the teenagers, it might be worthwhile for the parents to learn them as well. If the parents saw the needs to learn from their children especially in subject areas they were less exposed, they would actively engage in intergenerational learning activities. This might facilitate better communication and understanding and more importantly bridge the gaps between the two generations.

RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

The contents of the transcripts obtained from the interviews were

coded, and then categorised under the following sub-headings:

Keys:
FL (family learning)
IGL (intergenerational learning)
LF (learning family)
LLL (lifelong learning)
OG (older generation)
YG (younger generation)
Note: The participants' actual statements are presented in italics.

Lifelong Learning

From the teenagers' perspective, *LLL is important* (4C, 7C). *It is*

important as we need to continually improve ourselves. The world is

very big and there is new knowledge everyday (7C). *LLL is the trend*

and it is necessary, whether you like it or not. LLL is learning

throughout life in all aspects, not only formal learning (8C).

LLL means learning throughout the whole life (2C1, 9C). *There*

is no age limit for learning (2C2). *It involves active learning* (2C1).

LLL is holistic learning '全面' (3C). *It does not necessarily mean*

obtaining knowledge from school (2C2). *Learning takes place at home*

as well as at school (3C). *Daily new experience obtained on the street can also be good learning experience* (2C2). *LLL should not necessarily be limited by knowledge; learning should take place any time anywhere* (6C).

One of them thought that her parents were lifelong learners but she commented that *they tend to focus mainly on formal learning and social relationships* (8C). Another teenager saw her mother *as a lifelong learner as she wanted to study further for other degrees* (9C). So to both of these cases (8C and 9C), LLL seemed to be a kind of formal learning though cases 3C, 6C 8C, 2C2 thought it was informal learning.

Participant 10C remembered that *when I was in secondary school, our teachers encouraged us to be lifelong learners. As there is always new knowledge, we have to keep on learning. We have to open to changes and new knowledge to enrich ourselves '充實自己' thus we have to learn throughout our life*. It seemed that teachers also played an important role in introducing positive LLL attitudes to the youngsters.

The parents were having similar viewpoints on lifelong learning. They also thought that LLL was important and that LLL was learning throughout life.

A parent (1P) expressed her idea in an elaborative way: '*There are two levels of LLL. The first is individual level. LLL starts when we were born and continues to old age. In order to live, we need to learn throughout life non stop, to learn new things from the environment and through interactions with people. The second level is learning in the society. I think all should learn from each other, not necessarily from the OG. We don't think that the older the wiser any more though the OG has more life experience. It seems that as we are getting older, we resist '抗拒' learning from the YG. However we need to change this attitude now. It is not that the YG knows more but they might look at the world in different perspectives. In order to communicate with the YG, we need to understand their views. For example, I learned using MSN thus it helps increase our communication channels with the YG. LLL is particularly important now otherwise we will be out of touch with the*

world '脫節'. The experience we have built up can be saved and archived and will be useful eventually to be shared with the Generation Y'. This particular parent gave a very well thought out and comprehensive view on LLL. She did challenge the traditional Chinese thinking that the older was the wiser.

Participant 3P realized that LLL is *necessary for survival and it is not just for qualification e.g. we need to learn to use new products, new functions, and electronic gadgets. For the elderly generation they can survive even not knowing English or writing at their time. Now we must know how to operate the computer, MSN or SMS etc*. She further mentioned that LLL *does not necessarily mean formal learning at school; it can be just absorbing new information. Adults can benefit from informal learning from the YG (at home and at work) although the OG and the YG have different interests. For formal LLL, we still need to go to school especially for job related or career training*. It seemed that she identified two types of LLL -- formal and informal, and felt that learning from the younger generation should be an informal process.

Parent 6P commented that LLL *refers to structured and institutional learning for some people. Actually we need to maintain an attitude to actively explore and to be interested in things happening around us. Learning can be factual, cultural or experiential. It is human nature expressed in different ways: some learn through formal processes, some through observation and other senses, e.g., listening to music is a form of learning since it brings new experience. Curiosity is most important. As long as we have a sense of curiosity, we are already learning continuously. Everyone is learning either actively or passively. LLL is a given.* He appreciated different learning styles and recognized curiosity as an important motivator for LLL.

According to participant 7P, LLL *is very individual, as people have specific ways to learn. People have different interests in various life stages. LLL keeps one always thinking and growing. LLL is very important.*

Participant 8P realized the importance of LLL. *Children are naturally always learning. Adults also need to learn as the society is*

changing with technology advancing. If they don't keep on learning,

they cannot follow the pace of the society. As for the current older

generations, they do not keep on learning thus they would be left

behind and cannot catch up with the society '被社會淘汰'.

Participant 9P considered LLL as informal learning. LLL *is not*

only for career as we are working too hard already. There is more to

life than just working, such as developing interests, e.g., cooking and

knitting techniques. Learning does not need to be formal. We can even

learn from friends.

For most people, LLL is a natural process. When we are young,

we learn for our career and work. When we get older, there is already

much achievement at work. However we still need to learn as there is

new knowledge everyday. Sometimes even though we have the

knowledge, as the world is changing and the values might change as

well, we need to keep learning to understand how the YG thinks, though

we may not necessarily agree with them all. So to keep in touch with

the world, we must practise LLL (10P).

To summarize, both the parent and the teenager groups believed that lifelong learning was very important and it meant learning throughout life. Most of them thought that LLL could be informal and learning could take place anywhere any time. Nevertheless, a few of them did associate LLL with formal education related to career development (9C, 3P). LLL is necessary for us to catch up with technologies and the changes in the fast changing society. I do agree with the idea that curiosity plays an important role for LLL. Defining LLL into two levels (individual level and the societal level) actually puts intergenerational learning into better perspectives. Though some of the participants thought that LLL was individual learning, learning across generations was also believed to be a form of LLL.

Learning Family and Family Learning

Although at the beginning of the interview, participants were not given any definition of these two terms, all of them had some ideas of what they were or what they should be. Many of them thought that their family was a 'learning family' (2C1, 5C, 6C) others did not (3C,

7C) (also refer to questionnaire result page 133, 80% of parents as well as teenagers agreed that their own family was a learning family while 20% could not decide). The following are the definitions and descriptions on 'family learning' and 'learning family' from the teenagers and the parents.

Participant 1C described FL *as the sharing of daily information and knowledge, supplementary to each other. IGL is very important as teens can learn from their parents regarding their life experience while the OG can learn new technology from the YG so we can complement each other.* He realized that IGL should be bi-directional.

Teenager 2C1 thought his family was a LF. FL *means each family member learning from one other. It is not about academic subjects but sharing of our life views '人生道理' or technology '科技產品'.*

His sister 2C2 thought that in a LF, *parents should not force kids to listen to them. They should accept our opinions though they do*

not necessarily always agree. We can discuss and come up with consensus. Therefore LF means family members are willing to accept or take in knowledge from one another.

Participant 3C believed that *IGL improves relationship, understanding and communications among family members. It is often a happy experience. All members should participate, share and communicate. It's not like a teacher-student relationship.* When he was asked whether his family was a LF, he thought it was a *half and half situation, but not really.* This indicated that he was not really sure what a learning family should be like but he rated high (8 out of 10) in regard to his family as an ideal learning family in the questionnaire.

Teenager 4C thought that *there should be more discussion in a LF. I want my parents to reduce their authority '尊嚴', to be more open and talk with me on equal ground.*

Participant 5C expressed that *FL is very important. My family is definitely a learning family. It is not about learning from school, there*

is no need to study or do examinations. It's about family members'

willingness to share and it involves all family members. Learning is

under no stress or pressure but easy and comfortable '輕鬆'. It does

not necessarily mean parents teaching children, sometimes children can

teach their parents (e.g., going on trips or to museums, we learn

together about the cultures and absorb new knowledge). These are

usually happy experience.

Participant 6C gave a description of LF. *It is very harmonious*

'融洽', with members having very close relationships. Members are

like good friends learning from one another, able to appreciate each

other's strengths. My family is a LF. I expect my parents to show

interest to learn from us.

Participant 7C commented as follows: *We look up to our parents*

as idols and we tend to copy them. If they demonstrate LLL, we can

adopt that learning attitude. I expect parents to be able to communicate

and willing to listen. The atmosphere should be relaxed and there

should be no pressure. There is not much IGL taking place in the family.

It appeared that he respected his parents and at the same time expected them to be more active in IGL and LLL.

Teenager 8C thought that *the whole family should be learning and the learning atmosphere in the family should be good. I hope that parents would not always be against my ideas or forcing us to follow their ideas. I want them not to suppress our views '打沉人' but try to listen to us more.*

For an ideal LF, parents should not always feel that they are older and more experienced so that they must be wise and knowledgeable. I expect parents to ask questions more often so we can tell them what we know. Case 9C gave very concrete suggestions to parents on what to do.

Participant 10C realized *that learning does not only involve knowledge. It should also involve the sharing of opinions and viewpoints. When parents and children discuss various news and issues, learning takes place. For an ideal LF, parents should not be 'closed'*

'*封閉*' *but should be open minded, to accept new knowledge and viewpoints.*

The Generation Y participants did point out that FL should be informal (2C,5C), happy experience (3C,5C,7C) and bi-directional (1C, 5C, 6C), and most of them believed that parents could also learn from them. In a LF, the two generations should be able to share knowledge and discuss on equal ground (2C, 4C, 5C, 6C, 7C, 10C). The relationships between the parents and the children was important for FL (3C, 6C).They also gave concrete suggestions to their parents such as the willingness to listen (8C) and to ask questions (9C), so that the teenagers would be more willing to share their knowledge.

From the parents' perspectives, FL and LF were described as follows:

Parent 1P gave an elaborative account of what she thought. *FL is a form of LLL while learning happens among family members. Because we are living mostly in nuclear family nowadays, FL does not necessarily only happen within the family environment. It can also*

happen through family gatherings, even with phone contacts. For example, there is peer learning between my son and his cousins and the exchange can be through the Internet and the computer.

Learning is both-ways. FL is IGL, between parents and children, between siblings and cousins or even between grandparents and grandchildren. For example, when my son needed to do homework on the Ching Dynasty which I knew nothing about;, his grandmother could help him. On the other hand, my son taught his grandmother how to use the computer.

Previously, our generation seldom asked our parents questions but nowadays, the YG often ask us questions and challenges our practices.

FL should also extend to involve the domestic helper in the family. She spends more time with the kids. She teaches the kids politeness and table manners, etc, and the kids taught her how to play badminton so that she could play with them.

Therefore FL should also involve extended family where everyone learns from one other. Any interactions between any family members may lead to learning from one other and this is considered

family learning.

Participant 2P commented that *FL is teaching and learning and sharing in the family. Family members need to develop common interests. FL helps us to keep up-to-date on information, to share ideas and to improve relationships.*

According to participant 3P, *IGL improves family members' relationship. In a LF, parents cannot be very authoritative '擺款' and need to lower the expectations on teenagers in following traditional practices (e.g. greeting everybody for Lai See during Chinese New Year). Parents have to be easy going and serve as their friends, otherwise they would not tell. The consequence could be very serious such as those suicidal cases. Intergenerational communication is very important. Changes in family culture have been observed.*

Parent 4P realized *that parents have to be good role models '身教' in the family as actions speak louder than words. Parents demonstrate or practise what they preach, and then the kids may follow*

(e.g. reading books on arts). In an ideal LF, the son is willing to talk with the parents, and parents are ready to change their attitudes. Both mother and father need to adopt the same attitudes.

Participant 5P thought that i*n a LF, parents need to believe they can learn anytime and learning is a happy experience.*

To participant 6P, *LF is an environment confined to home and with family members. Common goals and interests are necessary for FL to take place. Learning should exist within a family. For example, while watching TV, family members will discuss issues raised and this is a learning process, e.g., social issues, factual questions and answers, sharing of views during casual conversation '吹水'. FL greatly depends on family relationship, understanding and the ways of communication. Good relationship facilitates IGL.*

As a working mother, participant 7P realized that *FL is influenced by the dynamics among family members. To facilitate FL, parents need to spend TIME together with the teens. Ideally, the best is that I do not*

need to go to work, so as to have more time. Learning happens any moment and anywhere and '即興' instantaneously. It actually happens even though while we are busy.

Participant 8P hoped that i*n a LF, members are having good learning attitude, and all enjoy reading books and magazines. They all spend time together to learn and grow. We also learn while going on trips. Members also share whatever they learn, discuss problems and ask others for opinions. With good relationship, it is easy; and sharing should not be too difficult.*

On reflection, parent 9P thought that she was not doing well enough for FL. *Learning involves all aspects, not just taking courses. If I have the chance to do it again, I would try to develop my children's reading habit and their concerns for social and political issues by reading more news. As I found that this YG is only concerned with peers but not interested in other social issues.*

Participant 10P commented that *'I haven't deliberately '刻意'*

made a LF. I feel deeply that it is the parents' responsibility to teach the

YG. Being a role model '身教' is very important, as it will be more

convincing to the children when teaching manners and values if we

practise what we teach. Parents have to give up bad habits and develop

good habits (such as be punctual). I have a friend whose family is

always learning-oriented. They play not just for fun but also for

learning, for example playing games on mathematics, spelling etc…'.

This is an important concept using 'games' as means to learn. Often,

playing and learning go hand-in-hand together.

Both generations stressed the importance of sharing and

communication in a learning family and for intergenerational family

learning. A learning family was harmonious (6C) with family members

in close relationship (4C, 6P, 8P) and willing to share and communicate.

They found family learning could improve relationship (1P, 2P, 3P) and

the experience was happy (5C, 5P). It was not a teacher-student

relationship (3C) but bi-directional (5C, 1P). Some of them actually

portrayed an ideal LF in which parents should be open-minded, should

accept new ideas (2C2, 10C) and be willing to listen and communicate

(7C). They should not force their ideas onto their teenage children (2C2,

8C) but should discuss issues on an equal ground (3P). Parents should

actively ask more questions (9C) so that teenagers could share their

knowledge and skills with them. When teenagers found themselves able

to assist their parents to learn, their self-esteem would be boosted.

A number of parents identified the importance of setting

themselves as a good role model for their children (1P, 4P and 10P).

Some of the participants even related FL to IGL and LLL. They thought

FL was a form of LLL (1P) and IG communication and learning was

important and necessary. Time was also an important factor for FL (7P,

8P). One of the parents (1P) thought that family learning should also be

extended to include cousins, grandparents and even domestic helpers.

Intergenerational Learning

Participant 7C realized that *the society is changing, even with*

lifestyles. The YG learns those changes and they tend to keep the

lifestyles they got during their teenage years. Learning from the teens

will be very important and useful. Learning from them should help adults to realize current changes.

Teenager 8C expressed that IGL was necessary as the *OG has to learn new knowledge while the YG absorbs new knowledge faster*. She commented that *parents learn only what they find useful and often want to change our minds instead of accepting ours*.

IGL was found to be able to improve relationship among family members. Participant 1P gave examples of IGL activities such as watching popular movies together to understand teenagers' interests, likes and dislikes; and going to Karaoke together and taking turns to sing, exchanging ideas so both generations learned to enjoy songs from different generations. Watching documentary and news together also encouraged the sharing of opinions and feelings. She thought IGL provided quality time, happy experience, increased IG understanding and helped develop common interests and hobbies.

Cultures of Learning Families

How?

The teenage participants gave very constructive ideas on building learning family cultures:

I expect parents to treat us as friends. Parents' learning attitude also affects our attitude'. (1C)

Learning attitude is slightly different between the OG and the YG. They are more concerned with academic learning and achievement. But I thought learning is more than learning from school and books. There is a generation gap. (2C1)

I want my parents to consider my ideas. They should not stop me from expressing but rather to listen first though they may not necessarily agree. Both parties should not force their own ideas onto others and they need to be patient. (2C2) He did not feel any real generation gaps in the family.

Mother's learning attitude will affect the son's values, e.g. common sense, life values '人生觀', manners and attitudes '態度', these can't be learned from school. Subjects and topics he was more knowledgeable than mum are those subjects that parents did not learn before. While teaching her the subjects, it helps to reinforce my study and learning myself. (3C)

Parents should start developing their kids early for independent thinking rather that being authoritative '獨立思考, 不要用權威' and avoid forcing their own ideas on us. (4C)

Parents should show interest and willingness to listen. Discussions are happy sharing experience. Children got a feeling of satisfaction and contribution to the family. Parents also encourage children to learn (i.e. LLL) (5C). This indicated that parents might encourage their children to adopt a positive lifelong learning attitude at home.

There is no generation gap as our parents are willing to listen to us and we have good communications. We have similar exposure. (6C)

Both parents are very busy at work and there is not much time to communicate. They are more concerned with our schoolwork. When they return home from work, they'll have dinner and watch TV and have no free time to communicate. I expect IGL more often though, the family atmosphere should be more relaxed and there should be more communications. If they initiate by asking, I'll teach them. Then they will be more willing to listen and learn. It needs great patience. I seldom initiate the process. (7C)   It seemed that he was disappointed that not much IGL had taken place in his family.

Parents are not familiar with electronics or popular arts, and they communicate differently. The YG communicates by questions and answers but with the OG, parents tend to argue back based on one sentence from the teens, which often breaks communication. (8C)

The parent participants also provided their views regarding learning family cultures.

Participant 1P realized that learning *starts at a very early stage. She finds 'family forum' very useful. It provides opportunities for discussion and understanding, and helps improve relationship. All family members sit down once a week and discuss informally for 10 to 30 minutes. Initially we discussed on school issues and settle fights between siblings or disputes with the maid. Later on we discuss about frustrations at school and I also share my burdens and worries with them.*

Learning takes place at home, during meal-time or going to bed together. It is mainly casual sharing. I spend 10 to15 minutes going to bed with my son. It is the golden moment to exchange daily worries and difficulties. He enjoys touch and massage given at the same time. (At other times, he is always occupied with the computer.)

Participant 2P commented that *parents need great patience and develop common interests and topics with the teenagers.* These are exactly the attributes and attitudes that parents should develop which will facilitate intergenerational learning in the family.

Participant 3P's sons tend to *demonstrate the skills or help do the tasks rather than actually teaching her. Those skills seem easy to them. They don't seem to have much deep feeling about this teaching and learning phenomenon.*

Parent 4P's own attitude in the family was *basically the traditional strict father '嚴父' style* but the most important thing he thought was *my willingness and readiness to admit mistakes I have made and we discuss after the events, e.g. my view on his composition assignments. I would like him to know that I want to teach him, hoping that he would improve. I would like him to learn the same attitude, i.e., willingness and readiness to admit wrong doings.*

Participant 5P suggested that parents *need to have positive attitudes, sincere respect and good relationship with the kids. Kids can easily feel whether you are interested to learn from them or respect their views, e.g. pop songs. Learning together is a happy experience. By doing IGL, children feel more mature and parents become younger*

at heart. Therefore both parent and child would experience mutual benefit from the learning events.

To foster a learning culture in the family, participant 6P suggested parents to *encourage curiosity and arouse interests, and to be flexible and strike a balance with traditions. For example, even with ICQ, it's also a learning process, learning through interactions. I may not agree with this way but I can accept it. It is necessary to allow difference in opinions, accept co-existence of different ideas, and not argues about 'right' or 'wrong'. Parents also need to show appreciation, enjoyment and feel the excitement with new learning for both parties, which is to provide encouragement and reinforcement for learning. We have to be cautious to accept differences in opinions, even with disagreements. For example, regarding indecent language '粗卑說話', teens feel all right with this kind of language. I'll listen to her but at the same time let her know that I do not agree with it as I don't want to close the door for communication. Moreover, it is hard to handle differences in interests, e.g., watching different TV channels. I like watching the Discovery Channel or sports which is boring to them. They like*

watching the Entertainment Channel '娛樂台'about news of popular

singers and stars, which I am not interested. This participant gave

many daily examples to illustrate his points which were very practical

and applicable.

Participant 8P also echoed that parents should have *a positive*

attitude and let the children feel that they can learn from their parents.

According to parent 9P, an ideal LF should have *daily reading*

time together without disturbance by TV, making it a family culture.

When compared with the time without computers, there was better

atmosphere and time for reading and more conversation taking place.

Now they have to be reminded to read. There should be more quality

conversation within the family. The YG follows their parents. Values are

moulded very young (e.g., value judgements, right and wrong, self

confidence etc). I felt that there is not enough sharing of feelings in the

family. When they were young, their dad and grandma were

authoritative and there were too many doctrines '說教式'. Children

tend to receive teaching from them rather than express their own

feelings and thinking.

As parents, we also need to manage our time better, and be open minded. We need to absorb and learn new knowledge ourselves, have wider scope and exposure, and to share with the teens. I believe the saying 'like father, like son' '有怎樣的父母就有怎樣的子女.'

It is difficult living with grandparents when teaching values. They used to say, 'we were not like that before'. Children will be confused as they do not know who to follow. If grandparents adopt a negative attitude, they might have a negative influence on the children.

Participant 10P realized that parents need to *develop a habit of regular conversation with the kids, but not to make them deliberately '刻意'. We share but do not add our own values onto the kids nor should we try trying to control them. Do not reveal their secrets if they tell you theirs. We should be sharing rather than teaching. The positive feelings following the conversation can reinforce the habit.*

To sum up, there seemed to be certain attributes that parents should possess which might facilitate IGL in the family. Parents were

expected by their children to be open-minded, easy going, and less authoritative. They should treat teenagers as friends and maintain regular conservations with them. It was important that parents act as good role models especially when they were teaching values and morals. They were also expected to be ready to change their attitudes and at the same time to have the patience to listen to their teenage children. Parents should also allow differences in opinions, show interest and be willing to listen and spend time with their children. Most importantly, parents should believe that they could learn from their children and initiate learning by asking questions or seeking help from their children. Both groups highlighted that the parents' learning attitude would definitely affect the youngster's attitude towards LLL. I am deeply inspired by the practice of holding regular family forums in one of the families. I am also very impressed by one father's willingness and readiness to admit wrong doings and mistakes as it is not easy for parents to 'loose face' doing so in front of the YG.

On the other hand, most teenagers expressed that they were willing to share with their parents their knowledge and their thoughts.

They felt a sense of contribution to the family. A number of them thought that teaching their parents actually reinforced their own learning and knowledge. Participant 2C2 and 6C explicitly mentioned that they did not feel any generation gaps in their family.

Many felt that both generations needed to spend time together to learn from each other. Interestingly, it was observed that both groups were reluctant to use the word 'teaching' when describing the process in which knowledge and skills were transferred from the teenagers to their parents. They preferred or were more comfortable using the word 'sharing' instead.

What?

Regarding the subjects for family learning, the teenagers' ideas are as follows:

I can learn about life views, morals from the OG. The OG can learn about trendy issues, e.g., fashion, technology. My mother now knows my fashion style and buys XL size clothes for me which is stylish. For example: the OG likes classical music while the YG prefers loud

and noisy music. (2C1)

I am more knowledgeable on current education, examination system and curriculum which are very different from my parents'. (6C)

I learn life experience and relationship from my parents. They can learn from me about western culture, current living style and technology. I like to tell them about school issues, my hobbies and friends. My stronger areas are in technology such as using the mobile phone, PDA, recording TV programmes, rock climbing and football. Dad is more advanced in technology. He knows sports, media and entertainments and music celebrities. Music could be a good area to share common interest. (7C)

The OG likes reading or taking care of their children. The YG enjoys reading but not necessarily for academics and we like surfing the Internet. (8C)

The YG are more exposed to new technology so the OG can learn from the YG in this area. On the other hand, YG can learn from

OG on values '價值觀' or news issues '時事'. I did not understand politics but through discussions with my parents, I understand more. We often discuss news and issues together to share our viewpoint. (10C)

The parent participants shared the following ideas:

The topics I learn from my son: high tech, new gadgets, slang and jargons, sports, trendy issues, idols, Putonghua and English pronunciations (her son is studying in an international school). (1P)

The subjects that my son will actively tell me are more on his formal learning and schoolwork, but we also talk about music appreciation. My wife and I enjoy listening to classical music and folk songs at home and this affects the kids' tastes as well. Then we develop common interests. I also learn to appreciate pop music through listening to pop songs introduced by my son, and we often discuss the melody and the content. We exchange our opinions and comments, thus we learn from each other. (4P)

Different learning happens with different topics and various combinations. For example, dad and son will talk about computer and mum is happy to be out of the picture. Mum and daughter appreciate music together but dad is not interested. Dad and daughter will talk about stamps and they collect and buy stamps together. Mum and son will discuss about life decision and planning, e.g., he hopes to study in Canada and we would analyse and discuss on the selection of academic subjects, etc. Son is stronger in computer skills and I can learn from him. I also learn from my girl who gives me more understanding and feedback on how to handle children who are not expressing themselves well, such as autistic children. She makes me realize that we have not been looking at things from their perspectives. (7P)

Parents learn about technology from the YG. (8P)

I do not encourage them to spend too much time in front of the computer as this is not good for the eyes, though they often say that they need to search for information and do homework on the computer. I want them to teach me computer skills, e.g., 'PowerPoint'

presentation. She helped me to polish my work and they set even higher standard than mine. Other skills they taught me include sending messages and document management. They helped me as my documents might slow down the computer function. They feel that I am troublesome but I accept myself as inferior in this area. (9P)

Casual talk or when specific topics are discussed. (10P)

As a summary, both groups believed that the YG could learn from the OG in the following areas: life views and experience, moral and values, manners, relationships, news and current issues or political stance. The OG could learn from the YG on trendy issues such as fashion or music and western cultures. They could also share with their parents their views about current education and school learning. Almost everyone recognized that technology and computer skills were the stronger areas of the teens. Most of them found that both generations could share common interests such as music and sports which they could exchange their knowledge and learn from each other. This will be further elaborated in the discussion of narratives on page 227-230**.**

When and Where?

In regard to the time and the venue which is ideal for FL, the teenage participants suggested the following:

IGL or FL mostly happened at home during free time. It can actually be anytime '隨時分享', even while watching TV, we can discuss issues raised. (2C1)

Family learning time would be at dinner time, while watching TV. It is informal, daily learning. Sometimes it could be in the evening at the hotel during family trips. (3C)

When both parents and kids are having free time, or at night while on holiday or during long trips in a car/train; these are good times to learn from each other. Family environment such as on the bed in the bedroom or in the sitting room is good. (5C)

It happened d*uring dinner or car journeys.* (6C)

It happened a*t night in the living room. TV must be off; otherwise parents would prefer to watch TV. It is a barrier to communication.* (7C)

Communication during dinner at the dining table was good. (8C)

During and after dinner at the dining table, it is a good time to share and communicate. Sometimes we are having dinner together with the whole family but sometimes we have to save food for my parents. (Both of his parents are working parents.)(9C)

Mealtime is usually a good time as we can sit down together to discuss and share our thoughts. Going out on trips during weekend is also good. When all family members do things together and spend time together, it is a good opportunity for sharing and learning. (10C)

Their parents provided similar ideas as follows:

Learning takes place at home, during mealtime or when going to bed together. It is mainly casual sharing. I spend 10 to15 minutes going

to bed with my son and it is the 'golden moment'. (1P)

IGL takes place at home during free time. (2P)

As family members have dinner at different times, FL does not happen at the dinner table often. However, dining out on weekends is good time for FL. (7P)

*U*sually it happens while eating or during mealtimes. The atmosphere facilitates sharing. Sometimes we will deliberately arrange afternoon tea or dining out for this. The traditional Chinese saying '食不言,寢不語', i.e. 'One should not talk while eating and sleeping' should not be adopted.* (8P)

Dinner at the dining table is the best and easiest time, provided that the TV is not on. It is a more relaxed time and everyone is willing to talk. Teens do not want to be distracted when watching TV. (9P)

FL happens at home or when travelling to new places. Then we

can figure out the situation and learn together. (10P)

Members from both groups did mention that IGL could take place any time anywhere or even during casual conversations. Most importantly, they needed to have free time together.

Most of the participants, both parents and teenagers, thought that mealtime at the dinner table would be the best time and the best place for FL and sharing. This was quite contradictory to the Chinese traditional saying which discourages conversation during meals. Bedtime was another suggestion for FL and communication.

Many mentioned that watching television together in the living room could be good opportunities for FL and exchange of views. Nevertheless, there was a contrasting view from 7C, 9C, who strongly felt that television was a distraction and a barrier for real communication and FL. Traveling and family trips or even car journeys were also good opportunities for IGL. Dining out during weekends was also reported to be good FL time.

Learning Methodology of the Two Generations

It appeared that the two generations (Generations X and Y) adopted different learning methodology to acquire new knowledge. The views of the teenagers are listed, followed by the parents'.

Participant 1C thought that the *OG was often poor and took less formal courses or extracurricular activities when they were young. On the other hand, the YG has much more exposure now, e.g., sports, so we gain more experience. Subjects that we are better are computer skills or technology as we are more exposed while mum did not learn all these when she was young.*

Participant 2C1 felt that his mother had difficulty remembering. *She always asks several times and I need to repeat many times in order for her to learn. She has learned but she can't remember for long. She often forgets and asks many times. When learning to use a new product, I read the manual but mum does not. In the past, the OG learned by reading textbooks and they did not have computers when they were young. The YG learns through doing projects and activities at school.*

We learn by active learning and it goes beyond textbooks.

The YG learns through activities and exposures, e.g., studying abroad. It does not have to be learning at school but at a real life environment '實地取材'. The OG learned by memorizing book knowledge. When learning to use new technology, mum will follow the instructions in the manual. I seldom read the manual as I would rather try on the appliance. The subjects that I am stronger in are technology, playing the piano and classical music since I have more exposure. Both parents know sports. (2C2)

My mother is more knowledgeable in academic matters and life experience except on IT and new technology. The OG is having difficulty learning new technology as they had less exposure and they do not realize the need to use new IT technology. (3C)

The OG often asks the YG about the use of electronic gadgets. The YG would try it out and learn it by self-exploration '自己研究'. (4C)

The YG is having more learning opportunities and exposures with multidimensional activities '多元化', e.g., parent-child classes, exchange tours '親子班, 交流團'. We are stronger in IT and computer skills or learning to use electronic appliances, Internet functions, etc. Sometimes we can even do something behind their back '瞞' on the computer. For the OG, mum always comments that they learned differently when they were young and their parents did not know how to teach them. Now as they are busy working, they love their children and tend to give in to us '遷就' more. (5C)

The OG learns from reading and searching information for themselves. The YG learns from classmates (e.g. msn), self-learning, but not necessarily from teachers at school. We get more sources and easy access to information. We learn faster through linkage from the Internet which the OG did not know. Dad seldom reads the manuals learning to use new products. He tries right on the objects, same as I do so I don't see much difference between us in terms of learning. (6C)

My dad learns by reading manual and following exactly the written instructions. The YG has better visual skills and we seldom read the manuals when learning to use new products. I taught my mother to use the mobile phone but she learned slowly. I showed her and demonstrated to her instead of reading up the manual. I think teenagers need to be very patient and to have more increased interactions with parents so they will find it easier to learn from us. My stronger areas are in technology, trendy issues (there is a big difference in opinion on fashion style though), or school and academic issues. (7C)

We the YG learn faster using electronic gadgets because we have been more exposed. For the OG, they have difficulty picking up the skills as they had not been exposed before. The OG prefers reading the manuals to learn but the YG does not need to do so. For the OG, teachers used to talk and the students listened. For the YG, teachers are also their friends '亦師亦友'. We can argue and discuss with our teachers. The OG learns mainly book and factual knowledge. (8C)

The YG is stronger on computer technology. The OG is stronger on cooking and management. The YG learns to use new appliances by reading manuals rather than asking the sales person for assistance. We learn faster as we are younger, our brain works faster. The OG mainly reads the manuals to learn. With teachers, we have more discussions than the OG used to have. The YG learns faster than the adults. For example, I took a French course. There were older adult classmates in the class. They tended to forget easily but I could remember and learn faster. (9C)

For a newly bought electronic appliance, my parents used to ask me to learn to use it first and then teach them. They would rather that I learn instead of learning themselves. They will ask me when they are having problems using it. As they only use basic function, they are not actually learning much. At school, we are used to learning through discussions and projects. The teachers encourage self-learning. I do not know how the OG learned at school. (10C)

From the parents' perspectives, participant 1P realized the differences in the learning methodology between the two generations. '*I appreciate very much the teenage children's ability to do multi-tasks at one time (e.g. listening to MP3, doing homework and playing games at the same time). Their output is still all right and satisfactory. I also tried doing multi-tasks but couldn't. I can only focus on one single task at one time. I asked them about it at the family forum and they said that this is the way to survive nowadays and they learn very fast*'.

She added, '*I also realize that the OG learns step-by-step and knowledge is retained. The YG learns by trial and error and they do not need to read the manuals or written instructions to start trying to use a new product.* '

'*I myself am stronger in English. I learn vocabulary by keeping a notebook on new terms read from the newspaper. I showed my child the notebook and he's very impressed. I think language learning needs time to develop. By doing this, I also demonstrate that I am a LLL. On the other hand, he is stronger in the IT area.*'

'My son does not need to read manuals or instructions to learn to use new gadgets.' (2P).

The OG learned under formal settings. They tend to learn following step-by-step instructions. The YG learns by trials. They don't like to follow steps. (3P)

The OG tends to read instructions to learn, such as to install programmes. They like to follow procedures or work within frameworks. The YG actually learns by trial and error. They are not used to reading instructions or manuals. They do not need formal learning to be able to master computer skills. Perhaps they learn from peers. (4P)

The OG uses traditional methods to learn, e.g., using the maps, dictionaries, print a copy to read and study. The YG uses the computer as part of their daily life. They obtain information quickly by pushing buttons or keys on the computer keyboard. This might not be the right way to learn though. They would not know how to try various ways to search besides using the computer. The OG used to do the searching

part for learning but now the searching is done by the computer. (5P)

The YG learns through activities and interactions. They ask more questions and challenge old practices. The OG learns by reading and listening to instructions. They remember and follow established rules, and prefer to follow step-by-step instructions. (6P)

The YG learns through the Internet. They learn much faster. They learn more as they do not need to copy any more. For learning facts I think this method is okay but they can't learn values and 'truth' from computers. Also, conversational skills are still very important and can't be learned through the computer. The OG was used to learning by reading books, copying and writing. (7P)

The YG learns fast. They learn naturally as they are exposed to computers early and have built the foundations at school. The OG was not exposed (to so much IT technology when they were young). *These are all new and we have no background knowledge, therefore our foundation is not strong so we learn slower.* (This could be explained

by the mental model theory.)*We used to be passive learners at school, just taking notes, studying and taking examinations. For the YG, they do projects and group discussions at school. They are more active learners. This practice starts early in primary school years. Even the kindergarten curriculum provides more varieties '多元化'. Even though, I think still more should be done for them. On learning to use electronic gadgets and new products, the YG does not need to read the manuals. The OG read the manual first and can easily get stuck if a step is missed. For example, to learn to use the various functions of the mobile phone, the YG would simply get a phone, work on it and learn to use it by trial and error.* (8P)

For the YG, there is much more information and knowledge now. Parents have also given them more exposure and opportunities to learn. There are more learning resources and the content is richer. Financial support is also important. The YG wants and are keen to learn new technology and more advanced subjects. There could be peer influence as they might experience difficulty communicating with their peers if they do not know these hot topics. On the other hand, the OG is not that

motivated and they do not need to use sophisticated skills. For example,

I only need to learn the basic functions of the mobile phone. (9P)

Basically the learning methodology is the same for the YG and the

OG. The YG adopts more hands-on and self-learning methods. We, the

OG are used to being taught. Nowadays, even our generation has

started to pick up self-learning, not just merely taking courses or asking

people to teach us. (10P)

Most of the participants pointed out that the learning methodology

employed by the OG was different from the one adopted by the YG.

However, 6C and 10P did not see a significant difference between the

two generations.

The OG was having a different upbringing and family

background when compared with the YG. They were less exposed

especially to computer technology when they were young, and were

now having difficulties learning new subjects. The YG was more

exposed to IT and computer technology and they had been given much

more learning opportunities. Two of the teenagers appreciated the fact that they had the opportunity to study abroad.

The OG was used to learning from textbooks, by memorizing book knowledge and they tended to be passive learners. They learned mainly through formal education. They liked to follow step-by-step instructions. On the other hand, the YG learned by exploration through doing projects and other activities. They searched for information beyond book knowledge. They also learned from classmates and, at the same time, self-learning was encouraged. They were exposed to more sources of knowledge and had easy access to vast information pool through the Internet. They tended to ask more questions and challenge old practices more readily.

When they were required to learn to use new electronic products, the OG was used to reading the manuals and following step-by-step instructions (1P, 5P, 7P). Sometimes they might be stuck if steps were missed. The YG would, however, try the product directly hands-on and play with it to learn to use it. They did not rely on reading manuals

or written instructions. They learned by trial and error. (1P, 5P, 7P).

The teenagers commented that when they tried to teach their parents to use the new products, their mothers in particular were not very motivated to learn. They relied on the YG to help. The YG needed to repeat several times in order for their mothers to learn and master the skill as they tended to forget easily. Repeat teaching was necessary, and this seemed to frustrate the teenagers. They 'taught' their parents by demonstration and explanation.

Both groups commented that the OG seemed to learn slower but the YG learned new skills faster. (6C, 8C, 9C) The reasons could be that the YG had been more exposed to new technology and the computer earlier in life. Probably, the OG had developed strong mental models for learning which were difficult to change or unlearn. In general, both groups agreed that parents tended to be stronger in their language and relationship management skills while the YG was stronger in IT and computer skills. Certainly teenagers found themselves more sensitive and familiar to trendy changes.

Roles of Mother and Father in Family Learning

In regards to the difference in the roles of their mother and father for intergenerational family learning, the teenagers expressed that

From my mother, I learn more about life values '人生道理' and manners. From dad I learn more on sports, play and recreation. (1C) (His parents are divorced and he lives with his mother.)

My mother is concerned more with my academic learning. She will supervise '督促' my school learning. Dad will teach me more on life lessons. He's got a more rational and logical mind. I share with both of them. Dad receives better than mum. He learns better in technology '科技' as he is a mechanical engineer (2C1). It seems that the father-son relationship is different from the mother-son relationship in this case. It could be a result of the difference in roles and expectations.

My mother is more open and accepting so I'll teach her more. However, she is reluctant to take in new subjects. I teach her the way she taught me when I was young. Dad is more strict and stubborn '硬頸'. But when I taught him Pandora, he showed interest. In general

they both are willing to listen. I learn more from mother as she is more patient and helps me to analyse and look at issues from different angles. Dad is less patient and I learn morality from him '道德教育' (2C2). In the same family, the sister of 2C1 saw the teaching and learning relationships with her mother and her father slightly differently from her brother's view.

Teenager 3C felt that *there is no definite difference but I have more sharing with my mother at home*.

I share with dad more on school issues. Mum does not listen and shows no reaction. She always asks whether the teachers had returned the test papers '派卷未?'. *She is mainly concerned with my academic results* (4C). It sounded like that the father-son relationship was closer than the mother-son relationship.

IGL with mother and father was *different as they have different characters* '性格' *and attitudes* '態度'. *Mum is often the one who initiates family activities for weekends. She likes exploring nature and*

enjoys music. Dad is relatively inactive. He is more interested in reading, culture, etc. He is eager to make us read and is more concerned with our academic achievements. (5C)

Teenager 6C mentioned that her *Dad learns about new technology himself (e.g. using the digital camera's special effects). He reads the manuals and learns on his own. Then we may discuss. I learn more from dad on handling personnel issues '做人處事' while I can teach mum by giving her new information and knowledge.*

Participant 7C also saw some differences between the role of his father and mother. *I used to teach mum more on using high-tech gadgets. I learned about relationship and issues related to work environment from her. With dad, I share information about technology, recent news and current affairs. I learn from him rather than teaching him.*

Participant 8C thought that *both parents mainly taught us values '做人道理'. They can't help us with our academic work now (s*he is

studying in F.7 now*). I teach them to use electronics and new products. As dad knows more in this area, we can exchange ideas. Mum tends to focus more on how I get along with my younger sister '相處'.*

Participant 9C felt that her mother *is more willing to listen. Dad is always busy. He knows more (*more knowledgeable*) and there is no need to share with him.*

Teenager 10C reported that w*ith dad, discussions will be more on news or specific topics, concrete and analytical. With mum, I'll discuss more on feelings. Sometimes we may do cooking and shopping together. Mum is more active asking me to teach her, especially for computer skills. With mum, she needs more help at work and used to call me and learns over the phone. She seldom uses the computer, except for checking emails at home. Dad will ask me more for medical information* (she is a medical student.) *The discussion is more serious '嚴肅 'and academic '學術' with dad*.

The parents saw their roles in FL as follows:

Participant 1P thought that *as a mother I am acting as a role model '身教言教'. This is very important. For example, once, I did not answer the phone and pretended that I was not home. That was a white lie and I was then challenged by my son. Basically we must follow principles such as: can't be late, so he always tries to be on time or even early for appointments. Their father, though we are divorced, is still required to play a father role. From him, my sons learn concrete and practical life skills of daily activities, e.g. plumbing, maintenance of electric appliances.*

Parent 2P thought the difference in roles *actually depends on the individual's interests. Mother usually focuses more on language and culture. Father usually shares with children information about sports and games.*

Participant 3P realized that with her, her sons *just help to perform the tasks rather than teaching her. With dad, there are more discussions and they tend to do the work together, e.g. setting up the computer.*

Participant 4P recognized the difference in roles. *There is sharing of work in the family. Mother is more actively involved when the child was younger at primary school level. She has been more concerned with his academic work. I tend to share my life experience with him and discuss issues on deeper and wider perspectives '生活化'.*

According to participant 5P, *it is easier with females for FL. They feel less embarrassed accepting own mistakes '衰得, 唔怕瘀'.* This indicated that mothers did not mind losing face in front of their children or learning from them. When face-saving was not a problem, it was easier for teenagers to express themselves freely and share their knowledge with their mother.

Participant 6P commented that the *differentiation of roles need not be emphasized though differences do exist, probably due to the differences in skill areas between males and females. Father tends to be more focused on science and factual objects. Mother is concerned more on housework, organization skills and school work. In the family, mother tends to have more direct hands-on involvement and learning is*

more structured and formal. Father is more on conceptual and principle issues. The fact is that the society adopts and expects different gender roles. It was apparent that the upbringing, personal interests and societal expectations were different between males and females, which could affect their interaction with their children.

The differences are not actually due to gender difference but rather characters and interests. In the family, mum is more active while dad is a bit lazy and less serious though he also enjoys family functions. Once we watch the 'Phantom of the Opera' together, even though he does not like music. (7P) It is true that personal interests play a part in FL but interests can be changed and developed to accommodate differences between generations.

Participant 8P thought that in terms of FL, mother and father *are different as each has different roles in the family. They have different perception of their roles and they inherited different personality.*

Participant 9P found that *it is the character '性格' and expertise '專長' which are more important in affecting parent-child learning and interaction. Dad is more capable in doing mathematics and computer while I am more concerned with daily living matters. My daughter and I share a common interest in dancing. I discuss more on his after school tutoring with my elder son. The kids are able to differentiate the differences and act accordingly. Dad seems to be very authoritative and serious, and is always teaching, ('教', '話', '指導') them. I guess it is not always a happy experience to them.*

As my occupation is working in childcare, I tend to encourage my children also to learn through play. I need to always remind their dad to adjust his attitude and manner '態度' talking to the teenagers. Apparently this parent participant was more open to FL while her husband (who is a university lecturer) had been more traditional and authoritative in the family.

According to participant 10P, *their father is more academic; the children will discuss mathematics, physics or technology with him. They discuss domestic and medical issues* (this participant is a

physiotherapist and her daughter is a year one medical student) with

mum. *The children know who knows what better and ask accordingly.*

Dad tends to give too much opinion and is not very attentive listening

to the children.

In order to have a better comparison, the data is re-organized and

presented in the following tables

From the Teenagers

	Mother	Father
1C	'人生道理' values and manners	sports, play and recreation
2C1	academic learning	life lessons, receives better
2C2	more accepting, learn more from mum as she is more patient	strict and stubborn, less patient and I learn moral
3C no difference	more sharing with mum	
4C	does not listen and shows no reaction, concerns about academic results	school issues
5C different characters & attitudes	initiates family activities, With mum, share new knowledge. e.g. new education environment and systems, joining interest classes	relatively inactive, interested in reading
6C	new information and knowledge	handling personnel issues
7C	using high- tech gadgets, I learned about relationship and issues related to work environment from her	share information about technology, recent news and current affairs,. I learn from him rather than teach him

8C	focus on how I get on with my younger sister	dad knows more in technology, we can exchange ideas
	both teach us values, can't help with academic work now, teach them electronics and new products	
9C	more willing to listen	always busy knowledgeable, no need to share with him
10C	discuss more on feelings, cooking and shopping, more active asking me to teach her, especially on computer skills, needs more help at work and used to learn over the phone	more on news or specific topics, concrete and analytical, asks me more for medical information, the discussion is more serious and academic

Table 25: Teenagers' Views on the Roles of Mother and Father in

Intergenerational Family Learning

From the Parents

	Mother	Father
1P	acting as a role model, teach values	sons learn concrete and practical life skills with daily activities
2P depends on individual's interests	focus more on language and culture	shares information about sports and games
3P	my sons just help to perform the tasks but not really teach or explain	there are more discussions and they tend to do the work together, e.g. setting up the computer
4P (dad)	more actively involved when the child was younger at Primary school level, she has been more concerned with his academic work	I tend to share my life experience and discuss issues on deeper and wider perspectives
5P	It is easier with females for FL, they feel less embarrassed accepting own mistakes/ignorance	

6P (dad) *differences in skill areas, society adopts and expects differences in gender roles*	*more on housework, organization skills and school work,* *have more direct hands-on involvement and learning is more structured and formal*	*more focused on science and factual objects,* *more on conceptual and principle issues.*
7P *characters and interest*	*more active*	*a bit lazy and less serious*
8P *different roles, different perception of roles and different personality*		
9P *character expertise* '專長'	*concerned with daily living matters, encourages them to learn through play*	*more capable in Maths and computer, very authoritative and serious, always 'teaching'*
10P	*domestic and medical issues*	*more academic, discuss Maths, physics or technology, tends to give too much opinion and not very attentive listening*

Table 26: Parents' View on the Roles of Mother and Father in Intergenerational Family Learning

Many participants reported that mothers and fathers played different roles in the family for IGL except for case 3C who did not see any significant differences. (Refer to questionnaire result on page 123-4, 60% of the parents and 40% of the teenagers thought mother played a more important role in FL while 40% of the parents and 50% of the teenagers did not agree with this idea.) The differences arose probably

not merely because of the differences in gender role but also depended on their particular personality, characters, interests and expertise (5C, 3P, 6p, 7P, 8P, 9P).

In general, mothers were concerned more with daily living and domestic issues, while the fathers were more technical and academic. It seemed that mothers tended to play a more active role. Mothers were considered more open, willing to listen or ask for help. Moreover, they were more receptive to the idea of learning from the teenagers (Generation Y→X learning). Fathers were said to be busy, 'lazy', inattentive or authoritative at times (5C, 9C, 7P, 9P, 10P). The teenagers as well as parents realized that the YG learned values and life experience from the OG whereas the OG learned computer skill and new technology from the YG despite gender differences.

Learning from Siblings

According to the teenagers, the learning and sharing with their siblings was quite different from that between them and their parents.

Participant 1C reported that '*We discuss more on recreation and leisure activities such as playing computer games. Often they are informal learning situation.*'

Participant 2C1 considered that '*I have better communication with my elder sister than with my parents as we are both young and of the same generation. The topics we share are more on recreation or academic subjects.*' In the same family, his sister got similar feelings. She (case 2C2) said, '*My younger brother is of a similar age with similar experience. We can really talk about feelings '傾心事' but we may keep secrets from our parents '有保留'.*

Teenager 5C also found that *the learning is very different. My relationship with my sister* (her sister is five years younger) *is extremely close. She is very sensitive to trendy issues which she would share with me. Mum may not understand our conversations. Sometimes we get each other's ideas without much talking.*

Participant 6C did not share much with her sister (her sister is two years younger) *because she does not ask. Usually my sister will tell me more especially about trendy issues as she knows more from her friends. To her I'll also talk about academic issues and manners (as she'll reject those if told by my parents*).It seemed that she was mature enough to play a counseling role on behalf of her parents.

Participant 7C's sister was 12 (three and a half years younger). *With parents, our discussions are more on everyday lives, news or current issues. With my sister, there is more random chatting and socialising for fun.*

Participant 9C reported that the sharing with her elder brother was mainly on computer games and game playing strategies. They also shared common interests.

According to participant 10C, *very often, family discussion also involves my sister. With only my sister, we will discuss more on youngster issues. She actually teaches me youth trends, such as pop*

songs, as she has a group of young friends.

Apparently, the teaching-learning relationship between siblings was different from that with parents. It involved mainly informal sharing (1C, 7C) and the topics were more on leisure or recreations, computer games (1C, 2C1, 9C) or trendy issues (5C, 6C, 10C) or occasionally on academic matters (6C). Often the participants and their siblings shared common interests, such as computer games or pop music. It appeared that our teenage participants enjoyed a good relationship with their siblings in their family and shared feelings with them.(2C1 and 2C2, 5C)

Family Learning and Lifelong Learning

To draw a relationship between 'family learning' and 'lifelong learning', the teenagers gave their thoughts as below.

Teenager 1C believed that *FL starts at an early age so that kids may develop a good learning habit and enjoy learning. Then we will adopt a good LLL attitude.*

Participant 3C considered his mum a lifelong learner and he himself was also a lifelong learner. This indicated that children were looking up to their parents as role models.

Participant 4C thought *LLL and LF are related. In a LF, one can get the LLL attitude developed. I can also help the OG for LLL, to increase their exposure.*

For participant 5C, *LLL and LF are related. I am a student, still studying at school. Mum still often absorbs new knowledge.* To her, LLL involved formal education as well as informal learning demonstrated by her mother.

Participant 8C gave a different view: *It is group versus individual learning. LF is for group learning and LLL is for self learning. LLL does not necessarily involve formal knowledge. Parents' learning attitude also influences the YG.*

Case 9C thought *FL is not LLL as FL does not fit the term lifelong learning '終身學習'. However, one's LLL attitude will be influenced by LF. Parents should set an example to be lifelong learners.* To her, it seemed that family learning was not a lifelong process.

Teenager 10C believed that *FL and LLL are related.   If parents adopt a 'willing to learn' attitude, they can accept children 'teaching' them*. Here she implied that a positive LLL attitude and an open mind were important for parents to be able to learn from their children.

The parent participants also gave their opinions on the relationship between 'family learning' and 'lifelong learning'.

Parent 4P was a lifelong learner. *I see myself serving as a good role model demonstrating LLL by taking the master course. They can actually observe their father practising LLL at home. IGL helps LLL. My son is learning from me, as mentioned, I also study all the time, setting a model for him* (he just obtained a master degree). *I am demonstrating LLL. I told them that I would continue to study after my*

retirement. This does influence his values and attitude towards LLL. I believe there are different focuses on learning at different life stages. At the same time, I learn from my son. Reversed IGL usually is informal learning. My son stimulates me to learn further on IT, Chinese medicine and acupuncture points, etc. We develop common interests and topics for learning. He introduced the term reversed IGL meaning that the OG could learn from the YG and such learning was usually informal in nature.

Participant 5P thought that *one must believe in LLL before we realize that we can learn from our kids. It is not easy to accept new ideas from the YG; rather we tend to easily reject their opinions.* This indicated that a positive LLL attitude would facilitate learning from the younger Generation Y by the Generation X parents.

Parent 8P related parent lifelong learners with learning family. *With LLL parents, the family will naturally be a LF. If parents are not LLL, they can't make a LF. Therefore LLL equals LF.*

According to parent 9P, *LF is greatly related to LLL. Parents'*
attitudes and practices towards learning affect the YG at home. Just
like the grandparents' generation, they are shortsighted and remain in
their old times, thus they can't communicate with the YG. She was
suggesting that the grandparent generation could not catch up with the
world as they did not practise LLL or LF.

Participant 10P thought that *if family members are not stubborn or*
very traditional (such as keeping strict Chinese traditional hierarchy),
IGL is possible. FL is a lifelong process. As long as there is interaction
among family members, there is learning. I agree strongly with her
views that family interaction brought with it learning opportunities
across generations and among family members.

From what we gathered, most of the participants (1C, 4C, 5C, 10C,
4P, 5P, and 9P) felt that FL was related to LLL. Only teenager 9C
thought that FL was not related to LLL as FL was not considered
lifelong. Also, parents' learning attitude greatly influenced the YG's
attitude towards learning and LLL (8C, 9C, 10C, 5P, 8P). It was

important that parents set themselves as role models of lifelong learning for their children to follow (1P, 4P). Only when parents adopted a 'willing to learn' attitude could they accept their children 'teaching' them. 'Reversed IGL' as mentioned (4P) was informal.

Family learning should start very early in the family so that the YG could develop good learning attitude. If they enjoyed learning when they were young and saw their parents practise lifelong learning, they would naturally become lifelong learners. Therefore in a learning family, there was a better chance to develop positive LLL attitude. Participant 8C presented a view that FL was group learning while LLL was individual learning. IGL helped LLL especially for the OG (4P). Also, if parents were lifelong learners themselves, their family was a learning family (8C). This indicated that family learning was a form of lifelong learning. Actually most of the participants thought they themselves were lifelong learners (also refer to questionnaire results on page 127: 100% of the parents and 70% of the teenagers)

SERENDIPITOUS FINDINGS

About Generation Gaps

Participant 1P elaborated on the experience about generation gaps.

Actually the generation gaps between us (Generation X parents) *and the YG* (Generation Y) *is less than the one we experienced with our own parents and the YG tends to tell us more and we can learn from them. Generation gaps still exist, though, and they exist even between siblings -- in hobbies, lifestyle, value of life, and especially in morals and ethics. It is very difficult to bridge the gaps with the current societal changes. There are different sets of value and discrepancies cannot be avoided.*

Parent 7P thought that *generation gaps are generated by differences in age and changes in the society. In our generation we needed to fight for what we wanted. The YG now has no need to struggle for what they want as they are well provided for. They are materialistic, practical and lack real-life experience '經歷'.* It seemed that the generation gaps come as a result of the different ways of upbringing between the different generations. It could be caused also

by cultural and societal changes at different periods of time.

According to parent 8P, g*eneration gaps must exist as the upbringing and the backgrounds are different between the two generations. But we can share and understand each other through good communication. The gaps will always exist though, e.g., in the concept of handling money*. If this is the case, are generation gaps inevitable?

For the parents, it seemed that they thought generation gaps existed and were unavoidable due to differences in the upbringing and the values between the two generations. However, the teenagers did not feel the gaps so much or perhaps they did not see this as a problem. (Refer to questionnaire results on page 135-6, 80% of the parents agreed that generation gaps existed but only 30% of the teenagers agreed.) If this is the case, generation gaps may not be a bad thing if we recognize their existence and try to bridge them by IGL and mutual learning.

Multi-tasking

Participant 1P, 8P and 9P commented during the interviews that their teenage children could perform multi-tasks, which means, they could do a few tasks at one time.

Parent 8P's child could do schoolwork, listen to music, and do ICQ using the computer all at the same time. For the OG, there were less task demands on them. *If required, OG can also do several things at one time.*

Participant 9P mentioned that the YG could be multi-tasked but she could not. *My son can listen to the ipod and read at the same time, or do typing and working with the computer while watching TV. However, I do not encourage them to do this as I believe that we should concentrate '不分心' and work on one task at one time. Nevertheless it seems that I cannot stop them from doing so.*

A Dutch newspaper called this group of youngsters the 'Einstein Generation', referring to the ability of the general members of this

generation to perform many activities at the same time, that is, they could do multi-tasks at one time, such as chatting with friends via the Internet, while they were doing their homework and watching television at the same time (West, 2005; Hira, 2007; McLester, 2007).

Family Learning and Organizational Learning

One of the parents (6P) was an executive in a large public corporation and he gave his remarks comparing a 'learning family' with a 'learning organization'.

To him, *'organizational learning' is more organized, and objectives oriented. Learning becomes an organized and structured process to sustain organization objectives. Individual interests are not important. Nevertheless, learning in the family is less organized and structured, open-ended, not restricted. Anything can be a learning tool or opportunity. Learning is only restricted by interests, resources and exposure.*

Like those in a large organization, family members also look for advancement, and the chance for improvement and enrichment.

He clearly highlighted the major similarities and contrasts between 'organizational learning' and 'family learning'. He was very positive in regard to family learning as he believed that FL helped to enrich and advance the family.

Living with Grandparents in the Family

Most families in Hong Kong are now nuclear families. It is not very common for three generations to live under the same roof, especially due to limited living space here. Certainly I believe there would be intergenerational learning across the three generations in the family. The comments given by the only participants living with the elderly generation pointed out the difficulties.

Teenagers 9C commented that *it is even more difficult to teach her* (her grandmother) *than my parents. For example, I taught her to use the mobile phone. But due to old age and deteriorated vision, she can't see very well. I need to repeat many times. Eventually she still could not learn and needs others to help her to use it.*

Her parent (9P) also remarked that *'It is difficult living with grandparents when teaching the YG values. They used to say, 'We were not like that before.' Children would be confused as they do not know whom to follow. If the grandparents adopt a negative learning attitude, they might have a negative influence on the children. For the grandparents' generation, they are shortsighted and remain in their old times thus they can't communicate with the YG.'*

It seemed that IGL involving the elderly generation was a different story from the X→Y or Y→ X or even X←→ Y learning in the family.

Other Comments

Parent 1P realized that *'I need to allow personal space and privacy to the teenagers as they have their own problems (embarrassment associating with adolescence and puberty, e.g., mustache). They do not want to go out with mum any more as they don't want to be seen by friends as mummy's little boy. He even requested me not to greet him at school!'*

I was deeply impressed by parent 4P's attitude and felt that it was very important for *parents to be willing and ready to admit any mistakes or wrongdoings made, and then follow it by discussions after the events.* This was not easy if parents were authoritative or wanting to save face after mistakes were made. As human beings, parents would not do everything right and sometimes they do commit mistakes.

Participant 8P presented some very good points. *Parents can benefit from learning from the YG as they are more close to the changes of the society, they can follow the steps and pace better. Learning from them will allow us not to fall behind in the society. It is not always necessary for us to take courses to fulfill these needs. It seems so natural to learn from each other, either parents to kids, kids to parents or both directions, just like with anybody else.*

The key to good FL was to allow family members to '*spend more time together*' (7C, 10P).

Therefore, good family learning required parents to be open-minded, humble and willing to spend time with their teenage children. Mutual respect of each other was as important as other factors.

Certain specific attributes of teenagers might also affect the outcomes of intergenerational learning. Unfortunately these were not investigated in depth for this study.

FROM THE ANECDOTES

The anecdotes collected were stories recalled based on the participants' own experience regarding intergenerational teaching and learning. Each of the participants was asked to provide three IGL episodes. The stories told were transcribed and their central themes identified. They were then categorised according to the following themes.

Themes of Anecdotes

Key: * : teenager teaching parent
   ^ : parent teaching teenager
   + : parent and teenager learning together
   Matched : matching topic between parent and teenagers
   Bold : **technology and IT topics**
   Italics : *values and attitudes*

	Parents	Teenagers
1	Visiting museum*	Soccer game*
	Learning Mandarin*	**Computer skills***
	Transferring audio files to computer*	**New products**, watching TV*
2	Chinese history*	C1 **Technology***
	Using mobile phone*	C1 Teaching Chinese history*
	Teaching son to play mahjong^	C2 **mobile phone***
		C2 Swimming*
		C2 **Teaching dad to use Pandora***
3	**Using DVD***	**Computer skills***
	Soccer game*	**Video recording** of soccer matches *
	*Religion**	**Technology**, watching TV*

4	**IT skills***	**Computer skills***
	Learning Chinese calligraphy together+	*Artist, sharing life views^*
	Playing basketball, changing roles+	*Buying jeans**
5	*Sharing experience and feelings+*	**Using msn***
	Technology*	Karaoke*
	Taking photography courses together+	School issues*
6	Music band performance*	Helping grandpa*
	Learning on the street*	Music band performance*
	Problem solving, discharging from hospital*	Teaching mum 'Chinglish' & **msn***
7	**IT update***	**Using mobile phone***
	Rock climbing knowledge*	News*
	Fixing toilet cover together+	*Western culture learned from school**
8	**DVD & DC***	**DVD***
	*Love values**	Baking cake*
	*Parenting skills**	Paris museum visit*
9	*Holding onto principles at 2 1/2**	**Emails***
	*Teaching values at home^*	*Sense of fashion**
	Learning Jazz*	Learning Jazz*
10	*Disciplining the dog**	**Teaching mum computer skills***
	Learning computer skills*	*Discussion with mum on fashion +*
	Sharing academic and clinical experience+	Giving dad information on bacteria*

Table 27: Themes of the Anecdotes

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF ANECDOTES

Number of Anecdotes

In all, 62 anecdotes were collected. They were translated from Cantonese to English and transcribed from voice to text format simultaneously. Data were coded, categorised and then analysed thematically.

IGL Teaching and Learning Events

Among all anecdotes, there were 52 (83.9%) incidences in which the teenagers played a teaching role, three (4.8%) were incidences that the parents played the teacher role while seven (11.7%) were cases that both the parent and their teenage child were learning together.
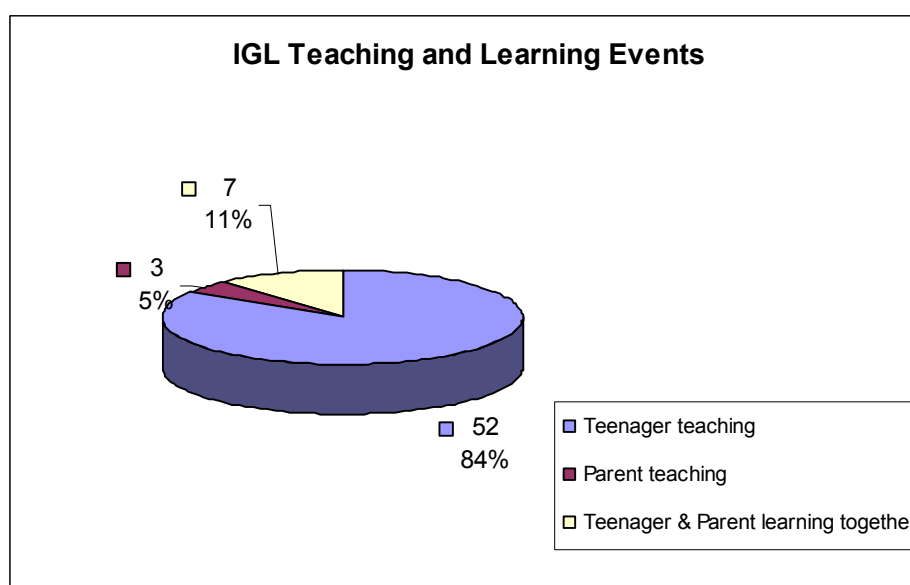
Figure 24: Types of Generations X and Y Learning Events

Participants recalled episodes mostly with teenagers playing the teaching role because they knew that the objectives of this study focused on IGL with the OG learning from the YG (i.e. Generation Y→ X learning). Nevertheless, there were still some reversed cases reported. It was natural and understandable that they also reported incidences where both generations were learning together. This indicated that participants remembered these incidences better and had them recalled readily. Probably they had found the IGL experience meaningful and impressive.

Matching Anecdotes

There were a number of cases with both the parent and the teenager reporting the same learning events. These were colour-coded yellow in the above table. In all, there were eight pairs of parent and teenager who reported similar IGL events. Those could be events with which both the parent and the teenager were similarly impressed and enjoyed, and which they easily recalled. In addition, this could be an indication that communication between the parents and the teenagers had been very good in these families.

Learning Together

The following were events in which both parent participant and

their teenage child learned together

Studying Chinese History (2P, 2C1)
Learning Chinese calligraphy together (4P)
Playing basketball-changing roles (4P)
Sharing experience and feelings (5P)
Taking photography courses together (5P)
Fixing toilet cover together (7P)
Sharing academic and clinical experience (10P)
Discussion on fashion (10C)

Thematic Categories of the Anecdotes

Theme/topics	Number	Percentage
IT and technology related	23	37.1
Other skills and knowledge	27	43.5
Values and attitudes	12	19.4

Table 28: Thematic Categories of the Anecdotes
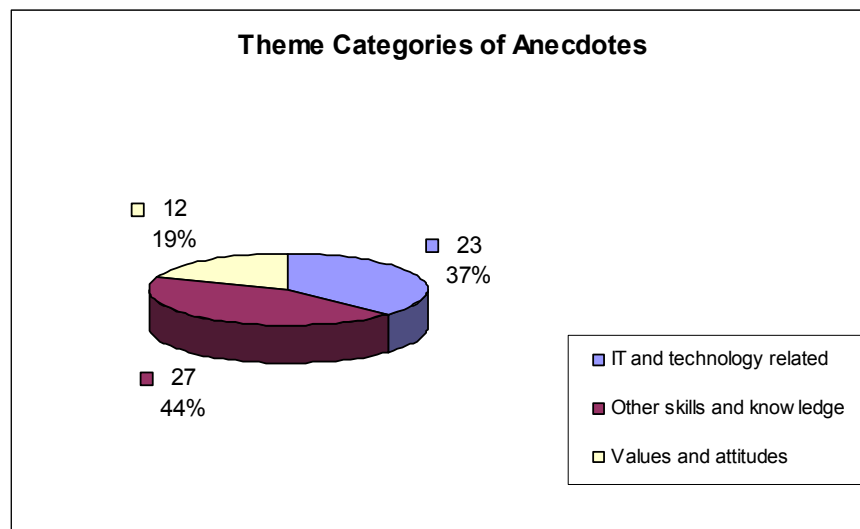
Figure 25: Thematic Categories of the Anecdotes

1. *IT And Computer Technology Related Topics*

This constituted about 37% of all anecdotes. All the events described under this category were incidences in which the teenagers played the teaching role. The events included teaching parents computer and IT skills (1P, 1C, 2C, 3C, 4P, 4C, 10P, 10C) such as transferring audio files to the computer (1P), Pandora (2C2), using email (9C) and msn (1P, 5C, 5P, 6C). Teenagers also taught their parents how to use the mobile phone (2P, 2C2, 7C), and the digital camera (8P) and to record television programmes with a DVD recorder (3C, 3P, 8C, 8P). They might also introduce new products to their parents (1C) and update their parents on IT information (7P).

2. *Other Skills and Knowledge Areas*

This constituted 44% of all the stories recalled. Among them were events on

   a.   Sports:
        Soccer (1C, 3P), swimming (2C2), basketball (4P),
        rock climbing (7P)
   b.   Subjects learning:
        Mandarin (1P), Chinese History (2C1, 2P), 'Chinglish' (6C)

c. Recreation skills:
Chinese calligraphy (4P), playing mahjong (2P), Photography (5P), baking cakes (8C)

d. Music:
Karaoke (5C), band performance (6P, 6C), Jazz (9P, 9C)

e. During traveling:
Museum (1P, 8C), on the streets (6P)

f. Others:
News (7C), school issues (5C) academic and clinical knowledge (10C, 10P)

These were the subject areas or topics in which IGL were reported to have taken place.

3. Values and Attitudes

This made up about 20% of the anecdotes collected. They involved religion (3P), fashion style (4C, 9C, 10C), sharing of life views (4C), experience and feelings (5P), love attitude (8P), parenting (8P), teaching values and principles (9P), western cultures (7C) and disciplining the dog (10P) at home.

From the analysis of the anecdotes, the teenagers were able to contribute to teaching their parents those skills and knowledge which they were better equipped. Among those, IT, computer knowledge and skills were most commonly transferred from the

Y$\rightarrow$X (teenagers to parents) direction. Teenagers also shared values and attitudes with their parents and apparently this was bi-directional (X$\rightarrow$Y and Y$\rightarrow$X) intergenerational learning and exchange.

INTEGRATED ANALYSIS

Data and results obtained from the anecdotes, interviews and questionnaires all indicated that intergenerational learning improved communication and relationship among family members, especially across generations X and Y. This certainly facilitated family functions as a unit.

At the family level, a happy atmosphere and positive learning culture could be created as intergenerational learning was found as happy experience both by the parents and their teenage children. Parent's lifelong learning attitude and attributes contributed greatly to making the family a 'learning family'. Most participants considered their family a 'learning family'. The transfer of values and morals, IT knowledge and skills using modern appliances allowed the family as a

whole to meet the challenges that globalization and the information age

brought.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS ON THIS STUDY

A number of participants, both parents and teenagers, did provide

the researcher with their personal viewpoints and feedback regarding

this particular study on IGL.

3C	*This is an interesting topic.* (from email message)
5C	Enjoying the quiz and questionnaires (email from 5P) '*Do you know my daughter likes your design of word/symbol chosen from the SCMP so much that she asks me for more to fill in!*'
6C	*This is an important topic* *IGL is a complementary process '互相補足' between parents and child*
9C	participant asked about further details of this study, explanation was given. A copy of the study summary was requested. She asked whether this study would eventually improve the learning attitude in the society. Feedback on study: *interesting topic*(from email message) *It's perfect! no amendments.*(for the transcription) *Can you send me your thesis or can you give me the hypothesis or conclusion of your thesis? I'm very interested in this LLL research =)* (This is another symbol used by the youngsters to indicate a smile.)

4P	*Excellent topic, give me an opportunity to review my family situation. This also stimulates me to think about the assumptions of this study.*
8P	*Quiz may not test IG gap. There is cultural component to be considered.* *OG may not be exposed to those terms.*
9P	*IGL is an interesting topic.* *Now parents as well as teens need to improve.* *Family directly affects children's learning.* *Parents should set an example '以身作則' and encourage communications and LLL.*

Table 29: Written Feedback from Participants

Other oral feedback was received. By recalling their FL experience while preparing the stories, the parents found it good to provide them an opportunity to review and revisit their relationship with their teenage children. The process itself was good as '*I need to think and appreciate more of my children and this improves our understanding.*' (1P, 5P) Teenager 1C gave supplementary information after the interview and asked his mother about the progress and the result of this study. He was happy that his contribution to his parents' learning was recognized.

Remarks

Many teenagers demonstrated great interest in this topic. They felt happy that their knowledge and contribution to their parents' learning could be recognized and appreciated. They were very willing to share their views and keen to know the results of the study. They also found the quiz interesting -- this probably explained their high score.

During the interviews and story-telling sessions, it was quite clear that the participants were reluctant to use the equivalent word of 'teaching' in Cantonese to describe the IGL phenomenon especially for the Generation Y→X direction. This was particularly obvious among the teenagers. Most of them felt more comfortable to use the equivalent word of 'sharing' instead, when describing the events or telling their anecdotes. Apparently, to them, the traditional Chinese 'teaching-learning' relationship implied a hierarchical relationship while 'sharing' was more on an equal ground. Even though the teenagers were more knowledgeable in certain areas and did play a teaching role, they were not comfortable with the concept that they were 'teaching' their parents.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

Terminology

It is not easy to clearly and comprehensively define the terms such as 'lifelong learning', 'family learning', 'learning family' and 'intergenerational learning', etc. Different people may define and interpret them differently. The attempt to define them will actually confine them into certain aspects of certain learning behaviour. Perhaps the data gathered from this study might be able to describe certain attributes or supplement the knowledge regarding these terms from the perspectives of our participants.

The discrepancy between the English and the Chinese interpretation and understanding of those terms further complicates the picture. When we describe those terms using different languages, we have to be aware of the semantic undertones of the language used.

The fact that the participants preferred the equivalent term 'sharing' to the term 'teaching' is interesting. It is possible that the teaching-learning relationship understood by adults may not be exactly

the same as that experienced by our teenage participants themselves. Perhaps the teaching-learning relationship for intergenerational family learning is a different relationship from the traditional teacher-student relationship that we are used to. In Chinese, teaching-learning implies a top-down relationship with teachers being considered more superior than students, while 'sharing' indicates teaching and learning or knowledge skills transfer conducted on an equal ground.

Factors Affecting Family Learning

From this study, certain characteristics and attributes of the parents could be identified which might facilitate IGL in the family. As most of the participants felt that theirs were learning families, we might be able to see certain aspects of family culture which are facilitating especially in the Y$\rightarrow$ X direction.

The participants often emphasized the importance of good relationship and communication between parents and teenagers for IGL to take place effectively. There were some conditions identified for an ideal learning family which were favourable for IGL. For example,

parents needed to be open-minded, become a good role model and demonstrate good LLL attitude. Some parents also realized that they had to be humble to learn from the YG. A few parents pointed out that it was important for parents to realize and accept the fact that the OG could and should learn from the YG.

IGL takes place through dialogues and personal interactions. Parents and teenagers have to build trust and good rapport before real IG family learning can take place.

Differences in Learning Methodology and Patterns

Both groups realized that the learning methodology and style were different between the two generations due to differences in upbringing, their background and exposure. Each generation might possess different learning characteristics and style thus they learned in slightly different ways. (Details on page 183-194)

Do Teenagers Learn Faster?

Quite a number of participants in both groups commented that the youngsters learned faster than the OG. This phenomenon might be explained using the mental model theory. It is believed that we use our 'Mental Reference Models (MRM)' for tacit decision-making as most decisions are non-conscious and result from activating the MRM. New learning actually involves 'conceptual blending', which includes the capability to combine and adapt pre-existing MRM to generate applicable MRM to handle new situations. Competent people make decisions by relying on MRM from past experience. MRM are stories and stories help us learn better (Wiig, 2005).

As we grow older, we have built large libraries of reference models on which we adapt and execute to repeat prior successes and avoid previous failures. Therefore our past experience and established MRM do have much impact on our learning. With too many old MRMs to draw from during the new learning process, the speed of learning might be sacrificed. The YG does not have as many MRMs as the OG so they may pick up new knowledge faster.

Role of Mother and Father in Family Learning

According to the results obtained from the questionnaire, 60% of the parents and 40% of the teenagers thought that mother played a more important role in regard to family learning. I do think that the mother could act as the key to a learning family (though 50% of the teenagers did not agree, probably they thought both parents played similar roles). Tam and Lam (2005:56) from their study of Hong Kong parents found that fathers and mothers on the whole did not show differences in behaviour, except for a significant difference in communication skills. Interestingly, the most optimal communication observed was between fathers and daughters.

Hailey and James (2002) suggested that the heart of a learning organization is a 'learning leader'. A learning leader was thought to be intellectually fit enough to handle change and agile enough to drive change forward. Parents from this study definitely demonstrated such capabilities to becoming a learning leader at home. As the 'learning leader' of a learning family, the mother or father can act as a catalyst for change. He or she is committed to learn, possess natural curiosity

and is responsive to environmental changes. Parents need to play a facilitator and educator role in bringing up their children in the family. Therefore he or she helps to promote learning and instill a learning mindset for her kids. Besides, the learning leader in the family also needs to become *individual being open to new ideas and willing to engage in new learning* (Swieringa and Wierdsma, 1992).

Many of our teenage participants pointed out in the interview that their mother was relatively more patient and willing to listen to them. They tended to 'share' more with their mother. Thus the potential of mothers becoming the family's 'learning leader' would be great.

Meta-Learning

By participating in this study and telling their IGL stories, both the parents and the teenagers were made aware of their previous family learning experience. This increased awareness may probably promote further IGL especially in the Y$\rightarrow$ X direction within the family. Hopefully this kind of learning will be extended to involve the other spouse and the siblings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Results from the questionnaire revealed that all the parents and 80% of the teenagers (20% undecided) thought they were 'lifelong learners'. The same proportion of the participants thought that continuous learning was important.

Among them, 80% of all participants agreed that (20% undecided) their family was a 'learning family'. All the parents and 90% of the teenagers found learning experience in their family was happy. Moreover, 80% of all participants gave a score of seven or higher when they were asked to rate their family with a score of ten representing an ideal 'learning family'. All of them gave a score of six or higher. Among all participants, 80% of them considered the learning culture or atmosphere in their family good, 5% excellent and 15% average.

The following summarizes the results from the findings of the narratives, interviews and questionnaire, with specific reference to the research questions outlined earlier in chapter 1 (on page 14).

1. **Are families engaging in bilateral intergenerational learning?**

Among all participants, 90% of the parents and 80% of the teenagers did NOT agree to the statement that 'learning taking place in the family is always unilateral from the older to the younger generation'. Similarly, 90% of them did NOT agree that 'family members (between two generations) seldom share information and knowledge'.

The major direction of learning taken place in the family was as follows: 70% of the parents and 90% of the teenagers chose 'parent⟷ child' (Generations X⟷Y) while 30% of the parents and 10% of the teenagers chose 'parent→child' (Generation X→Y). No one chose the option 'child→ parent '(Generation Y→X).

It appeared that a larger proportion of the teenagers (90%) saw that intergenerational learning in the family was bi-directional. Though no one chose the 'child→parent' (Generation Y→X) direction, this could have happened although it might not have been a major direction, nor had it been emphasized enough. In this study, both

the parents and the teenagers did not demonstrate any difficulties telling their narratives illustrating the 'child→parent' (i.e. Generation Y→X) learning incidences.

2. **Are parents learning from their teenage children?**

All the parents (100%) did NOT agree that they 'have learned only from their supervisors or teachers' and 100% of the teenagers did NOT agree that they 'learn only from school'. This implied that learning could have taken place both outside of school and work.

Among the parent participants, 60% of them (20% did not agree and 20% undecided) thought that their 'children are having much to learn from them at home'. On the other hand, all teenagers believed that 'their parents are having much to learn from them at home'.

All the parents involved realized that they 'have something to learn from their children.' Nevertheless, 80% teenagers did NOT (20% were undecided) agree to the statement that they 'did not have much to learn from their parents at home now'. Thus most of the

teenagers thought they still had much to learn from their parents while they also realized that their parents had to learn from them too. Moreover, it seemed that the teenagers were prepared to let their parent learn from them.

In all, 70% of the parents and 90% of the teenagers (20% of the parents and 10% of the teenagers did not agree) thought that they 'did not always agree with the comments/behaviour of their counterparts'. The teenagers seemed to be more indifferent to their parents' comments or behaviour. Nevertheless, 80% parents and 30% teenagers (20% of the parents and 30% of the teenagers did not agree, 40% of the teenagers were undecided) believed that there existed generation gaps in the family. Fewer teenagers saw generation gaps exist between themselves and their parents and 80% of them did not think 'generation gaps' were necessarily 'knowledge gaps'. They stressed the importance of communication between the two generations for intergenerational learning. A few parents pointed out that generation gaps were unavoidable as they were caused by differences in upbringing and societal changes.

3. What are the contents of intergenerational family learning?

As a summary, both groups believed that the YG could learn from their parents in the following areas: life views and experience, moral and values, manners, relationships, news and current issues or political stance. The direction was more on Generation X$\rightarrow$Y learning.

On the other hand, the parents could learn from their teenage children on topics such as fashion, sports, recreation, music and western culture. The YG could also share with their parents about their current education and school learning. Above all, almost everyone among both generations recognized that information and communication technology (ICT) and computer knowledge and skills were stronger areas for the teenagers and were skills which parents could learn from their Generation Y children. More than one third of the narratives told in this study were on this theme.

It appeared that the teenagers were capable of teaching their parents those skills and knowledge which they were better equipped or

more exposed to. Among those, IT and computer knowledge and skills were most commonly transferred in the 'teenager to parent' (Generation Y→ X) direction.

The YG also shared certain values and interests with their parents and apparently this could be bi-directional (X→Y and Y→X). Most of the participants found that both generations could share common interests such as music and sports which they could exchange their knowledge and learn from each other or even learn together. (Page 174, 227)

4. **Is the learning methodology different between the two generations?**

Significant differences in the learning methodology and styles between the Generation X parents and Generation Y teenagers were found. The OG was said to experience a different upbringing and family background as compared to the younger generation. They were less exposed, especially to computer technology when they were young, thus might have difficulties learning new subjects now.

The YG had been more exposed to ICT and personal computer early in life. Moreover, the teenagers had been given much more learning opportunities by their parents. They even had a chance to study abroad which was very rare among the parent group members.

The differences found also reflected the change in pedagogy at school or they could be outcomes of the drastic changes in the society. The Generation X was used to learning from textbooks, by memorizing book knowledge and tended to be passive learners. They preferred to listen to their teachers and followed step-by-step instructions. They learned mainly from formal education. On the contrary, the Generation Y had been adapted to learning by exploration through doing projects and other activities. They searched for information beyond book knowledge. They also learned from their classmates or peers while self-learning was also encouraged. The YG was exposed to vast sources of information and knowledge. They could easily access oceans of information through the Internet and the webs. They tended to ask more

questions and challenge old practices in their learning.

When learning to use the new products or electronic appliances, the Generation X parents tended to read the manuals or followed step-by-step instructions. On the other hand, the Generation Y would try the products directly hands-on and played with them to learn to use them. They did not rely on reading manuals or written instructions and preferred to learn by trial and error.

When the teenagers tried to teach their parents to use the new products or gadgets, they commented that their parents, especially their mothers, were not very motivated to learn. The Generation X mothers usually relied on the YG for help. Most teenagers said that they had to repeat several times in order for their mother to learn to master the skill and they thought the OG forgot easily. Repeated teaching was necessary, which seemed to frustrate the teenagers. They usually 'taught' their parents, by hands-on demonstration with verbal explanation.

Both groups commented that the OG seemed to take longer to learn and the YG learned new skills faster. The reasons could be that the YG had been more exposed to technology and computer skills earlier in life. Probably, the OG had already developed strong mental reference models which were difficult to change or unlearn. Besides, it took longer time for adults to draw on vast libraries of mental models to match with the new learning.

5. **Are mothers playing a more important role for intergenerational family learning?**

Among all participants, 60% of the parents and of the 40% teenagers agreed (40% of the parents and 50% of the teenagers did not agree) with the statement that 'mother plays a more important role in intergenerational learning than father'. On the whole, about half of the participants thought mother played a more important learning role for intergenerational family learning. The other half did not agree, especially the teenagers. Probably they thought that both parents were as important. From the interviews, the participants (parents and teenagers) commented that mothers and

fathers played different roles according to their individual personality, interests and attitudes. They might even have various levels of contribution to and involvement in intergenerational family learning. Some parents pointed out that fathers tended to be more authoritative and passive while mothers were more willing to listen, to actively seek for help from their teenage children and face-saving was less of a concern.

6. **What are the characteristics of a 'learning family'?**

A learning family is a family in which 'members are willing to accept or take in knowledge from one another'. Parents should develop their children early in life for independent thinking and positive lifelong learning attitudes.

A learning family seems to demonstrate certain characteristics and the parents should possess certain attributes that facilitate IGL in the family. According to the data obtained from the interviews, parents were expected to be open-minded, easy going and less authoritative. They should treat the teenagers as friends and

maintain regular conservations with them. It is important that they act as good role models especially when they were teaching values and morals. Parents needed to absorb and learn new knowledge themselves, develop wider scope of views and increase their exposure. They were also expected to be receptive and ready to change their attitudes. They should not force their ideas onto their children. They had to be patient to listen to their teenage children. They should also allow differences in opinions, show interest and be willing to communicate and spend time with their teenage children. Most importantly, they should believe that they could learn from their teenage children and initiate learning by asking them questions or seeking help from them.

It is desirable for both generations to develop common interests so they have more opportunities to learn together. There should be regular and more quality conversations within the family. Parents need to have positive attitudes, sincere respect and be able to maintain good relationship with their Generation Y teenage children.

Both groups recognized that the parents' learning attitude was definitely affecting the youngsters' attitude towards LLL. I was deeply inspired by the practice of holding regular family forums in one of the families. Besides, one father's willingness and readiness to admit wrong doings and mistakes was particularly impressive as it is not easy for parents to be humble enough to admit their own mistakes and to learn from the younger generation.

7. **What is the relationship between 'family learning' and 'lifelong learning'?**

Learning is actually intrinsic to living. Learning can take place at different levels: personal, family, societal, organizational, community, national and even international or global level. Family learning and intergenerational learning are thus somewhere on this learning spectrum.

Lifelong learning is learning throughout life, from cradle to grave. It is another dimension of learning. Lifelong learning is much more than the retraining of skills or continuing professional education. In

this study, both the parent and the teenager groups considered lifelong learning as very important in helping them to catch up with the changes in this fast changing world. Lifelong learning could be informal and learning took place anywhere, any time. They also believed that lifelong learning was individual learning and learning across generations was a form of lifelong learning.

Family learning or intergenerational learning was bi-directional and it took place between parents and children, between siblings and cousins and even between grandparents and grandchildren. Any interactions between family members might lead to learning from each other and this could be considered as family learning. Intergenerational learning is family learning taking place across generations. Intergenerational learning is thought to be able to improve relationship among family members across generations.

Most of the participants felt that family learning was definitely related to lifelong learning. They thought that family learning was one form of lifelong learning and was mostly informal in nature.

Parents' learning attitude greatly influenced the younger generation's attitude towards intergenerational and family learning as well as lifelong learning. It was therefore very important for parents to set themselves as role models and became lifelong learners themselves for their children to follow suit. Only if parents adopted a 'willing to learn' attitude could they accept their children 'teaching' them. The participants also suggested that family learning should start very early in the family so that the younger generation could develop good learning attitudes early in life. If they enjoyed learning early, they would more likely become lifelong learners. Therefore, in a learning family, there were better opportunities for family members to develop positive lifelong learning attitudes. Moreover, if parents themselves were lifelong learners, their family would more likely to become a 'learning family'.

FAMILY LEARNING MODELS

The following model is designed in an attempt to put family learning

into a life-wide perspective.

Figure 26: Family Learning and Other Forms of Learning

Learning takes place at various levels under different

environments. Generally, we acquire academic knowledge at school

and professional experience at work. We learn social behaviour and

culture in the community and gain global knowledge through various

media and social interactions. Family learning is learning with family

members in the most relaxed, emotionally comfortable environment.

FAMILY LEARNING AND INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

Who?

From a broader perspective, learning between or among family members is considered family learning (can be between spouses, between siblings, etc). When learning takes place across generations, it is intergenerational learning (can be between parents and children, between grandparents and parents or between grandparents and grand children).

In this particular study, Generation X parents and their Generation Y teenage children were involved in the intergenerational learning episodes. The parents were adult learners and all participants consider themselves lifelong learners. The teenagers were actually mini-adults and they played a very important teaching role in the intergenerational learning process with their parents, especially in the area of computer skills and technology.

The following model illustrates the relationship between family learning and intergenerational learning.
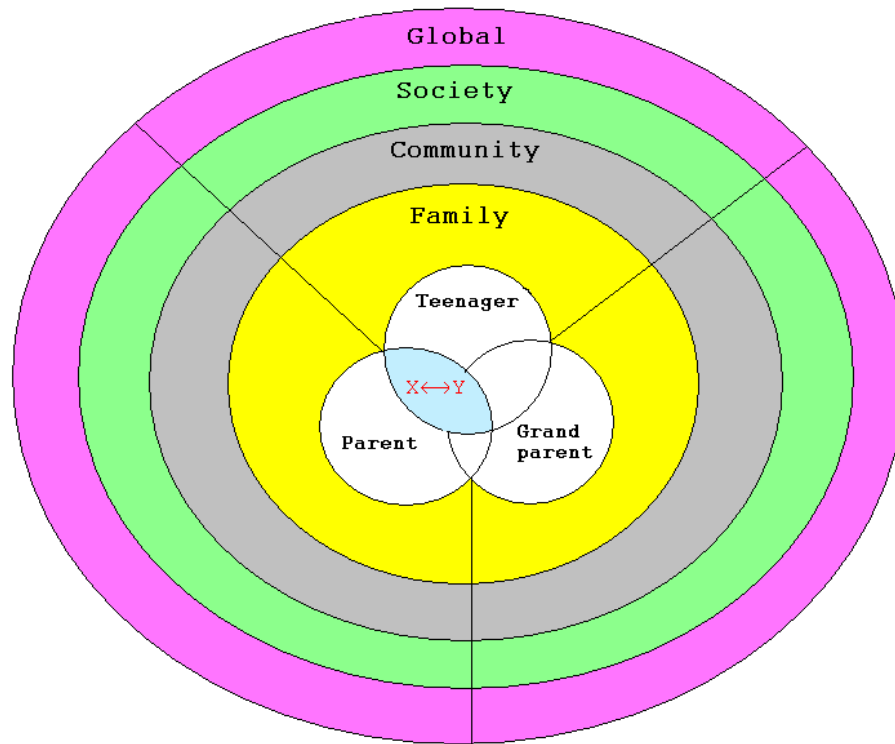
(Key: The middle section in blue indicates Intergenerational X←→Y learning)

Figure 27: Family Learning and Intergenerational Learning

In the above figure, the yellow circle indicates knowledge and learning that takes place in the family, the grey in the community (school or workplace), the green at the society, and the pink at the global world level. Individual family member of each generation learns continuously from his or her surrounding environments (family, school,

community, society and global) within their respective pie section. The light blue area is the intersection where Generations X and Y can share their experience and knowledge gained from various levels or environment. By doing this, maximal learning can take place across generations and experience be shared across different environments.

What?

Intergenerational family learning is a form of lifelong learning involving the transfer of tacit knowledge across generations. It is informal, mostly unplanned and self-directed learning. It is situational and experiential learning through personal conversations and activities.

Both the two Generations X and Y can contribute to intergenerational learning and each is knowledgeable and experienced in particular subjects and topics. Intergenerational learning should be allowed to take place in a bi-directional (Generation X parents$\leftrightarrow$ Generation Y teenagers) manner so that the maximum benefit can be achieved.

In this complex and fast changing world, teenagers who are growing through puberty and confronted with chaos also need to search for their identity, roots and reference points as anchorage in order to feel secure and safe. They also need a sense of belonging which can be best cultivated in their own family. Parents can provide their teenage children with their own life experience and share with them principles, values and morals which the teenagers can use as yardsticks in life. Teenagers do want some rules and regulations though they may never admit this. They realize that they can fall back on these rules their parents have set for them when life becomes chaotic. Rules help teenagers feel safer. Yet, family rules will have to be changed over time as children change and grow (Nolte and Harris, 2002: 98-99). This is when intergenerational communication and learning becomes essential.

On the other hand, teenagers can contribute by teaching or sharing with their parents ICT skills, new technology and trends, so as to enable their parents to absorb new knowledge and keep abreast with fast societal and technological changes.

From the anecdotes collected, about 37% of them were description of the parents learning IT and computer skills from the teenagers, 44% were on other knowledge and skills such as sports, music, history, etc, and about 20% were on the sharing of values and attitudes between parents and their teenage children. As a summary, both groups believed that the younger generation could learn from their parents in the following areas: life views and experience, moral and values, manners, relationships, news and current issues or political stance. On the other hand, Generation X parents could learn from their Generation Y children on aspects such as fashion, music and western cultures. Teenagers could also share with their parents their knowledge on current education and school learning. Almost all participants recognized that technology and computer skills were the stronger areas for the teenagers, from whom their parents can learn.

The following diagram summarizes the content of intergenerational learning. It also indicates the major direction of learning and knowledge flow between the two generations. The content in the box on the left hand side is predominantly for learning in the

Generation X to Y direction, that is, for parents to learn from their teenager children). The one on the right hand side contains content for Generation Y→ X learning, that is, parents learning from their children. Those in the middle box involve more of mutual exchanges. The combination of the three contains important components for a happy balance learning family. Nowadays, most of the youth problems encountered are believed to be consequences of a breakdown in these processes, particular that from the left hand side.

Generation X
Parents

Values		Technology
Manners	News	ICT
Morals	Social	New trends
Life experience	Political	Youth culture
Ethnic culture	Recreation	
Problem solving		
& decision		
making skills		

Generation Y
Teenage Children
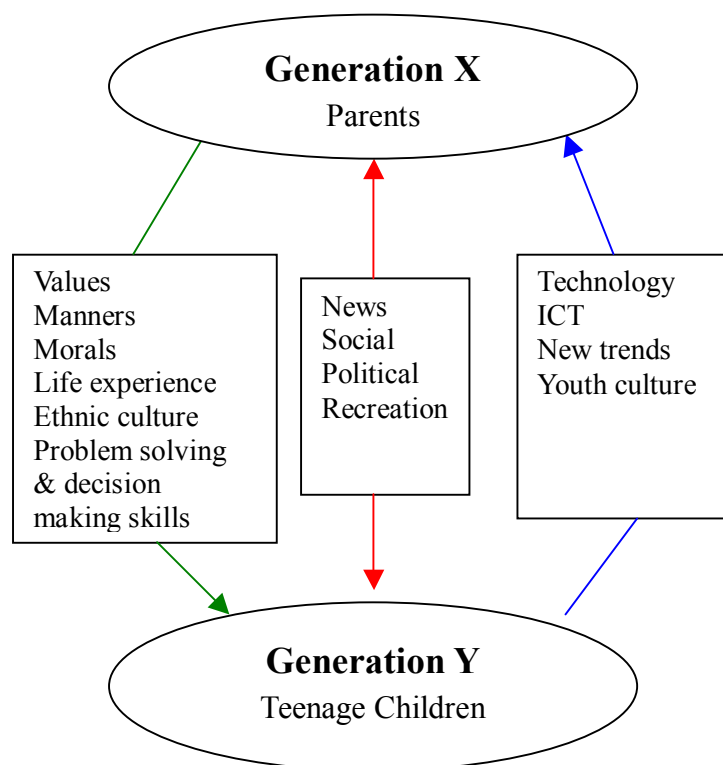
(Key: The arrow indicates the direction of learning)

Figure 28: Subjects for Intergenerational Learning between the X and Y
    Generations

When?

According to the participants, intergenerational family learning

could take place anytime as it was considered informal learning. Some

of them also pointed out that meal times, traveling or going on family

trips, and playing games together would be good opportunities for

bi-directional intergenerational learning to take place among family

members. Bed time conversations and holding regular family forum

were other practical suggestions given.

A study conducted by the National Center on Addiction and

Substance Abuse (CASA, 2005) which interviewed 1000 teenagers and

829 parents of teenagers, found that frequent family dinners were

associated with lower rates of teen smoking, drinking and drug use.

This finding echoes with the comments given by our participants that

dinner time with family members is the ideal time for intergenerational

family learning.

It is arguable whether watching television together is a good time

for intergenerational learning. Some participants mentioned that the television distracted attention and became a barrier for real communication, but others thought it stimulated the exchange of ideas and provided topics for learning and discussion. Presumably the kind of television programmes would also influence the outcome.

It was also greatly emphasized that free time spent together between parents and their teenage children without pressure was most important to allow real intergenerational family learning to take place.

Where?

Similarly, intergenerational learning happens anywhere. It does not necessary happen in the home environment. Besides spending quality time at the dining table, going on family trips, visiting museums, watching television together in the sitting room were also reported as venues for Generations X $\longleftrightarrow$ Y learning.

Basically, intergenerational learning may occur under any environment as long as there is interaction among the family members.

How?

Parents play a critical role in facilitating intergenerational learning in the family. They themselves have to be active lifelong learners practising lifelong learning. To foster a good learning culture in the family, parents should encourage curiosity and arouse children's interests to learn. They should be flexible and open-minded and most importantly they should adjust themselves from the traditional authoritative figure.

Technically, the teenager participants suggested that parents should ask them more questions or seek for help thus allowing them opportunities to contribute their knowledge and skills. The 'asking the right questions' teaching and learning approach advocated by Socrates seemed to be a workable approach for intergenerational learning.

It is necessary for parents to allow differences in opinions and accept the co-existence of conflicting ideas. Parents might also have to realize that they can have something to learn from the younger

generation at home. Both the parents and the youngsters should be able to show appreciation, enjoyment, and to feel the excitement generated from new learning with their counterparts. Teaching and learning actually take place at the same time and they reinforce each other.

Parents should develop a positive family learning culture early in a child's life. Values and attitudes are moulded when children are very young (e.g. value judgement, right and wrong, moral, self-confidence, etc). The positive feelings and better communication accompanying IGL reinforce constructive learning habit and lifelong learning attitude.

Factors Affecting Intergenerational Family Learning

Certain factors are believed to influence the extent and the quality of intergenerational family learning especially in the Generation Y→ X direction. The most important determining factors are a close relationship and good communication between the parents and children. The parents' attitude towards lifelong learning and willingness to learn from the young are also crucial. Their personality construct, attributes, parenting and learning style, plus motivation all contribute to the

outcome of intergenerational learning. (Refer to page 234-5 for details)

Benefits of Intergenerational Family Learning

Intergenerational family learning experience was reported as happy experience both by the parents as well as the teenagers. It was believed that such experience would improve relationship among family members and increase the sense of belonging and cohesiveness.

The technological skills and knowledge of the Generation X parents could be updated through learning from their Generation Y children. Socially, parents could also acquire information about current trends and cultures from them. Through intergenerational family learning experience, the younger generation feels more mature and satisfied helping their parents. At the same time the parents become younger at heart and are able to keep in touch with new trends and the rapid changes in the society. Both generations experience mutual benefit from the intergenerational learning process.

Often, we do not know what we do not know therefore we do not know what to learn. Through intergenerational learning, both

Generations X and Y will be able to know what needed to be learned.

SUPPORTING THEORIES

According to the European Commission (n.d.) framework for learning, intergenerational family learning fits into the 'informal' category. It happens with daily life activities, intergenerational, and with no definite structure. Typically intergenerational learning is incidental. Family learning is neither certificated nor facilitated, unlike the 'formal' education and training in institutes or the 'non-formal' learning at the workplace or in the community.

In *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*, Knowles (1970) defined 'andragogy' as 'an emerging technology for adult learning.' His four andragogical assumptions are that adults move from dependency to self-directedness; draw upon their reservoirs of experience for learning; are ready to learn when they assume new roles; and they want to solve problems and apply new knowledge immediately.

In the case of intergenerational learning especially in the Generation Y➔X direction, it is important that parents as adult learners

realize that they have to assume new roles and become active learners.

They have to be self-directed and they have to initiate by asking

questions or for help from the YG. When parents are confronted with

problems and difficulties (such as learning to use a mobile phone), they

will be more motivated to learn from the young as the knowledge and

skill obtained can be utilized and applied immediately after the

teaching-learning event. When drawing upon their experience, they

have to be open-minded and prepared to alter their established mental

models in order to accept new knowledge or new ways of thinking.

Sometimes, parents have to actively unlearn old knowledge in order to

learn and accept new knowledge.

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital can be expanded to include

cultural goods and practices which are progressively more important in

determining achievement. Specifically, computers are 'machines' that

form a type of objectified cultural capital, and the ability to use them is

an embodied type of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986:47). Emmison

and Frow's (1998) work focused on the exploration of the ability to use

information technology which was also considered as a form of cultural

capital. These authors believed that getting familiar with and a positive disposition towards the use of technologies of the information age could be seen as an additional form of cultural capital bestowing advantage on those families that possess them.

Cultural capital built within the family can be further enriched by family members practising bi-directional intergenerational learning, and adopting positive lifelong learning attitudes. Positive learning family cultures cultivated early in a family will definitely help add value to the cultural capital of each individual family member.

DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING PROFILE

From the results obtained in this study, 'lifelong learning' actually meant learning throughout life to the participants and it should start early in life. Nevertheless, many governments, including the Hong Kong government, have treated lifelong learning or lifelong education mostly as post secondary school education or job skills re-training.

I would like to take a life-course approach and look at the developmental aspects of lifelong learning and intergenerational family learning. A family life-course framework emphasizes the continuity and reciprocity of life experience. Families are units of individuals and the events or episodes that affect individual family members also influence the unit and the course of family life (National Center on Fathers and Families(NCFF), n.d.).

The following is a typical developmental learning profile drawn with reference to the current education system in Hong Kong.

Age	Education	Primary learning sources	Venue	Family Learn-ing	Throughout Life
0-6	Preschool (non-formal)	parents, family members carers	home, kinder-garten	P→→C	Lifelong Learning + Family Learning + Inter Generational Learning
7-12	Primary (formal)	school teachers, peers	school	P→C	
13-19	Secondary (formal)	school teachers, peers	school	**P←→C**	
20-23	Post-secondary /tertiary (formal)	Profession-al teachers	Institut-ion	P←→C	
Work life 23-65	Professional Training (non-formal) **Lifelong Education**	colleagues at work	workplace	P←→C	
Retire-ment 65 onwards		family, friends	community	C→P??	

Key: P = parent   C = child

Table 30: Developmental Learning Profile

Tuckett (2004) believed that 'lifelong learning' brought the recognition that initial, pre-school and post-compulsory learning were intimately connected. I think learning represents a developmental continuum which is life long. Moreover, 'lifewide learning' extends the role of learning outside schooling and beyond the world of work. Therefore, lifelong learning, lifewide learning together with intergenerational family learning add dimensions to our learning profile, both in depth and in width. Learning is a continuous personal development and transformation.

IMPLICATIONS

Family Learning and Lifelong Learning Starts Early at Home

The data of this study indicated that the concept of 'family learning' and 'lifelong learning' should be introduced very early in the family. A positive family learning culture would also foster the development of positive and active lifelong learning attitudes both for the parents and the younger generation.

Children experience a whole world of learning before formal schooling. Khoshkhesal (1995:14) also believed that cultural learning began at birth and it was mostly non-verbal and 90% unconscious. It is therefore important to set the scene for lifelong learning early in life.

In their UNESCO report, Medel-Anonuevo et al (2001:12) echoed this idea when they highlighted that 'If you were an active learner when you were young, you will stay that way when you are older.' Past learning experience certainly influence our present and future learning. Early happy learning experience will definitely facilitate lifelong learning for children. The report also stressed that 'family environment

is critical to providing a foundation for the culture of learning'
(2001:15). I consider bi-directional intergenerational family learning is
a key to ensure that the base for lifelong learning is established. Stehlik
(2003) concluded in his paper suggesting that the home in fact was a
valid site for adult learning, despite being overlooked in the literature. I
believe family is the best place for learning, both for the children as
well as the adult parents, as it provides a free and relaxed environment
for family members to learn and there is no fear of failure.

A family is a basic social unit in the society. It is in this social unit
of the family that we have the possibility of bringing fundamental
changes that are of significance in the more immediate presence. Here
and now, we can begin to change our lives and attitudes so as to regain
some degree of sanity in a world that has so many problems and
pathological aspects. What we do within the family, the home we create,
would perhaps be more important than any massive reforms (Kane,
1987). We can change the world starting small at home by practising
intergenerational family learning through better understanding and
communication between parents and their children. If bi-directional

intergenerational learning can improve family relationship and promote understanding, juvenile delinquency would be avoided or better tackled. This might also help the Generation X parents go through their middle-age crisis, and the Generation Y teenagers through puberty more smoothly and happily.

Teaching and Learning

I see an urgent need to re-define 'teaching' and 'learning' in this fast changing knowledge society. The focus should be more on the mechanisms of learning (not teaching), one of them being intergenerational X$\leftrightarrow$Y learning.

In this study, the participants, especially the teenagers, were very reluctant to use the word 'teaching' but preferred the word 'sharing' when they helped their parents to learn and master new skills. The reasons could be due to the deep-rooted traditional Chinese parent-child hierarchy perception that the teenagers felt they were not in a position to 'teach' the older generation. Alternatively, this Generational Y$\rightarrow$X learning is a different teaching-learning relationship from the one they

were used to experience at school in highly authoritarian classrooms (Biggs, 1996). Hong Kong students are used to experience learning where adults are the teachers and they themselves are learners, playing a humble and timid student role.

In higher education, Frand and Hixon (1999) saw a blurring of roles and responsibilities in the emerging university environment. I think this blurring of roles becomes significant under many situations, both at school and at home. Very often, teaching and learning take place together with one reinforcing the other. The effect is manifested further by the widespread use of the computer technology and the Internet. To me, the concept of 'teaching and learning' would gradually become a process of 'knowledge sharing and transfer' taking place on a more equal ground between the teacher and the learner. Teaching and learning are two sides of the process coin. Knowledge sharing and the learning process go hand in hand together.

The focus now should be more on learning, not teaching, if we believe learning is an active and self-directed process. Teachers should

not be just deliverers but developers of learning (Hargreaves, 2003:161).

The role of the 'teacher' is to enlighten someone to learn for himself, and not to press tons of information or explicit knowledge onto the learners. Palmer (1993:33) thought too much of the lecturing was authoritarian, too much of the listening was unengaged, and too much of the memorization was mechanical. He also stressed the importance of relationship for learning. He thought that real learning did not happen until learners were brought into relationships with the teachers, with each other, and with the subject (1993:xvi).

Perhaps the results from this study help to shed some light for us to re-define the role and the work of the teachers in our schools as well. As many educational reformists suggested, the major role of school teachers now should be a willingness to change students' minds, to ask enlightening questions, to build trusting relationship, to motivate students to learn, and to reinforce positive learning behaviour. Giving out information and expecting students to regurgitate answers are no more a desirable pedegogy, especially when the knowledge cycles become so much shortened in this knowledge explosion era. There

should be a shift from the training of 'IQ' (Intelligent Quotient) to 'QI',

which is, making learning 'Quite Interesting' for the students.

Even though teachers today realize that young people need ICT

skills for life, ICT is only just beginning to be used as a means to create,

manage and transfer new knowledge and skills by teachers (Hargreaves,

2000). West (2005) brought our attention to the fact that the Generation

Y (i.e. teenagers) is far more technically competent than their school

teachers in this area. Teenagers tend to learn what they get from

television, websites and through the Internet. They dislike fake idealism

and are critical of moral talks, particularly if these are preached by their

teachers or their parents.

It is important for our Hong Kong education system to review our

teacher-student relationship, the current teaching methodology and the

method of evaluation. The system has to evolve in response to the

changes and societal demands of a globalized knowledge economy.

Friedman (2006:278) in his book *The World is Flat'* also stressed that

students have to fundamentally re-orient what they are learning and

educators how they are teaching it. They cannot just keep the same old

model that worked for the past decades, since the world is round.

As the teenage participants commented in this study, they also

learned during the 'teaching' process with their parents. An

intergenerational learning event is actually a reciprocity-mutual

exchange process. The 'teachers' also learn during the process. Camino

(2000) stressed that what is critical to the success of a youth-adult

partnership is mutuality in teaching and learning between youths and

adults. Perhaps we should adopt a 'sharing' kind of learning attitude as

what actually happened during the intergenerational family learning

episodes reported.

To ensure that we learn continuously, we need to be involved in

activities such as reading, interaction, reflection and even

documentation. Interaction and networking are now inevitable if we

want to gain knowledge and be in the know (Palaniappan, 2005). I

believe that among all the above, interaction is the most important

component for intergenerational family learning. Moreover, parents

should allow room for opposing views and innovative ideas, and be open to voices that challenge their old practice. 'Teaching' is considered one of the best ways to learn as it exposes one to innumerable questions and compels us to be extremely sure of what we know. Parents need to step out of their comfort zones. Allowing teenagers to teach their parents what they know actually reinforces children's own learning while their parents learn. Intergenerational family learning is a win-win, learning-learning situation while knowledge and experience is transferred and modified, rather than just a simple teaching-learning relationship.

Meta-Learning

The term 'meta-learning' is used by Biggs (1985) to encapsulate two complementary features of deep level, self-regulated learning capacity; namely an awareness of, and control over, learning in a personal context.

In the case of intergenerational family learning, I think parents have to develop 'meta-learning' strategies in order to gain maximum

benefits from the process. As learners themselves, parents have to develop a learner's awareness and conscious repertoire so as to facilitate intergenerational learning and knowledge exchanges in the family. If both the parents and the teenagers recognize their learning needs and are conscious of what has to be learned or shared in the family, more learning opportunities will be created. The challenge now is that we might be facing the problem of not knowing what we do not know and what needs to be learned.

Parenting and Family Relationship

In this new intergenerational family learning paradigm, the parents' new knowledge comes mainly from the teenagers' free, willing disclosure. Generation Y$\rightarrow$ X learning relies heavily on the teenagers volunteering their knowledge to their parents. It is important for parents to revisit and adjust their regulatory-supervisory role so as to facilitate intergenerational family learning. Friedman (2006:385) also thought that there was a need for improved parenting. Parents need to know in what world their children are growing up and understand what it will take for them to thrive.

Most of the parents base their parenting practices on the way they were raised. Sometimes they model or react against the techniques of their own parents. Nevertheless, the specific mechanism for intergenerational transmission and the actual effect, particularly a father's involvement, are difficult to determine (NCFF, n.d.). Ijzendoorn (1992) pointed out that little is known about the mechanism of intergenerational transmission of parenting and that it is difficult to ascertain how people specifically learn to parent. A traditional view on intergenerational learning asserts that parents are the principal agent of socialization in childhood, and children learn their parents' beliefs, values, and attitudes through both direct teaching and indirect observation. Therefore it is important for parents to set themselves as good role models and practise what they preach. As children grow into adolescence, intergenerational learning can become more bi-directional. Subsequently, the traditional hierarchical family relationship has been much challenged and needs to be changed.

Parents have to review their traditional practice of authority within the family. Teenagers are found to have a tendency to challenge the

voice of authority, both at home and at school (Blahy, 2004). With an open mind and better understanding of the worldly changes, parents (as well as teachers at school) will find adult-teenager interaction becoming more complex, but at the same time richer if parent-child relationship is well established through learning from each other.

Importance of Generation Y→X Learning, Teenagers as Knowledge Resources

Many governments have come to realize that there is a growing resource demand for the ageing population. I think young people can be considered as vibrant new resources especially in terms of new knowledge and family support. Realistically, the future is in their hands, and the rest of us will be taken along on the ride.

The Time Magazine chose "YOU" as the 'Person of the year 2006'. People are so amazed witnessing the remarkable development of the World Wide Web, and the rapid rise of 'You Tube', 'MySpace', 'Wikipedia' and many other websites. The Web2.0 is considered a massive social experiment, innovation, creation and collaboration. The

"YOU" actually implies the younger generation as they are the major players with all this ICT (Information and Communication Technology). It was predicted that the young generation would not only change the world, but would also change the way the world changed (Grossman, 2006). We are living in an era with an explosion of knowledge and information, and demands on productivity and innovations. Can we Generation X parents afford to be left out?

From his research findings, Leif Edvinsson (2006) found that the 'Creativity Score' decreased with age. The score was highest at five years old, dropped from five to eight very quickly, then slowly until it reached the lowest creativity score at around 44 years old; then it increased slightly after the retirement age. He discovered that children were more adventurous, with courage and less fear and they tended to ask more questions and laugh more. He coined the word 'QUIZZIC' meaning the art and science of asking questions. He also experimented by involving three generations in his 'future centres' in which children were also included when government policies were formulated.

Innovations and creativity are desirable attributes in the knowledge economy. Perhaps we adults (especially the middle-aged Generation X parents) might need to change our mindset and think differently to learn to be inspirational and creative. Learning from the younger generation, that is Generation Y→X learning, might be a means to bring back the creativity which the adults have lost as they age. By applying 'Quizzic' or refining our questioning skills, it is possible that parents (and teachers) can tap into the great knowledge resource pool at home. Our teenage participants did stressed that they would be willing to teach their parents what they know if they simply asked.

Multi-tasking

A Dutch newspaper also named the Y Generation the 'Einstein Generation', referring to their ability to perform many activities at the same time (West, 2005). That is to say, they can perform multi-tasks at one time. For example, they can chat with friends via the Internet, and do their homework and watch television or listen to music at the same time. This multi-tasking skill seen among the Generation Y is also

reported by other authors (Hira, 2007, McLester, 2007, Tyler, 2007).

The parent participants in this study also discovered this multi-tasking ability from their teenage children. I wonder whether we as parents should keep on stopping the teenagers from performing multi-tasks, as we were previously discouraged by our parents when we were young. The traditional belief that one can succeed only if he is concentrating and focusing on one task at one time might not hold true any more. Parents are quite used to complaining that their teenage children are spending too much time sitting in front of their computer or the television set doing multi-tasks but not concentrating on doing their schoolwork. Possibly, in the 21st century, multi-tasking is not a bad thing at all. In fact this ability could be one of the survival skills required in an information explosion era, I guess.

Perhaps the Generation X parents should also learn this multi-tasking ability from their Y Generation teenagers. Though, chances are we may have a problem with multi-tasking, and that problem will likely get worse as we get older. Nevertheless, it is

encouraging to know from recent research (published in the online edition of the international journal Vision Research) which informs us that multi-tasking skill can be re-learned. Researchers found that seniors, who typically have more difficulty than younger people dividing attention between two or more tasks at a time, can overcome these difficulties with practice (McMaster Times-Winter 2007:12). Therefore we can be optimistic that the older generation's multi-tasking ability can be improved, if they are willing to learn and practise.

RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS

Technology and Learning

There will be increasing intergenerational concerns in the future trend. With similar viewpoints as other experts in the e-learning field, McLester (2007) pointed out that web venues become the norm for learning; even educators will be facing an overwhelming technology learning curve. It seems that a new digital divide is emerging, one that is largely generational. Masie (2006:19) introduced the term 'technology sandboxes', suggesting that we should play with technologies like we played in our sandboxes when we were children. To the parents, I recommend that they embrace technology and through learning from their teenage children they can enjoy the games and the convenience new technology brings. As a matter of fact, technology brings children closer to their parents (Tyler, 2007) with the help of mobile phones and msn. There is no doubt that technology improves quality of life and shortens the distance between people. The older generations can also benefit if they are not fearful of the ever-changing technology but rather learn to use and manage it with the help of the younger generation.

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) (2003:12) also recognized an e-learning trend. Our rapidly globalized and information intensive world is shaping the learning process and learning opportunities of individuals in communities and societies. The development of ICT both as a learning environment and a means for learning has transformed the traditional learning practice to a very significant extent. The widespread use of ICT and its impact on active learning styles in information seeking, analysis, synthesis, interactive and horizontal communication, which go beyond familiar learning environments, cannot be ignored (Medel-Anonuevo et al., 2001:16).

As evidence shows, ICT will become an important means for future learning and it has great potentials for further advancement. E-learning and learning through the web has become the inevitable trend and Garner (2007) predicted that there would be rapid development of mobile learning content for the 12-15 years old. The young teenagers are computer literate with good dexterity and they are the key players for future learning using electronic means and technology. We as parents have to be involved in order to keep up with

the lifelong learning trend. My personal experience told me that our Generation Y children could assist us to enjoy learning using the e-learning mode.

Learning Family and Family Cultures

It is evident that parents play the key role in creating an appropriate environment for intergenerational learning. Convey (1997:390) proposed seven habits for highly effective families. The seven habits are: be proactive; begin with the end in mind; put first things first; think 'win-win'; seek first to understand….then to be understood; synergize and sharpen the saw. These are also attributes required of a parent to upkeep intergenerational learning in the family.

Convey also stressed the importance of a 'beautiful family culture', which I think would also facilitate intergenerational family learning. His idea of 'interdependence, independence and dependence model' of the family will also be applicable to building an effective learning family.

To elaborate on his second habit 'begin with the end in mind', the concept of a 'family mission statement' was introduced. A family mission statement is 'a combined, unified expression from all family members of what your family is all about and the principles you choose to govern your family life' (Convey 1997:72). It is critical to have the entire family culture aligned and head towards a mutually agreed upon destination, in this case to building a 'learning family'. Having all family members practise bi-directional intergenerational learning would be a mission for the modern family. A 'learning society' or 'knowledge society' needs a great number of 'learning families' and lifelong learners in order to flourish.

Children who experience positive home environments are likely to create similar environments for their children (NCFF, n.d.). I anticipate that a positive intergenerational learning family culture would perpetuate to influence later generations as well as the society at large.

As suggested by Hailey and James (2002:405) for learning organizations, the 'leaders' have a distinct character and leadership

style that are characterised as being able to work within an uncertain and changing environment, willing to learn and experiment, have a curiosity and ability to analyse the external environment, follow trends and respond to changing circumstances. They also possess good communication and interpersonal skills that enable them to motivate others. Similarly, all these attributes are essential for parents, both mother and father to successfully become 'leaders' of a modern learning family.

Empowering the Teenagers

Personally, I have no hesitation in advocating teenagers' empowerment. Teenagers are the host of the future. Scanzoni (2000:146) asked the adults to cultivate a fresh image of children as social agents. Adults should view youngsters as partners in the task of building the 'knowledge society'. She also emphasized that children should be treated as young citizens, capable of partnership with adults for social changes. Instead of the traditional one-way pathway from adults to children, both parents and their children should now participate in a two-way flow of learning with benefits across

generations – that is bi-directional intergenerational learning.

If parents can alter their mental models about learning and teaching and the traditional authoritative parent image, there is an unlimited knowledge resource pool right at home. Parents should recognize that their teenage children, who later become adults, will continue to serve as a valuable source of reliable information and updated knowledge for lifelong learning. Learning from the younger generation at home is inexpensive and helps to narrow the generation gaps as well as any digital divide. Parents can be inspired to become active, self-motivated lifelong learners themselves. They should establish lifelong as well as lifewide learning focuses but not just limit their learning to work or formal education. A positive attitude towards intergenerational and lifelong learning in addition to positive family culture cultivated will induce the same in the next generation.

Parenting and Intergenerational Programmes

At present, family learning programmes are lacking in Hong Kong. Those provided in other countries are mainly focusing on literacy,

numeracy, ICT, arts and crafts, homework support or childcare programmes for the very young and the elders. I think intergenerational family learning should be included as one of the important topics in a comprehensive parenting or family programme. Parents as well as the public should be aware of the importance and the techniques for intergenerational family learning. Teenagers are to be trained to take an active 'teaching' role, and equipped with the communication skills required for transferring their knowledge and skills to their parents at home.

Programmes aiming at promoting parents and youths learning together would be very much desirable and beneficial. Evaluations of youth and adult programmes might have to include measurement revealing the enthusiasm, energy and youthful perspectives those young people brought to the activities. Mutual learning experienced by the two groups should also be studied. Most importantly, the idea of having young people as a source of reliable information has to be recognized (Murdock and Paterson 2002).

Moreover, communication and parenting skills training should be emphasized as one of the lifelong education programme initiatives. I agree with Stehlik's (2003) notion that parenting is a vocation and can provide a meaningful context and framework for lifelong learning. The scope of intergenerational programmes and strategies should be extended to include the middle-age parents with their teenage children (existing programmes are mainly for children, youths and the elderly). It is also worthwhile to promote the sharing of intergenerational learning experience among learning families.

Government Lifelong Education Policy

It is evident that the Hong Kong government has viewed lifelong learning only in narrowly economic terms, especially for the 1997 post-retrocession education policy. Kennedy (2004) recognized that there is political discourse behind the policies. Much money has been spent to retrain workers with skills that the government believed would help Hong Kong compete in the 'knowledge economy' or to quieten the public's concern over the high unemployment rate. It seems that the Hong Kong government has not learned even after making numerous

expensive mistakes. As suggested by Eng (2007 b), the Hong Kong government should focus on effective education, developing skills set such as knowledge, global perspective, language proficiency, innovation and creativity, which are needed to succeed in the knowledge society. Education reforms should aim at doing away with rote learning, putting less emphasis on examinations and teaching more liberal arts subjects (Eng, 2007a). The spirit of intergenerational learning should be promoted not only at home between parents and their children, but also between teachers and students at schools.

More vigorous evaluations and research on current lifelong education programmes will be needed for the government to become proactive, to better use its education funding and to formulate its future lifelong education policies. The roles of the government for lifelong education have to be reviewed to encourage other lifelong learning discourses rather than just solving economic and political problems. The learning needs of parents have to be acknowledged especially on technology and computer literacy. It is important to develop a lifelong learning and education framework and expand the perspectives to

include the personal and the social aspects of lifelong learning. There are major distinctions between education, training and learning. It will be desirable that family learning and intergenerational learning can become part of the lifelong learning initiatives in Hong Kong for the entire population. Hargreaves (2000) emphasized that in knowledge economies, people have to engage in lifelong learning for continual renewal of knowledge and skills thus we have to learn how to learn in more autonomous ways, in homes and workplaces, and not just in educational institutions.

It is the individual's responsibility to engage in lifelong learning to continuously update his knowledge and skills. The teenagers can serve as a potential knowledge source in the family for intergenerational learning and it does not require extra funding. I believe intergenerational family learning is a very economic and effective means of lifelong learning. Intergenerational family learning should be promoted and supported within a wider context of lifelong learning. The public's awareness of the importance and benefits of bi-directional intergenerational family learning has to be raised. I would also urge the

government to develop a lifelong learning strategy for the society and support building learning families in the communities. There is a large population out there in need of guidance and assistance for them to survive in a 'learning society'.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following are the summaries of the findings and answers to the seven research questions (refer to page 14). The results indicated that the participants and families involved in this study did engage in bi-directional intergenerational learning. Parents were learning from their teenage children as their children learning from them. The contents of intergenerational learning covered mostly information and communication technology, computer skills, trendy issues and values. Teenage children also learned from their parents on life views and experience, moral and values, manners, relationships, news and current issues or political stance.

The learning methodology differed between the X and Y generations. The X generation parents tended to learn from teachers, textbooks, memorizing book knowledge, following instructions and played a passive learner role. On the contrary, the Y generation was used to learn from doing projects and activities, trial and error and often from peers and through the Internet. They had been more exposed to

technology and computer skills earlier in life. The younger generation thus seemed to learn faster than their parents, probably due to the fact that the older generation had already developed strong mental reference models which were difficult to change or unlearn.

Both mothers and fathers played important roles for intergenerational family learning but their contribution varied according to individual expertise, interests, attitudes and personality. Mothers were considered more patient and less authoritative while face-saving was less of a problem for them to learn from the young.

Learning families seemed to demonstrate certain characteristics and the parents would possess certain attributes that facilitate intergenerational family learning. Parents were expected to be open-minded, easy going and less authoritative, treat the teenagers as friends and maintain regular conservations with them. They act as good role models when teaching values and morals. Most importantly, both generations should spend quality time together communicating and sharing ideas as well as developing common interest. Parents could

initiate learning by asking their teenage children questions or seeking help from them.

Most of the participants felt that intergenerational family learning was definitely related to lifelong learning. They believed that learning across generations was one form of lifelong learning and was mostly informal in nature. Parents' learning attitude greatly influenced the younger generation's attitude towards intergenerational family learning and lifelong learning. Moreover, if parents themselves were lifelong learners, their family would more likely to become a 'learning family'.

LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBLE ERRORS OF THIS STUDY

On Sampling

The participants of this study happened come from very similar socio-economical backgrounds. They were recruited by convenience sampling rather than by random selection. With this homogeneous population, the outcomes though were illuminating, might not be simply generalized to the entire local population. Even though, the results obtained were fairly representative of the middle class nuclear families of highly educated working parents with teenage children studying at schools.

Data Translation and Transcription

The primary data collected was in Cantonese for the narratives and interviews. Translation from Cantonese into English might create errors in language interpretation. It was sometimes difficult to find exact identical meaning or connotation for specific terms or expressions when they were translated from colloquial Cantonese to English. There could be occasional loss of meaning in the translation process.

When presenting the transcribed data in Chapter 4, the actual Chinese terminologies were retained in brackets when it was thought that the English translation or vocabulary could not represent the exact meaning and connotation of those words.

Language and Culture

As the questionnaire and transcripts were written in English, the participants were required to be competent both in the Chinese and the English languages. As they were bilingual and had received education under the British system, the participants presumably had already adopted an 'east meets west' culture in their families thus they did not come from typically traditional Chinese families.

DIRECTIONS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Knowing that narrative is the driving idea behind Weblogs while blogs help to connect people on a more personal informal level and encourage virtual conversations, it might be a good idea to collect anecdotes using the web platform so that teenagers could submit their intergenerational learning stories online. Through this, a much

larger number of participants might be recruited. Thus a narrative database of intergenerational learning events could be created and shared among interested parties. The drawback, however, is that the middle-age generation may not be able to contribute through this means if they are not yet blog or web users.

2. In order that the results obtained could be generalized, it is suggested that a larger sample which covers families from more heterogeneous socio-economic backgrounds, should be included. The intergenerational learning patterns and behaviour might not be the same as those found in this study if participants were coming from different family cultures and backgrounds.

3. It is worthwhile to review the teaching-learning relationship between school teachers and teenage students in this fast changing knowledge society. Knowledge ages rapidly and is liable to wear (Rampersad, 2002). It is therefore necessary for teachers to be open-minded enough to update their knowledge and also to learn from their students. This is another form of intergenerational

teaching and learning or knowledge sharing between teachers and students. The role of school teachers might have to evolve and change if teachers are to keep up with the changes and the challenges, and at the same time meet the students' ever changing learning demands.

4. It will be desirable for governments and communities to promote the concept and practice of bi-directional intergenerational learning in the family through various means. Future researches can be oriented to evaluate the effect and the impact of intergenerational learning. The outcomes might be measured in terms of improved parent-child relationship, wider knowledge base of parents, the change of learning and sharing attitude or better family culture, etc.

5. The knowledge of the brain function and development affects our understanding of adult learning (Hill, 2001:73) Future neurological researches can be carried out to study the neuro-flexibility of the ageing brain for new learning as the notion that the brain becomes less flexible for learning as one ages has been overturned and

ageing brains still perform an amazing job of rewiring (Hill, 2001:76). It is also worthwhile to study how our brain learns from electronic means and also how computer and technology affect the teenagers' prefrontal cortex development.

CONCLUDING   REMARKS

'The family is one of nature's masterpieces.' - George Santayana

In the 'knowledge economy' and 'learning society', we have to continuously engage in lifelong learning due to the fact that knowledge and skills have to be continually renewed and updated. It is important to recognize the horizontal as well as the vertical dimension of lifelong learning. We have to learn how to learn in more autonomous and self-directed ways, not merely in the educational institutions or at work, but also at home with our beloved family members. Learning within the family is so natural and enjoyable. Family life is the most basic part of our social life and learning journey.

As the study of intergenerational family learning is still at the very early stage of development, the findings of this particular study would certainly contribute to adding knowledge to the area of intergenerational (X$\leftrightarrow$ Y) as well as another dimension on lifelong learning. Hopefully this may stimulate other academic and lifelong learning practitioners to further exploration and building a theoretical framework for intergenerational learning, especially in the generations X$\leftrightarrow$ Y direction so that the benefits of this specific type of lifelong learning could be manifested and promoted.

Although there are not many materials published on the theoretical basis of 'learning family', 'family learning' or 'intergenerational learning' yet, we do actually practise family learning daily to various extents without realizing it. As Collins pointed out in the 'foreword' (Drucker, 2004:4), the important thing is to identify the 'future that has already happened' and to identify the 'changes that have already happened'. I suppose the important challenge for us is to recognize and exploit the changes that have already occurred and see them as opportunities. Through studying the intergenerational learning

phenomenon, particularly in the Generation Y$\rightarrow$ X direction, we may be able to exploit the vast learning opportunities among various generations. Intergenerational family learning helps build our intellectual as well as our cultural capital preparing us to face changes in the future. Lifelong learning implies recognizing the changes, accepting continuous change and changing with the changes. I would also like to support Friedman (2005:136) who stated that 'The future favours the prepared mind.' Are we prepared ourselves well enough to engage in intergenerational family learning - another form of lifelong learning?

Churchman (2005) reminded us that we are facing a problem of not knowing how we are going to assess values that are out there years from now for our future generations. We cannot be sure that what we believe is right currently will still hold true in the future. To face the uncertainties and complexities that our world brings, I think as parents we should learn to learn together with our younger generation, so as to develop a dynamic value system that is responsive to the changes. The World Bank's research also shows that it is when adults and children

learn hand in hand that lasting cultural change can be secured (Tuckett, 2004). Through mutual learning and intergeneration communication we can survive this information explosion age, balance conflicting world views, find orders among chaos and manage our lives in a meaningful way.

We must realize that we cannot live in the knowledge society with the same ways of thinking and practices that brought us here. Parents probably have to leave their comfort zones and envision a different form of education, with teaching and learning dedicated to the development of competences, creativity and sensitivities for ourselves as well as for other family members. We should purposefully design experience that is learning oriented, self-empowering, sustainable and evolutionary for us parents as well as the younger generation to make ours an ever-adaptable family.

As Henry Ford said, 'anyone who stops learning is old, whether twenty or eighty'. The greatest thing in life is to keep our mind young. I truly believe that staying with and learning from the younger

generation keeps our minds and hearts young. Learning is a lifelong process. Longevity is one of the greatest achievements of the twentieth century. By 2050, it is estimated that about one third of the world's population will be over 60 years of age and there is a global ageing phenomenon. The society has started to pay more attention to the needs of the older generation. Are their learning needs also addressed? It would be prudent if we can instill positive lifelong learning attitudes and have the concept of Y$\rightarrow$ X intergenerational family learning introduced early to our middle-aged population, so as to prepare them for a better quality of life entering their golden age, keeping up with the societal changes through learning from their younger generation.

> 終身學習 = Lifelong Learning
>
> 誇代學習 = Intergenerational Learning

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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Appendix 1: Focus Group Discussion Report

FOCUS GROUP RECORD
Time: April 2006
Attendance: all girls

Q1. What are the areas that your parents can learn from you?
English
Appreciate TV program
MP3
msn
computer knowledge
typing, internet, gaming
email, communication
dance (also learn from parents: dance ChaCha, guitar)
piano
Chinese typing
Cooking-pudding, cake, pancake 9learned from Home Economic lessons)

Q2. Learning atmosphere at home?
1. Very good
2. good
3. values 做人道理, table manners
4. learn from parents: food and nutrition, skin care, cooking skill
5. When and where? Market time, meal time, night time, shopping, watching TV

Q3. Are parents adopting continuing learning practice
Yes x 4

Father	Mother
x	Family relationship course
x	+
x	x
Master course	
x	x
Library, HKU	x
seminar	

Q4. Your understanding of LLL and family learning
LLL
Chinese term good 終身學習 (lifelong learning)
活到老學到老(learning while living)
more than formal learning, learning anytime anywhere eg daily skills, even manner
attending courses
不斷學習 (learning non stop)
trip, not necessary academics

<u>Family Learning</u>
Very important
Learning from parents 家教：做人, conducts, society, tradition, sometimes skills
More important learning from parents than to parents
Learning from each others
Relationship
Happening at own home

Q5. Learning at home at various age
<u>Preschool</u>
Skills learned from parents
Skills: table manner, manners, language & speech, rules & regulations
Conduct/Manner 品行
Life rules: honesty, manners, greeting
             Safety rules, life skills, brush teeth
             No soft drinks
*life skills all needed are learnt at preschool age

<u>Primary School </u>(learning at home)
Holding pencil, homework, academic
Sports-swim, biking, ball skills
Cooking
Cleaning
Girls- menstruation
品行+學業

<u>Teenage at home</u>
From mother:
choosing boyfriend criteria, dating
mahjong
cooking

From father:
Card games,
professional knowledge
financial information : stock market

From siblings
Academics
粗口 (discouraged by mom, both dad and brother+)

* less academic learning at this age

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

"Is the intergenerational learning taken place in the family unilateral or bilateral?"

Part A: For parents

Background information:

Sex:

Age：

Education background: Primary (   ) Secondary (   ) Tertiary (   )

Post-tertiary (   )

Years of formal education:

Formal courses taken/taking in last ten years:

Informal courses (e.g. interest class) taken/taking

Occupation:

Working experience/requirement:

Living with Grandparent(s)? Grandfather_____ Grandmother_____

                              Both_____No_____

Age/Sex of children:

Questionnaires

Instructions: Please answer the following questions based on your own experience and feelings.

You may elaborate on your answers if you wish.

Statements	Agree	Do not Agree	Can't decide
Parents enjoy full authority in the family			
My family is a 'learning family'			
Family members (between two generations) seldom share information and knowledge			
I am a 'lifelong learner'			
I think continuous learning is important for my family members			
I have learnt only from my superiors and teachers			

I find learning experience in the family happy			
Learning taking place in my family is always unilateral from older to younger generation			
My children are having much to learn from me at home			
I have something to learn from my children			
I do not always agree with the comments/behaviour of my children			
There exist generation gaps in the family			
Mother plays a more important role in intergenerational learning than father			

Select one option that best describes your situation

1. Learning culture/atmosphere in the family
    Rating: Excellent____
Good_____Average_____Weak_____Poor_____
Comments:

2. Generation Gaps = Knowledge gaps?
    Yes_____   No_____
Comments:

3. Major direction of learning taken place in the family
    Parent→ Child   Child→ Parent   Parent←→ Child
Comments:

<u>Story Telling about intergenerational learning</u>

Tell stories about 3 recent incidences when intergenerational learning has taken place among family members.

<u>Guiding questions</u>

1. How often do you learn from the younger generation at home?
2. What subjects or topics do you often discuss? (sports, music, entertainment)
3. How to encourage bilateral sharing of knowledge in your family? What are the requirements for both parties?
4. Do you feel any generation gaps among family members? What are they?
5. How do you think intergenerational learning can benefit you?
6. Recall the recent situation/ areas you teach/give important information to your child
7. Recall the time/ experience when you and your child learn together.
8. Do you think that learning taking place in your family is unilateral or bilateral?
9. Describe When, Where, What, Why and How intergenerational learning taken place
10. In which areas/subjects/topics do you think your child is superior to you?
11. Identify a few items/knowledge/skills that you think your child can teach you (e.g. use of MP3, sports…)
12. What are the difference in roles between father and mother in intergenerational learning?
13. Do you think there is a need for intergenerational learning? Why?

**"Is the intergenerational learning taken place in the family
unilateral or bilateral?"**

Part B: For Child/Youngster

Background information:

Sex :

Age :

Education: _____

Siblings (Sex/Age): _____

Living with Grandparent(s)? Grandfather_____ Grandmother_____

Both_____No_____

Questionnaire

Instructions: Please answer the following questions based on your own
experience and feelings.

You may elaborate on the answer if you want.

Statement	Agree	Do not Agree	Can't decide
Parents enjoy full authority in the family			
My family is a 'learning family'			
Family members(between 2 generations) seldom share information and knowledge			
I am a 'lifelong learner'			
I think continuous learning is important in my family			
I learn only from my school			
I find learning experience in the family happy			
Learning taken place in my family has been unilateral from older to younger generation			
My parents may have something to learn from me at home			

I do not have much to learn from my parents at home now			
I do not always agree with the comments/behaviour of my parents			
There are generation gaps in the family			
Mother plays a more important role in intergenerational learning than father			

Select one option that best describes your situation

1. Learning culture/atmosphere in the family

    Rating: Excellent____

Good_____Average_____Weak_____Poor_____

Comments:

2. Generation Gaps = Knowledge gaps?

    Yes_____   No_____

Comments:

3. Major direction of learning taken place in the family

    Parent→ Child   Child→ Parent   Parent←→ Child

Comments:

Story Telling about intergenerational learning

Tell stories about 3 recent incidences when intergenerational learning taken place among family members.

Guiding Questions

1. How often do you learn from the older generation at home now?

2. What subjects or topics do you often discuss? (sports, music, entertainment)

3. Recall the recent situation/ areas you teach/give important information to your parents

4. Recall the time/ experience when you and your parents learn together.

5. How to encourage bilateral sharing of knowledge in your family? What are the requirements for both parties?

6. Do you feel any generation gaps among family members? What are they?

7. How do you think family learning can benefit you?

8. Do you think that learning taking place in your family is unilateral or bilateral?

9. Describe When, Where, What, Why and How intergenerational learning takes place

10. In which areas/subjects/topics do you think you are superior to your parents?

11. Identify a few items/knowledge/skills that you think your parents do not possess which you can teach them (e.g. use of MP3, sports…)

12. What are the difference in roles between father and mother in intergenerational learning?

13. Do you think there is a need for intergenerational learning? Why?

For families with children living with grandparents,

1. Describe the learning/idea sharing interaction between you and your grandparents

2. It there any difference from interaction with your parents? What is the difference?

Note: Possible areas for intergenerational learning

ICT: computer usage, software, internet surfing, information search, information resource management

Technology: use of electronic devices and appliances such as MP3, DVD, PDA

Culture: slang, language evolution, use of Putonghua in HK, entertainment e.g. songs, movies, animation films, fashion, youth culture: attitude and values change, manners

Appendix 3: Quiz

Name   :

Age   :

Sex   :

PART A

From SCMP Youth Post Feb 9, 2006

Word/symbol	Do you know? Yes ✓	Answer	Remarks
H5N1			
MTR			
MTV			
UK			
US			
DVD			
Mcdull			
SAR			
SCMP			
NBA			
ICAC			
ETV			
HKU			
CEO			
RTHK			
CD			
MD			
Legco			
FBI			
GPO Box			
NGO			
UN			
CLP			
ESPN			
news@scmp.com			

Part B

Word/symbol	Do you know? Yes ✓	Answer	Remarks
Wiki			
PDA			
MP3			
PSP			
Blog			
MSN			
TVB			
VHS			
VCR			
AI			
88			
be4			
ttyl			
U2			
SARS			
KFC			
ipod			
.doc			
©			

<u>**Appendix 4: Informed Consent**</u>

University of Nottingham
Doctor of Education (Lifelong Education) Program
Informed Consent Form

TITLE OF STUDY: Is Intergenerational Learning taking place in the Family Unilateral or Bilateral?
NAME OF RESEARCHER : Ms. Cherri HO Chui Yee
FACULTY SUPERVISOR   : Dr. Chris Atkin

> *Invitation*:
> *You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to take part in it. If you have any questions, please ask.*

PURPOSE OF STUDY:

The objectives of this study are to investigate the extent of intergenerational learning taking place in the family. It aims to identify the characteristics of teaching and learning behaviour, subjects learned and the learning culture in the family. The family members' perception and attitude towards 'lifelong learning' and 'learning family' will be explored.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE RESEARCH

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to do a questionnaire and attend an individual interview. Your participation will last for about an hour. A convenient time will be scheduled for you. This interview will be conducted in a venue of your choice. Research will be conducted at mutually convenient time. Efforts will be made to minimize disruption to schedules or burden on the participants. You and your child/parent will be interviewed separately. With selected cases and upon your consent a home visit/meeting will be conducted to observe how parents learn to do a new task from their children.

USE OF INFORMATION

Data and information collected is purely for the purpose of this research project. The results may be used for teaching, research, publications or

presentations at conferences. If your individual results are discussed, your identity will be protected by using a pseudonym. Your name or other identifying information will not be disclosed.

POTENTIAL RISKS OF RESEARCH

There are no known risks to you from being involved in this research other than what you would encounter in daily life. Your participation in this study will not cause any physical nor emotional risk to you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF RESEARCH

There will not be direct benefits to you by your participation in this study. There are possible benefits to society in terms of advancement of knowledge. Your participation may aid in our understanding of intergenerational learning and identifying the means to facilitate lifelong learning in the family.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Results will be reported in anonymised form.

The activities are to be audio- or videotaped. The subject has the right to review/edit the tapes. The records will only be accessible to the researcher. They will be kept for seven years and then erased. Data will be kept in a safe and secure location by the researcher.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. If you withdraw, no more data will be collected from you. The researcher may then ask if the data already collected in the study can be used. Deciding not to be in this study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the researcher.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

If at any time you wish to stop the interview, you can tell the interviewer not to continue. You are free to choose not to answer particular questions if you do not want to. You may stay in the study

even if you skip some of the questions. You may ask that the tape recorder (video recorder) be turned off at any point during the research activities. Participants have the right to access to any data kept on them. The dignity and opinions of the participants is respected at all times.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Your participation will involve no cost to you. Also you will not be paid for your participation in this study.

IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHERS

The researcher is a third year student of the Doctor of Education (Lifelong Education) programme of the University of Nottingham. She is a part-time visiting lecturer at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher at 94320835 or e-mail address suncherr@netvigator.com or Dr. Chris Atkin, Faculty Supervisor at chris.atkin@nottingham.ac.uk (Tel: 44(0)115-951-3041) or Dr. Andrew Hobson, Research Ethics Co-coordinator at andrew.hobson@nottingham.ac.uk (Tel: 44(0)115-951-4417)

STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

As a volunteer participant in the above mentioned research, I understand the procedures and conditions of my participation described above. I understand that I will be interviewed and asked about my teaching and learning experience in the family. I will take part in a questionnaire survey which takes about 30 minutes to complete. The information I provide will be used exclusively for this project and will in no way be associated with my name, address, or any other identifiable information.

By signing below, I state that I have read this consent form in its entirety and that all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time and that my participation or lack of participation will in no way affect me in any way. I hereby give permission for audio or video tape recording of me to be used in scientific publications or presentations. I have been given a copy of this form.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

_____   _____

Name of Subject   Signature of subject

Date

_____   _____

Name of Guardian (if applicable)   Signature of Guardian

Date

(Note: Subjects under 16 years of age require the signature from their guardian)

RESEARCHER CERTIFICATE CLAUSE

My signature certifies that all the elements of informed consent described on this consent form have been explained fully to the subject. In my judgement, the participant possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research and is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to participate.

_____   _____

Signature of Researcher: Date:

Appendix 5: Audio Record Data Transcription Template

AUDIO RECORD

Date   :

Reference   :

Keys:

LLL : Lifelong Learning

LF   : Learning Family

FL   : Family learning

OG   : Older Generation (Parents)

YG   : Younger Generation (Teenagers)

IGL   : Intergenerational Learning

Background	
Story 1	
Story 2	
Story 3	
Lifelong learning	
Learning family	
Learning culture	
Learning methodology	
Mom & dad roles	

The End