

Quantitative and Qualitative Research in Education: The Educational Research Journal

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In a climate of research assessment exercises and publication being crucial in institutional funding and individual performance appraisal in Hong Kong, it is important that the Educational Research Journal (ERJ) should maintain its position as a leading force in educational research and practice. It has done so in the past, and will continue to do so by presenting valuable research reports, balancing its particular “personality” style with new visions and perspectives in this changing educational context. The changes are evident as one considers the papers submitted to the journal for publication, and their subsequent review and editorial treatment. This evolutionary eclecticism, which involves both content and methodology, is essential as the readers of the ERJ range across participants in education in roles of students, teachers, providers and researchers.

One obvious change is the increasing complexity and specificity of questions addressed by current research studies in education, as each new investigation has to take into account the results and implications of those that precede it. In line with this conceptual complexity, complex research designs and statistical models are now often required to account for the accumulated knowledge about a phenomenon while addressing novel and alternative questions.

School Environment and Student Performance A Multi-level Analysis

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The purpose of this study was to employ the multi-level statistical model to investigate the relationship of the school social environment to the performance of students.

The school environment was conceptualized into five aspects: instructional, structural, human, political, and cultural. The student performance was assessed in terms of learning efficacy and the Chinese, English and Mathematics achievements in the Hong Kong Attainment Test.

The study was a cross-sectional survey, involving 61 aided primary schools, 1407 teachers, and 4715 students in Hong Kong. There were two levels of analysis – school

environment variables at the school level, and the student performance at the individual level.

The correlation analysis and one-way ANOVA revealed that some components of the school environment are related to certain school contextual factors. The multi-level analysis revealed that the contribution of environmental factors such as the caring and support factors, formalization factor, and pupil control factor to students' Chinese, English, and Mathematics achievement cannot be ignored.

Effects of Cooperative Learning and Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) on the Performance of Cloze Procedure

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This study attempts to examine the effectiveness of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and cooperative learning in the performance of cloze procedure. The CALL and cooperative learning are compared different learning conditions – (1) individualistic learning with worksheets, (2) individualistic learning with the computer, (3) cooperative learning with worksheets, and (4) cooperative learning with the computer – and underwent cloze procedure practices on two text structures – narrative and expository. An immediate post-test and a delayed retention test were given respectively.

No significant result was found on the post-test scores among all groups. However, in the retention test, it was found that the cooperative learning group performed significantly better than the individualistic learning group, and the computer group out-performed significantly those with worksheets in the individualistic learning group. Implications of these results were discussed.

Should We Start Teaching English at Primary Four? An Examination of Neurolinguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspectives on English Language Teaching

Eva Fung-kuen Lai

This paper reviews the theoretical background for the alternative in English language teaching proposed in the Education Commission Report of the Working Group on Language Proficiency. First, the theoretical constructs of Cummins' Common

Underlying Proficiency (CUP) model are examined. Two studies designed to test the CUP model are reported and findings are discussed with reference to the Hong Kong situation. Second, the Critical Period Hypothesis is described. Though there is no support for this hypothesis, the elements of time-on-task and cognitive maturity are brought up and weighted in the local context. Third, the sociolinguistic perspective of English teaching is investigated through two surveys, one with junior secondary students as subjects and the other with English teachers as subjects. Having considered all the research findings relating to age for English to be taught as a foreign language, it is suggested that English teaching be started early rather than late in Hong Kong. To improve on the current situation, the English teaching practice should be examined and an effective and enjoyable curriculum should be designed for the primary children.

Teacher Turnover and Turnover Intentions in Hong Kong Aided Secondary Schools

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This study is divided into two parts. The first part examined the teacher turnover situation in Hong Kong secondary schools from 1989 to 1992. The data, taken from Education Department and HK Subsidized Secondary School Council, showed that while there was a slight reduction of turnover and a large decline in the number of teachers changing schools in the period under study, the wastage rate of teachers remained at the same high level.

The second part involved a study of teachers' turnover intentions. This study adapted the model developed by Mobley (1982) and Willimans (1986) with job attitude acting as a moderator between turnover intention and individual and organizational characteristics. The intention was to understand how individual and possibly organizational factors caused the turnover intention of teachers. A total of 40 schools with over 600 teachers took part in the study. Logistic regressions were used to study the fitness of model. Results showed that teachers with less job satisfaction, who did not choose teaching as their first career and who had frequently changed schools had stronger intention to resign. Implications for school administration are discussed.

Assessing Student Problem Behaviors in Hong Kong: The Conners Teacher Rating Scale

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Two hundred and seven secondary school students were rated by six teachers on the frequency of student problem behaviors, student participation, and student attitudes toward authority using the Connors Teacher Rating Scale (CTRS). It was found that behaviors indicating a lack of student involvement were rated as most common, followed by various minor misbehaviors and uncooperative attitudes. While there were few age group differences on the frequency of occurrence of these problem behaviors, notable gender differences on certain specific problem behaviors were found. In general, student problem behaviors could be conceptualized in terms of five dimensions: General Misbehaviors, Problems in Interpersonal Relations, Uncooperative Attitudes, Mood Problems, and Lack of Involvement. These results were consistent with the free responses on common problem behaviors by another group of 69 secondary school teachers. The sound psychometric properties of the CTRS in this cultural context suggested the viability of its use in future research on student problem behaviors in Hong Kong.

How So Hong Kong Hospital-Based Student Nurses Learn?

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The approaches to learning of 86 first year and 104 third Hong Kong General Nursing students were assessed by a modified version of the Study Process Questionnaire (SPQ; Biggs, 1987). The SPQ was found to have adequate scale internal consistency reliability estimates and factor structure supporting within-construct validity for this sample. The responses to the SPQ indicated that the student nurses may become less deep – and achievement-oriented as they progress through their studies. However, the student nurses associated success in their course to a deep level approach and tended to report learning strategies at least as deep as other medical science students in Hong Kong.

Relocation of Secondary Schools from the Urban Area: The Hong Kong Experience

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The development of new towns around a city will lead to reduction of population in the city which will in turn lead to the over-supply of school places inside the city. Beside closure of schools, little has been reported in research literature about how to handle the problem. To deal with this problem, the Hong Kong Government has developed a program to relocate the secondary schools from the urban area. There are a total of 49 secondary schools involved in this program. These schools have been or will be moving their own school from the old campus which is located in a district that had an over-supply of school places to a new campus which is located in district that has not enough school places. Besides the traditional practice of school relocation, the Hong Kong Government introduces another way by phasing out the old campus and phasing in the new campus in several years' time. This article discusses the background of the school relocation and the problems generated in detail. It would be a good lesson for ministries of education in other countries if they encounter similar problems in the future.

香港中國語文課本編寫組的文體分類研究

謝錫金

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中學中國語文科課程綱要指定香港中學生要學六種文體，並要辨認不同文章體裁，寫作課程也清楚列明不同文體的練習比例。在公開試方面，會考亦要求學生能辨別和寫作不同體裁的文章。可見文體分類與課程及考試有密切的關係。本研究希望探究香港中學中國語文科課本的文體分類情況。研究對象是 10 個出版社的編寫組。結果顯示每一篇範文平均有 3.8 個編寫組有不同的分類。在 128 篇範文裡，只有 4 篇有一致的分類。這些均顯示現時文體分類的標準並不統一，也不穩定，對學生學習構成一定的困難。中國語文科課程和會考建基於文體架構的有關部份，應要重新檢討和改善。

學校組織變革的研究路向及策略

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學校組織變革已成為目前教育改革的重要課題，本文從探討與學校組織變革的理

念，進而討論研究上的方向及可行的策略，希望對變革的推行和研究有點幫助。本文提出的組織變革動力模式，強調有關研究除應由微觀角度去解學校成員在認知、情意及行為上的改變外，亦需從宏觀的角度去量度外顯的組織科技變革及內隱的組織文化變革。在研究方法和探究途徑方面，從單向的線性思維轉向多的矩陣思維：朝整合質與量兩種典範的方向進行。

Dubious Benefits of Exposure to a British Environment on Hong Kong Teachers' English Ability" Comment on Dolan (1994)

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Dolan (1994) compared the English ability of three groups of Hong Kong (HK) teachers [and a group of British (UK) students] who were attending university courses in UK. Among other things, he concluded that there was general improvement in language proficiency with British exposure. In this article, Dolan's analyses were re-examined. It was found that UK exposure might lead to an increase in HK teachers' specific UK knowledge. However, contrary to Dolan's conclusion, reanalysis showed that HK teacher's general English proficiency had not improved even after nine months of exposure. The benefits of UK exposure were unsubstantiated and dubious.