

## **Vision, Task, and Hope" The Hopng Kong Education Reform Movement in the 21st Century**

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The Hong Kong education reform movement in discussed in light of our shared vision, our past failed attempts, the tasks ahead. and our hope in talent development for all learners. It is believed that the issues of the centrality of the learner, equity, excellence, multiple talents, and the learning society bear directly on our reform measures. An evolutionary approach that maximizes success is suggested, ensuring the collaboration among learners, practitioners in schools, parents and other stakeholders, the respect for diversity and choice, the equitable pursuit of excellence, the programming for talent development for all students, and the promotion of educational research that informs practice.

*Key words: education reform; talent development; Hong Kong*

## **Classroom Language Use in Hong Kong's English-Medium Secondary Schools**

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In recent years the long-standing debate over the medium of instruction (MOI) in Hong Kong's Secondary schools has been reinvigorated by the introduction of a controversial language policy which requires the majority of the territory's schools to adopt Chinese as the teaching medium. Under the new policy, only 114 schools are permitted to continue-teaching in English. The government's decision to force most English-medium schools to switch to Chinese while retaining an "elite" English-medium stream has been criticised for being discriminatory and divisive. Since the policy was announced, much attention has been given to the changes which the former English-medium schools will need to undergo in order to adapt to Chinese-medium instruction. However, much less attention has been paid to the implications of the policy for the schools which will retain English as the MOI. The study reported in this article, which investigated language use in the "new" English-medium stream, was designed to find out the extent to which these schools' MOI policy in fact translated into classroom practice in the years immediately preceding the introduction of the new policy.

*Key words: language policy; language in education; medium of instruction*

### **A Comparative Study of Relay Thinking Activities in Degree and Secondary Level Students**

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“Relay thinking” was first piloted at two Hong Kong tertiary institutions, with students required to generate ideas through relay thinking in order to solve problems. To explore applicability and compare the possibilities and limitations of relay thinking at different levels, a comparative study was carried out. In the study, two groups of secondary level design and technology students, along with two groups of university industrial design students, were selected to use relay thinking in generating design ideas to solve a problem. The study did not aim at problem solution, but simply at the experience of relay thinking. In this paper, the idea behind relay thinking is briefly described. The discussion focuses on three major aspects: (a) the students’ experience, (b) the settings and requirements of the relay thinking activities, and (c) the students’ performance. The study indicates that relay thinking is suitable for both levels, and that it provides an alternative individual and group thinking experience for students, though modifications to the thinking activities the two levels are necessary, and there are different problem requirements.

*Key words: relay thinking; degree level; secondary level*

### **Analyzing the Hong Kong Junior Secondary Science Syllabus Using the Concept of Curriculum Orientations**

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This article reports a critical examination of the design of the new junior secondary science curriculum in Hong Kong. Five orientations to science curriculum are identified and discussed: academic, cognitive processes, society-centered, humanistic, and technological. Arguments for integrating all curriculum orientations within a science curriculum are presented. Using the five curriculum orientations as analytical tools, the content of the new junior secondary science syllabus designed by the Curriculum Development Council (1998) is

examined. The analysis covers the curriculum intentions, curriculum content and organization, teaching methods, learning activities, and instructional assessment. The results show that the new syllabus is dominated by the academic and cognitive processes orientations but neglects the humanistic, society-centered, and technological orientations. Directions for improving the design of the science curriculum are suggested.

Key words: curriculum design; curriculum orientations; science education

### **Gender Equity in the Context of Education in Hong Kong**

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This paper discusses current research related to gender equity in Hong Kong's educational system, at the classroom and administrative levels as well as in teacher education. Eastern and Western philosophies of sexual difference are presented in a historical perspective as a backdrop for current attitudes. Factors associated with gender imbalance are explored. Equal access to technology education and the effects of the recent influx of immigrant youth from the Chinese Mainland on gender equity in Hong Kong schools are also considered.

*Key words: gender equity; teacher education; education reform*

### **Quality Teaching and Learning: A Response to Social, Political and Technological Change in an Australian Context**

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The paper firstly outlines developments in higher education in Australia since the 1960s. In doing so it identifies and describes some of the significant shifts evident in Australian higher education today, both in terms of ideological and functional changes. In particular, the notion of quality is being questioned and reconstructed to fit the market economy models of quality teaching and learning. The authors then reflect on these changes and propose three criteria for quality teaching and learning for the current times. Having provided a framework for changes in higher education, the paper adopts a case study approach to closely examine the Faculty of Education at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to see how it addresses the three identified criteria for quality teaching and learning committees, monitoring through the use of instruments such as course evaluation questionnaires, and setting performance indicators, are discussed. Whilst the focus of the paper is on changes evidenced in Australian higher education quality, is part of the global emphasis on economic rationalization, thus the paper has relevance beyond the Australian context.

*Key words: higher education; teaching and learning; quality*

### **Australian and Filipino Students' Approaches to Learning, Conceptions of Learning, and Learner Self-Concepts: A Cross-Cultural Comparison**

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This study investigated cross-cultural differences in approaches to learning, conceptions of learning and learner self-concepts. Three groups of secondary students participated in the study: Australian students attending school in Australia, Filipino students studying in Australia and Filipino students attending school in the Philippines. Few cultural differences

were found when the correlations between the dependent variables were compared for the three groups. However, significant differences were found between most of the dependent variables particularly for the Australian and Filipino students.

*Key words: learning; cross-cultural; learner self-concept*

### **Bringing Narrative Inquiry to School Reform**

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Research on the massive, sustained, efforts to reform schools in North America and elsewhere shows dismal results. Educational systems are remarkably resilient and resist change initiatives. The three main theoretical approaches to school reform – the grand schemes approach, the individual school-based approach, and an approach that holds that change cannot occur – fail for four reasons. They fail to recognize: (1) that school reform is a complex practice/theory social process in which undirected change is inevitable, (2) that schools and their participants have narrative histories, (3) that school reform is an epistemological matter that involves issues of practitioner knowledge, and (4) that the educational reform literature dates to the last century. We draw on two decades of data on the study of change in one inner-city school. Rather than analyzing this data in terms of the accepted theories of school change, we develop an historical, narrative, understanding of school change. We critique the existing literature of school reform, offer an interpretation of one aspect of the dramatic changes that have occurred in Bay Street School, and give suggestions for conceptualizing school from a narrative perspective.

*Key words: school reform; narrative inquiry; change*