

### **Comparative Education in a Microcosm: Diversity and Evolution of Secondary School Curricula in Macau**

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Because of the extreme non-interventionist philosophy of the Macau government, schools in Macau have developed with strong autonomy and almost no coordination. This makes a fascinating context for a study of comparative education, for almost every school is a system unto itself. Although the government is now making efforts to improve liaison, it is not yet possible to refer to a single Macau education system. This paper exposes differences between the schools. To permit some depth, it focuses on the secondary level and on mathematics curriculum. Although at first sight mathematics might appear a universal subject with commonalities in education systems throughout the world, deeper analysis reveals a wide array of approaches and philosophies. On a methodological note, the paper illustrates the value of internal (as opposed to international) comparative education as a field of study.

### **Words that Matter in Science: A Study of Hong Kong Students' Comprehension of Non-technical Words in Science**

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This paper reports on an investigation into Hong Kong students' comprehension of 45 non-technical words commonly used in science. A total of 4644 Secondary 4, 5 and 6 students in a randomized sample of 46 schools, stratified by school type and area, participated in the study. The results showed that many students did not correctly comprehend a large proportion of the words, confused them with words that were phonetically or graphologically similar and even took them for their antonyms. Such poor performance raises doubts as to whether the majority of Hong Kong students have attained a 'threshold level' of competence in English to benefit from learning science in English.

### **Learning and Its implications for Teaching: Two Case Studies from Canadian and Hong Kong Schools**

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Do Hong Kong students dislike innovations and want to be taught? Traditional opinions suggest that they do, although there is accumulating evidence to show that students in Anglo-Chinese schools are not particularly predisposed to that expository, didactic mode of teaching. Most of them do like innovations. They prefer their classrooms to be different from what they are, and they should learn much better under innovative than under expository teaching. In the present paper, the author, with two case studies put forward, attempted to show that prior knowledge and learning environment in fact have a sound effect on the learning approach. The results showed that showed that before discussion, students in Hong Kong tended to be more “surface” in their learning strategies as compared to their Canadian counterparts. With the introduction of innovative measures of teaching into the Hong Kong classrooms, it was possible to change students’ conception from a lower ordered to a higher ordered one. This throws light on local educators in the teaching and learning of complicated scientific concepts.

**Towards a Taxonomy of Teacher Thinking**

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The suitability of six established taxonomies of teacher thinking were considered for use in analyzing the interview protocols of the planning practices of four expert and four novice teachers of Chemistry in Hong Kong Secondary schools. Each was found to be wanting for our purposes either because they required more specialized probing than provided by our interview material or they proved to lack ecological validity in terms of discriminating between the cognitions of the expert and novice teachers. A Taxonomy of Teacher Thinking (TOTT) was then developed to classify the structural complexity of the teachers’ thinking. Evidence is provided of the reliability and ecological validity of TOTT. We suggest that this taxonomy may be of value to other researchers as it would seem to be suitable for analyzing evidence of teacher thinking from a range of sources.

**Adult Views on Learning and Development In Hong Kong Preschool Children**

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The present study compares the views of 198 parents and 51 teachers of a sample of 4-year-old children on early learning and development and their reciprocal roles in promoting such learning. Generally parents and teachers have similar rankings for eight overall categories of early learning and development. The major difference is for preacademics, that parents rank as the most important category and teachers rank as amongst the least important. Mother's occupation was the only family background variable to affect the rankings. Comparisons between parents and teachers by type of preschool and locality indicate a similar pattern to the overall sample. Moreover, parents and teachers agree that teachers are primarily responsible for preacademics and self-expression, parents for self-sufficiency and social skills with adults, and both groups hold joint responsibility for language and social skills with peers. Neither group takes primary responsibility for promoting motor-physical and self-assessment skills.

### **Early Childhood Training in Hong Kong**

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This paper reports on a section of a large project founded by the Hong Kong Council of Early Childhood Education and Services (CECES) which investigated early childhood education and training in Hong Kong. What are presented in this paper is the results of a survey of 1529 kindergarten and child care workers who responded to a survey questionnaire. Given current community concern about the inadequacy of training for the early childhood workforce respondents were asked to reply to questions about what the minimum length of training should be, should be included in the training curriculum, what should the next level of training be after the basic course, were respondents interested in completing further training, should credit be given for previous training, identification of overlap in training courses, overall satisfaction with career opportunities. The paper presents these results and discusses some implications of the survey findings for the early childhood workforce in Hong Kong.

### **Student-Teacher Relationship: The Student Perspective**

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The student perspective on student-teacher relationship was assessed in a survey of 204 secondary school students. While the general student-teacher relationship was generally regarded to be moderate to good in schools, few students sought help from teachers on nonacademic matters, and few reported that in addition to knowledge and skills in teaching, approachability, fairness, and caring attitude of teachers contributed to a positive student-teacher relationship. Implications of these results for defining and assessing teacher effectiveness were discussed.

### **An Ethnographic Study of Coping Strategies among Chinese College Students in Beijing**

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The present article discusses the patterns of coping strategies among a group of college students in Beijing. Specially designed questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data for the study. Results indicated that to cope with stress in their academic underachievement, emotional frustrations, interpersonal conflicts and others, the Chinese college students used a variety of strategies, including culturally appropriate ones such as self-reflection, endurance, self-control, Ah-Qism, take-it-easy/let-happen-what-may. The practical implications of the strategies are explored in relation to the current social and political realities in China. Additionally, the experiential and psychosocial significance of the culturally appropriate coping strategies are analyzed in terms of the Confucian ethics of self-cultivation and the Taoist ethics of self-transcendence. The analyses demonstrate that the coping strategies foster a sense of enlightened awareness of the dynamics of conflicts in the mundane world and that attainment of inner harmony “he” constitutes the cultural protocol for coping with stress in Chinese society. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications of the present study on further researches on the issue

being explored.

### **The Job Characteristics of Secondary School Teachers**

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This study aimed to investigate the job characteristics of Hong Kong secondary school teachers. Teachers' work was classified into six categories: teaching, extracurricular activity, guidance, discipline, administration and miscellaneous affairs. The diversity in teachers' time allocation and concern with these job categories was observed. In terms of task identity, task significance, skill variety, autonomy and feedback, the motivating potential of teachers' job categories was assessed. Among the six categories, teaching duty was found to have the greatest motivating potential. However, the existence of the other five categories in teachers' work seems to have a reducing effect on the overall motivating potential. Furthermore, teachers' job characteristics were found strongly related to affective outcomes in teachers such as job satisfaction, internal motivation, intention to change schools, and intention to change jobs. Teachers' personal growth need and affective outcomes. The findings supported the validity of Hackman and Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Theory in the context of Hong Kong secondary schools. Implications for research and administration were also discussed.

### **為何需要結構方程模式及如何建立潛伏變項？**

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結構方程(SEM)已成多變量分析的重要技巧，本文檢視 SEM 較傳統分析優越之處，並討論如何用單指標變項、項目對(或小組)及單同源分子測量模式去建立潛伏變項；此外亦簡略探討偏態序級量表、最少樣本數目及吻合指數等課題。