

New Frontiers in Hong Kong Education: Perspectives Across Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education

This symposium brings together five studies examining Hong Kong education from early childhood to higher education. It explores innovation in pedagogy, learner development, and institutional transformation in response to contemporary challenges, including technological advancement, interdisciplinary learning, and evolving learner needs.

In the first presentation, Sum Kwing Cheung (The Education University of Hong Kong) examines how structured parental support influences early mathematics and science learning. The study evaluated a 16-session home-based STEM program for kindergarten children under three conditions: (1) activities without prompts, (2) prompts providing discussion topics and vocabulary, and (3) prompts including topics, vocabulary, and guiding questions. Participants included over 80 families, with pre- and post-intervention data from child assessments and parent questionnaires. No significant effects were found for mathematics knowledge. Gains in science knowledge were more evident at higher levels of parental autonomy support, with a significant effect observed in the condition with the most detailed prompts, highlighting the importance of both program design and parental interaction.

In the second presentation, Alan C. K. Cheung (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) examines Project GIFT, a pioneering gifted education program in Hong Kong designed to enhance students' psychosocial competences across two tiers: Level 1 for general students and Level 2 for high-ability students. Using a client satisfaction approach, the study investigated primary and secondary students' subjective perceptions of the program, instructors, and perceived benefits. A total of 3,971 Grade 3 to Grade 9 students completed a subjective outcome evaluation measure after program completion. We assessed the validity and reliability of the tool and analyzed participants' response profiles using structural equation modeling and Mann-Whitney tests. Results supported the factorial, convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related validities of the assessment tool for both Level 1 and Level 2. Students generally reported favorable perceptions of program quality, benefits, and implementer performance. Consistent with expectations, Level 2 participants showed more favorable perceptions than Level 1 participants, reinforcing Project GIFT's effectiveness for talent development.

In the third presentation, Chak Pong Gordon Tsui (The University of Hong Kong) discusses subjectivity cultivation in global interdisciplinary higher education. Symbolizing diverse disciplinary and socio-cultural perspectives, global interdisciplinary higher education provides an opportunity for learners to experience beyond their disciplinary and socio-cultural understanding. However, without inputting their own meaning in this experience, learners remain objects in this opportunity. The presenter, one undergraduate interdisciplinary course tutor, shares how facilitation and co-learning, instead of "teaching", cultivate students' subjectivity. Additionally, a space for everyone (including "teachers") to input their meaning (such as values and experiences) on various disciplinary and socio-cultural issues allows all stakeholders to become subjects in this course. A facilitation method (Online Forum) for such subjectivity cultivation in this course will be illustrated. The presentation concludes by sharing the limitations and recommendations of this facilitation to enhance subjectivity cultivation in interdisciplinary education.

In the fourth presentation, Tracy X. P. Zou (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) examines the increasing adoption of generative AI (GenAI) in Hong Kong universities as part of a

broader global trend. Prior research shows that while some students critically evaluate GenAI outputs, others accept them uncritically, and some express concerns about loss of originality or overreliance. Against this backdrop, this phenomenographic study draws on semi-structured interviews with 53 Hong Kong university students to examine their different approaches to GenAI and how these are formed. Preliminary findings identify four approaches: Using GenAI instrumentally to improve human work; modifying GenAI outputs; integrating GenAI inputs with human work; and prompting and directing GenAI for collaborative work. Intentional avoidance also emerged as a distinct approach. Students' focus on task completion versus learning, together with their perceptions of GenAI as an emerging technology, helped shape these approaches. The study contributes to discussions on fostering responsible and critical engagement with GenAI.

In the fifth presentation, Hei-hang Hayes Tang (The Education University of Hong Kong) discusses boundary-crossing as innovation in higher education. While entrepreneurial university literature has outlined global templates, archetypes, and typologies, it largely portrays universities as responsive actors. Far less attention has been paid to their role as proactive agents exercising organisational actorhood and strategic agency through negotiation of competing institutional logics and university identities. This study addresses the research gap by examining boundary-crossing innovations using abductive analysis and qualitative coding, identifying 17 key dimensions of institutional action. Key empirical findings reveal more convergence than divergence in how these universities proactively position themselves in knowledge societies. The critical paradox is that while pursuing academic entrepreneurialism rooted in novelty, differentiation, and creative disruption, they exhibit institutional homogenisation through path dependence, organisational learning, and legitimacy-seeking. This institutional homogenisation undermines the innovative distinctiveness that entrepreneurialism champions, with profound and long-term implications for global innovation systems.

Together, the presentations provide an integrative perspective on educational change in Hong Kong, highlighting innovation across levels and emphasizing learner agency, critical engagement, and adaptability in navigating local and global developments.