

**WORLD'S EDUCATIONAL ISSUES, POLICIES AND  
RESEARCH IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:  
HONG KONG PERSPECTIVE**

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The world is becoming more connected and dependent on shared human resources in the area of education, the challenge is to leverage what we have learned in a nation/region to improve education around the globe.

The transformation of the world's economy is influencing our education, as it is suggested by Astiz, Wiseman, & Baker (2002) that "operate in conjunction with the neoliberal policies creating conditions necessary for state restructuring of education on a global scale and then to transform the shape of education and how national school systems operate". Brown, Lauder, and Ashton (2008), and Spring (2008) also state that processes of economic globalisation may be only successful if backed up by processes of educational development, as education is critical for future economic progress.

Hong Kong, situated at the southern end of China, is seen as a regional education hub which connects the main land, the Asia Pacific region, and beyond. The major challenges and issues that the HKERA is facing in the past years and in the coming years include: 1) playing of an active role in regional and international networks, 2) taking account of globalisation processes in education policy and education research, and 3) rethinking of the currently prevailing variations in classroom instructions from the perspective of globalisation.

In Hong Kong, some major educational changes during the past number of years were highlighted in the Policy Address documents. The education policies in the 2009-2010 Policy Address included

education services as one of the six industries for economic development which is the priority of Hong Kong (paragraph 26-30). The education services involved internationalisation, diversification, and formulating a long-term strategy. The 2010-2011 Policy Address reiterated that it is our established policy to promote national education (paragraph 158-162). The 2011-2012 Policy Address stated that

“Education not only enhances the quality and competitiveness of our population, but also promotes social mobility. The Government has allocated substantial additional resources to improve the quality and quantity of education. We have provided 12 years of free education, extended subsidies to pre-school education, progressively implemented small-class teaching, introduced a new academic structure for senior secondary and university, expanded tertiary education and encouraged tertiary institutions to raise teaching and research standards. We have also opened up multiple study pathways for young people” (paragraph 113).

Other policies included “supporting students with special education needs” (paragraph 117) and “developing electronic textbooks” (paragraph 120-212).

In the past few years, the HKERA has organised several symposia and meetings in collaboration with universities, associations and centers to discuss different educational issues related to worldwide, the Asia Pacific, Greater China, and local perspectives. Those related to worldwide perspectives were

“Addressing student learning diversity”;  
“Managing human capital in world cities: Education reform, nurturing talent and student learning in a globalizing world”;  
“Celebrating quality self-directed learning and assessment”; and  
“New developments in assessment for the 21st century”.

Those related to the Asia Pacific regions were

“Transnational higher education and student mobility in East Asia”;  
“The search for new university governance in Asia: Incorporation, corporatisation and new restructuring strategies”;  
“Issues for Asian universities: Challenges and prospects”; and  
“Positioning universities in globalized world: Changing governance and coping strategies in Asia”.

Those related to Greater China were

“Sport medicine, rehabilitation and exercise science”; and  
“The quest for regional hub of education in Hong Kong: Challenges and opportunities for deep cooperation in Greater China”.

Local issues included

“Dialogue between the university and school: general education and student learning”;  
“From General Studies to Liberal Studies”; and “The development of gifted education in Hong Kong”.

In the coming years, to think from the perspective of globalisation, we may have to focus more on the leadership for educational development in various aspects. On one hand, we can work towards the goal to transform teacher education to redefine professionals for the 21st century classrooms. On the other hand, we can work on the transformation of classroom teaching and learning for the 21st century learners.

Collaborative and comparative cross-national research can be organized in the form of symposia or roundtables for specific topics/areas to promote international and regional dialogues – invite academics from different regions to share views and experiences and engage participants to debate and discuss related issues. Moreover, publication of special issues afterwards with focus on reflecting upon education development and policy change in specific topics/areas will extend the impact of these meaningful dialogues to a wider audience.

**REFERENCES**

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