



Comparative Education Research Centre
Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong

From the Director

This is the 10th issue of *CERCular* to be published since CERC was founded in 1994. Looking back over earlier issues, I am struck by what has achieved so far; and together we may be excited by prospects for the future. Many projects have matured, and CERC members have embarked on important new initiatives.

The research on which CERC members focus is naturally multifaceted. Some of this research is theoretical, while some takes the form of consultancies and similar projects. Both dimensions are well represented in this newsletter, which includes an impressive list of publications, a perspective from a UK visitor who is spending her sabbatical in CERC, reports of consultancies in Laos, Macau and the Chinese mainland, and information on a new project under the umbrella of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

CERC also promotes research through training. Some of this is in formal degree programmes, and the newsletter contains both the abstract of another PhD thesis and an announcement about the next intake for the MEd in comparative education.

Additional training, of course, takes place through informal channels. The newsletter reports on growing links with Russia through bilateral visits, and CERC will have strong participation in the July 2001 World Congress of Comparative Education in Korea. Such activities open horizons and provide avenues for cross-cultural discourse which are so valuable for our field.

Finally CERC continues to play a major role in formal professional bodies. Locally, this includes the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong (CESHK), for which a member of CERC's Executive Committee has become the new President. Internationally, CERC plays a major ongoing role in the World Council of Comparative Societies (WCCES), hosting its website and now providing its Secretary General.

As always, readers who do not know us personally are invited to get in touch. For many people, the best place to start would be with our website: <http://www.hku.hk/cerc>.

Mark Bray

CERC Studies in Comparative Education

CERC is pleased to announce publication of the second edition of *CERC Studies in Comparative Education No.1*. The first edition was published in 1997, and the scale of demand is reflected in the fact that the entire stock was sold rapidly. The second edition contains both revisions of the original chapters and new materials. Further details are presented on page 2.



Education and Political Transition: Themes and Experiences in East Asia

Edited by
Mark Bray and W.O. Lee

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Education and Political Transition: Themes and Experiences in East Asia

Edited by
Mark Bray and W.O. Lee

This is the second edition of a book first published in 1997. For this second edition, all seven original chapters have been retained, with three being reprinted in their original form and four being revised. In addition, three new chapters focus on Hong Kong, Korea and Mongolia. Thus, the new edition is more substantial as well as updated.

Comment on the first edition:

“[The book provides] an excellent collection of perspectives on issues of how education is affected by political transition ... [T]hese are very worthwhile essays that add significantly to our knowledge of Hong Kong and the region.”

Philip Altbach, *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, Vol. 18, No.2, 1998.

Order from: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong, China. E-mail: cerc@hkusub.hku.hk; Fax: (852) 2517 4737. The list price (HK\$150 or US\$26) includes sea mail postage; add US\$5 per copy for air mail. We accept cheque, bank draft payable to 'The University of Hong Kong', VISA and MASTER CARD. For credit card, please provide card number, expiry date, name and address of the cardholder.

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Changing Ideopolitical Emphases in Moral Education in China: An Analysis of the CCP Central Committee Documents W.O. LEE

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The Taiwanisation, Democratisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education in Taiwan LAW Wing Wah

Hegemonic Struggles in the Language Policy Development of Hong Kong, 1982-94 PUN Shuk Han

Education, Civic Participation and Identity: Continuity and Change in Hong Kong PAUL MORRIS, FLORA KAN & ESTHER MORRIS

Globalisation, the State and Education Policy in Singapore SARAVANAN GOPINATHAN

Education and Political Change in Korea: A Century of Colonial, Post-Colonial, Authoritarian and Democratic Transitions LEE Yonghwan

Democracy, Education and Reform in Mongolia: Collapse of the Old Communist Order, and Transitions within the New Era MALCOLM INNES-BROWN

Focus on Decentralization

In October 1999, CERC hosted a workshop in conjunction with the University of California (see *CERCular* No. 2 of 1999, p.4). The core papers from that workshop have now been published in a special issue (Vol.38, No.5, 2000) of the *Journal of Educational Administration*, edited by Mark Hanson. The title of the special issue is: "Educational Decentralization around the Pacific Rim". The papers are:

- t Ernesto Schiefelbein & Paulina Schiefelbein, 'Three decentralization strategies in two decades in Chile',
- t Carlos Ornelas, 'The politics of educational decentralization in Mexico',
- t John N. Hawkins, 'Centralization, decentralization, recentralization: educational reform in China',
- t Hiromitsu Muta, 'Deregulation and decentralization in education in Japan',
- t Tang Kwok Chun & Mark Bray, 'Colonial models and the evolution of education systems: centralization and decentralization in Hong Kong and Macau', and
- t Flora Ida Ortiz & Rodney T. Ogawa, 'Site-based decision-making leadership in American public schools'.

Journals



Current Issues in Comparative Education (CICE) is the title of an electronic journal produced at Teachers College, Columbia, USA. Conceived in 1997 by a group of doctoral students, CICE is dedicated to debate on and discussion of contemporary educational dilemmas and transformations worldwide. The journal can be accessed at www.tc.columbia.edu/cice. The co-editors in chief are Matt Brown and Iveta Silova at Teachers College, Columbia.

A new *Journal of Southeast Asian Education* was launched by the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) in August 2000. Details are available on www.seameo.org/journal. The main purpose of the journal is to provide information and analysis to assist in policy making and planning in education in the countries of Southeast Asia. The editor-in-chief is Alex Fung at the Hong Kong Baptist University.



In September 2000, CERC was very pleased to welcome Patricia Potts for a six-month visit. As noted below, Patricia Potts has long connections with the University of Hong Kong. She also has longstanding and strong links with the Chinese mainland.

For nearly two decades, Patricia Potts worked at the UK Open University. She is now Senior Research Fellow at Canterbury Christ Church University College, in the United Kingdom. While in CERC, she is working on a book provisionally entitled Education and 'Modernisation': Overcoming Barriers to Learning in China and the UK.

Comparing Education in China and the UK

Patricia Potts

I am pleased to make this contribution to *CERCular*. I have been working with colleagues in China since I participated in a conference in Beijing in 1988, and in Hong Kong since I was the first Marden Fellow in the Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong in 1990. It was the Year of the Dragon in 1988 and it is the Year of the Dragon once more as I try to draw together the threads of 12 years' experience into a useful discussion of educational policy and practice in China and the UK.



Modernisation has been a central aim of the Chinese government since it opened its doors to the world in the late 1970s, and it is also a core theme of the new Labour government in the UK. Both countries also promote the idea of social justice and cooperation. Taking educational reform as an example, I am exploring how far the goal of modernisation is compatible with the project of social justice in the two cultural settings. In the context of the major programmes of reform carried out in each country from the 1980s, my specific focus is on overcoming the barriers to learning faced by children and young people classified as 'mentally retarded'. I shall argue that the issues raised by making provision for these students are central, not marginal, to the development of education as a whole.

I hope to construct an accessible narrative that gives space both to accounts of individual places and events, and to longer and more complex analyses of what I have learned from my involvement in education. Because my work has taken me to a range of cities in China, I shall mainly write about developments in urban education even though I am aware of enormous contrasts between cities and the countryside. Following my stories of individuals, schools and university

departments, I shall reflect on the main themes that have emerged. These include the idea of childhood, gender imbalances, the use of space and time, the relationship between questions, and answers and the nature of cross-cultural social enquiry. Sustaining a comparative framework involves developing an approach that I have come to see as a return journey.

Modernisation has been defined in terms of aesthetics, humanism, science, economics, politics, and international influence. The economic, scientific and global senses dominate in both China and the UK, and the promotion of marketisation, efficiency and competitive excellence impedes progress towards social inclusion. The stronger sets of values maintain exclusive rather than inclusive educational practices.

Victor Ordonez on Educational Reform



In November 2000, the University of Hong Kong was pleased to host the annual conference of the Hong Kong Educational Research Association (HKERA). The theme was 'Educational Reform in Hong Kong: Prospects and Possibilities'.

The first keynote speaker for the conference was Victor Ordonez. Dr Ordonez is well-known in the region, having been Director of UNESCO's Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok. He has also recently completed the task of Chairperson of the Presidential Commission on Education Reform in the Philippines.

Victor Ordonez made a very stimulating presentation, during which he drew on his wide experiences in the region. He highlighted some of the lessons to be learned from reforms in mainland China, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. He contrasted generic reform with targeted reform, and noted contrasts between top-down and bottom-up initiatives. The conference also noted the ways in which comparative lessons have been taken into account by Hong Kong's Education Commission, which launched a far-reaching reform in September 2000.

Evaluating Five Years of UNICEF in China

Bob Adamson



Early in 2000 I was pleased during a lunch hosted by CERC to meet Barbara Reynolds, then the Head of the Education Section in UNICEF, China. Over lunch, she told us about her work in Beijing and the various projects that UNICEF was operating in China in collaboration with the government. This pleasant meeting was followed a few months later by an invitation for me to join the team that would review UNICEF's recent programme of five years' work in education in the PRC. The task was to identify the successes and the problems, and to make recommendations for the next five year cycle. "Thirty days of hard work," promised Barbara, "but you'll find it worthwhile."

In May, the evaluation team assembled in Beijing: three international consultants—from India, Botswana and Hong Kong—and three national consultants nominated by the Chinese government. The briefing document for the team identified dozens of questions concerning the education programme, and after deliberation, we whittled them down to four general questions:

1. Is the design appropriate?
2. Has implementation been effective?
3. What are the outcomes, both intended and unintended?
4. Are project processes sustainable?

These four questions were to guide us as we evaluated the UNICEF programme, which was made up of five major projects, each with a large number of sub-projects.

The next step was to finalise the methodology. We chose a primarily qualitative approach. Data collection was broad-based at the national level, as we wanted to get information concerning the design of the whole programme from UNICEF and ministry officials. However, the focus became narrower at the grassroots level, as we decided to do case studies of three of the five projects (Primary Education in Poor Areas, Reorienting the Content and Process of Education and Non-Formal Community Education) and within each of three selected projects, two sub-project activities were selected for conducting tracer studies. The complexity of the methodological design was simplified by conceptual diagrams, so we were able to keep track of where we were!

After some intensive work conducting interviews with national-level officials, our team dispersed to read project documents and to prepare for the field trips. We subdivided into three groups of three (one national and one international consultant, and a UNICEF staff member in support). My group, which focused on Reorienting the Content and Process of Education, was fortunate in that we were to visit Yunnan Province, which is not only an area of exquisite natural beauty but also the location of some very interesting educational reforms.

And so our group met up in Kunming at the end of August. The provincial officials were very hospitable and helpful in our data collection. We met curriculum designers, teacher educators, textbook writers, project managers and

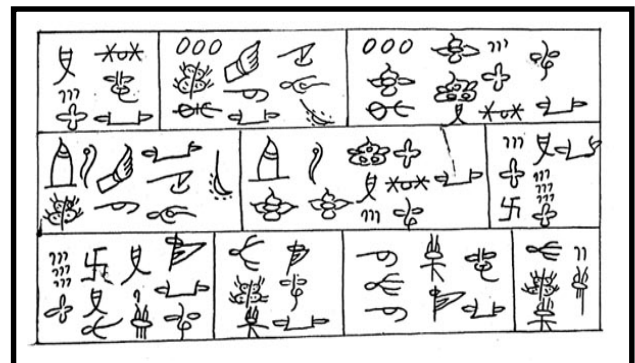
others involved in the programme. The main focus of their work is on developing curricula and resources for the various ethnic minorities in the province. We discussed the issues relating to producing inexpensive teaching resources in different minority languages, some of which do not have a standardised written form.

From Kunming we flew to the ancient town of Lijiang, designated as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations. In the outskirts of the town we visited schools and witnessed impressive examples of curriculum innovation. For instance, one primary school had a collaborative programme involving members of the local cultural academy, with the main objectives of preserving the minority language and enhancing the students' sense of cultural heritage. Much of the teaching in language, music and art is currently carried out by members of the academy, while some teachers in the school were provided with teacher training opportunities so that they could also participate in the new classes.

In another primary school, I was surprised to find a teacher of English. I wondered what the relevance of this subject could be in a fairly backward location. He explained that his main focus was on the language that was useful for communicating with tourists, the economic mainstay of the local community. He spent his weekends at a nearby temple listening to tourists shopping at a market, and taught the children the necessary phrases for such transactions. The pupils went home and taught their parents. It was, he said, a very popular class. This struck us as an important aspect of projects designed to benefit the grassroots. They must be linked to the local social, linguistic and economic environment if they are to provide long-term positive outcomes.

After a long drive through the hilly countryside, dodging landslides, we visited another project site, Dongchuan Township, where we met teacher trainers, teachers, parents and children. Once again, it was a fruitful trip, as we discussed the challenges facing the communities with regard to educational provision. The field trip ended with a generous lunch, including a dish of fried locusts, which were a new experience for me, and a local rice wine that anaesthetized me against the rigours of the four-hour journey back to

(continued on next page)



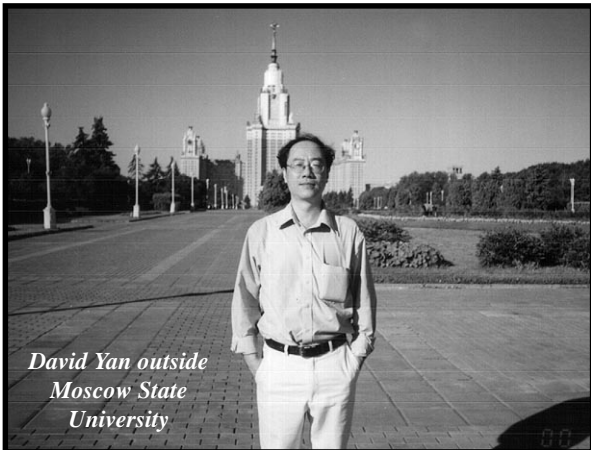
Teaching material in Naxi language

Developing Links with Russia

CERCular No.2 of 1999 reported on the visit to CERC by Dr Nina Borevskaya from the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. Dr Borevskaya is a specialist in education in China, and has published widely in English, Russian and Chinese. Her visit was financed by seed funds from the University of Hong Kong (HKU) 'Areas of Distinction' programme.

The following issue of *CERCular*, No.1 of 2000, reported that the seeds had indeed germinated and were bearing fruit. It contained an article by David Yan, a part-time MEd student in comparative education at HKU, who had been inspired by Dr Borevskaya's visit and had travelled to Moscow at his own expense in December 1999.

CERC is delighted now to report further development of links. In July 2000, Mark Bray and Ora Kwo visited Moscow to discuss additional plans for collaboration. Mark Bray is working with Nina Borevskaya on a study which compares the financing of education in Russia and China; and during the visit to Moscow he and Ora Kwo accompanied Nina Borevskaya to meet personnel in the Ministry of Education, in the Russian Academy of Sciences, and in a school which specialises in the teaching of English and Chinese.



*David Yan outside
Moscow State
University*



*Nina Borevskaya and Mark Bray outside the
Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation*

Then in August 2000, David Yan made a return trip to Moscow. He spent a month at the Moscow State University, learning Russian and extending his understanding of the country. This provided materials for his MEd dissertation, which focuses on education and regional disparities in Russia and China.

In parallel with these initiatives, in June 2000 HKU sponsored 30 undergraduate students to spend a month in St. Petersburg and Moscow on a programme which counts towards their academic degrees. Most of their time was spent at Herzen State University in St. Petersburg, with which HKU has made a formal linkage. The academic side of the programme was coordinated by Michael Share of the HKU Department of History, who presented seminars in CERC both before and after the visit. The evaluation showed that the students greatly benefited from the programme.

Plans for further links include a one-week visit to Moscow organised by the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong (CESHK) in collaboration with CERC. About 10 people are expected to form the group, and the visit is planned for April 2001. Readers who would like to know about the cost, itinerary and precise dates are invited to e-mail davidyan@hongkong.com.

(continued from previous page)

Kunming. The next day, we briefed provincial officials on our initial findings and flew to Beijing.

The next phase was for the three teams to meet together and compare notes. Recommendations were drafted and case notes were written up. This only left the main report to be compiled, drawing the various threads together and making a succinct evaluation of successes achieved and lessons learnt. Unfortunately the team leader, who was to work full-time on the final report, suffered a family bereavement. I was asked to deputise, an awkward proposition as term was just starting here at the university. However, a few late nights and excellent support from team members allowed the report, with 20 recommendations, to be ready on schedule for circulation among UNICEF and ministry officials. Their feedback was generally positive, so the report was given a final brush-up and submitted to UNICEF

at the end of September.

Barbara Reynolds was right. It was very hard work, but I learnt a lot from the experience. In particular, I learnt the importance of establishing a realistic framework for such an evaluation: focusing on four main questions made the work manageable. I learnt the importance of listening, instead of trying to impose my own interpretation; of teamwork and shared responsibilities; of giving praise where it is due; and of ensuring that criticism is fair and constructive, intended to support future development and not to demoralize. Above all, I was humbled and inspired by the achievements of teachers I met who work with far fewer resources that I enjoy in Hong Kong. For all these lessons, I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate in the evaluation.

Award for Comparative Book

CERC congratulates Zhang Minxuan for the “Excellent Academic Achievement” award for his book *Conceptions and Choices: A Comparative Study on Student Financial Support Policies*. The award was given in 2000 by the Federation of Philosophy and Social Sciences of Shanghai. The book was published in 1997 by the People’s Education Press in Beijing.



Visitors from Gansu

CERCular No.1 of 2000 reported (p.7) on CERC’s partnership with Cambridge Education Consultants in the Gansu Basic Education Project. This project is funded by the UK government’s Department for International Development, and focuses on four poor counties in Linxia prefecture.

CERC looks forward to hosting a group of administrators from Gansu in January 2001. The visitors will focus on aspects of school planning, management and innovation. They will discuss lessons from different parts of the world, and will visit selected Hong Kong schools. Their visit is being coordinated by Bob Adamson with help from Emily Mang, Sun Miantao and Ora Kwo.

Bob Adamson becomes CESHK President



Bob Adamson has been elected to the Presidency of the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong (CESHK). Bob is the fourth CERC member to be elected to that post: his predecessors include Gerard Postiglione, Lee Wing On and Mark Bray. Bob took over the Presidency from Clive Dimmock, of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He will hold the office until 2002.

CERC has a long tradition of productive collaboration with the CESHK, which will certainly continue. One example is that CERC hosts the CESHK website: www.hku.hk/cerc/ceshk.

Among major forthcoming CESHK events are a conference at the Hong Kong Institute of Education in February 2001 (see below), and a study trip to Shenzhen in December 2000.

Bob Adamson has also edited another substantial issue of the CESHK Bulletin. Paper copies can be obtained by contacting him at CERC (badamson@hkusua.hku.hk), and the electronic version can be read on the website.



CESHK Conference 2001 2001 年香港比較教育學會研討會

“Comparing Across Cultures”
跨越文化之比較

Date: Saturday 17th February 2001
Venue: Hong Kong Institute of Education
Time: 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

日期: 2001年二月十七日(星期六)
地點: 香港教育學院
時間: 上午九時三十分至下午三時三十分

REGISTRATION (INCLUDING LUNCH)

CESHK Members: \$150
Student Members: \$100
Non-members: \$300 (includes membership)
Student Non-members: \$200 (includes membership)

報名須知 (連同午飯)

CESHK會員: 港幣一百五十元正
學生會員: 港幣一百元正
非會員: 港幣三百元正(包括會員費)
學生非會員: 港幣二百元正(包括會員費)

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Enlightenment in Bologna: from Clerici Vagantes to Internet

Percy Kwok

In September 2000, I joined the conference of the Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE) in Bologna. It was a very memorable occasion. This article shares some of my experiences and lessons.

Bologna: the oldest university

Bologna is a historic city in Italy. In the 11th century, Bologna hosted a community of students who attended the Bologna 'Studium' in a floating association-oriented relationship with their masters. From this, the original meaning of the term 'Universitas' was created. In a gradual extension from professionalism in law schools to other fields including arts and science, Bologna became the first western-style university in the world. Today, the University of Bologna, which hosted the CESE conference, has about 90,000 students and remains a renowned capital of human intellect. It was indeed a historic and beautiful location for such a conference.

Academic sharing in CESE 2000

I am a young scholar, and CESE 2000 was only my second international conference in comparative education. It was thus especially meaningful to me. The Congress had a striking theme: "The emergence of the 'knowledge society': from *clerici vagantes* to Internet". The *clerici vagantes* were the students who had come together during the early decades of the university's existence. They had an average age of 35, and most were from distant countries. They were initially 'rootless', and migrated with their teachers.

Nine hundred years later I found myself, a 33-year-old student in comparative education, presenting a conference paper in Bologna, far away from my home country. My paper was co-authored with Adams Bodomo, a colleague in CERC, and fitted the conference theme by thinking about old and new ways of learning. The objective of the paper was to re-conceptualise educational communications by making comparisons between Ghana and Hong Kong. Our focus was on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) integration in secondary school curricula. We identified six comparative indicators: Accessibility, Connectivity, Creativity, Interactivity, Sustainability and Transferability (abbreviated to ACCIST). These indicators focus on both current integration problems and future research directions for ICT, not only in Ghana and Hong Kong but also more widely.

My presentation fitted well into the working group. The other six presenters undertook single-country case studies in European and South American countries. Together, we made comparisons – noting in particular the different needs of industrialised and less developed countries.

The Community of Comparative Educationists

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter (p.8), the Bologna conference was also the occasion for a meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES). At that meeting, it was my honour to represent the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong (CESHK).



Percy Kwok (right), with conference participants

I also took the opportunity to introduce both CESHK and CERC to the wider community of conference participants. Copies of CERC books and of *CERCular* were placed on a display table, and a large poster about CESHK joined a display about other WCCES member societies.

At the same time, I learned about the European society. CESE has held conferences in different parts of Europe every two years. CESE was established in 1961, and in 1970 was among the founder members of the WCCES. CESHK is much younger, having been established only in 1989. The two societies have similarities in their overall goals, but CESE works at continental level while CESHK functions at the level of a small territory. This itself shows diversity in the field. Each arrangement of course has strengths and limitations.

I am looking forward to more exposure to comparative education through similar conferences in the global network. Meanwhile, I continue to treasure the experience of my visit to the birthplace of Western-style universities. Comparative education is a wonderful field with many enriching opportunities!



CERC Seminars

CERC has a regular programme of seminars. The schedule for the second half of 2000 was:

- Sept. 19 Peter Cave, "*Lowering the Flag: Democracy, Authority and Rights at Tokorozawa High School*"
- Oct. 16 Patricia Potts, "*Modernisation: Overcoming Barriers to Learning in China and the UK*"
- Nov. 13 Michael Share, "*Hong Kong University's Russian Studies Program in St. Petersburg*"
David Yan, "*Russian Education through the Eyes of Hong Kong People*"
- Dec. 5 Michael Crossley, "*Continuity, Challenges and Change in Comparative and International Education*"



Mark Bray becomes WCCES Secretary General

At the 28th meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), held in Bologna, Italy in September 2000, Mark Bray was elected WCCES Secretary General for a five-year term.

CERC has already made substantial contributions to WCCES affairs. For example, from 1994 to 2000 Mark Bray was Assistant Secretary General; and Percy Kwok is webmaster for the WCCES website (www.hku.hk/cerc/wcces.html). HKU is also making a financial contribution: the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Frederick Leung, has supported Mark Bray's work with an allocation of HK\$50,000 (US\$6,400) from the Dean's Fund to support necessary travel, administrative and other expenses.

The WCCES was established in 1970, and is a Non-Governmental Organisation in operational relations with UNESCO. It brings together 28 member societies, namely:

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|---|--|
| † Association Francophone d'Éducation Comparée (AFEC) | † Dutch Speaking Society of Comparative Education (NGVO) |
| † Australia and New Zealand Comparative and International Education Society (ANZCIES) | † Greek Comparative Education Society (GCES) |
| † British Association of International and Comparative Education (BAICE) | † Hungarian Pedagogic Society (HPS) |
| † Bulgarian Comparative Education Society (BCES) | † Israel Comparative Education Society (ICES) |
| † China Comparative Education Society (CCES) | † Japan Comparative Education Society (JCES) |
| † Chinese Comparative Education Society - Taipei (CCES-T) | † Kommission für Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft (KVEDGE) |
| † Comparative Education Society of Asia (CESA) | † Korean Comparative Education Society (KCES) |
| † Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE) | † Nordic Comparative Education Society (NCES) |
| † Comparative Education Society of India (CESI) | † Polish Comparative Education Society (PCES) |
| † Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) | † Portuguese Comparative Education Society (PCES) |
| † Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC) | † Russian Council of Comparative Education (RCCE) |
| † Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong (CESHK) | † Sezione Italiana della CESE (SICESE) |
| † Czech Pedagogical Society (Comparative Education Section) (CPS-CES) | † Sociedade Brasileira de Educação Comparada (SBEC) |
| | † Sociedad Española de Educación Comparada (SEEC) |
| | † Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society (SACHES) |



WCCES Executive Committee Meeting in Bologna

Among the most visible activities of the World Council is the organisation of periodic World Congresses of Comparative Education. The next World Congress will be held in Korea in July 2001 (see below). Previous World Congresses were held in South Africa (1998), Australia (1996), Czechoslovakia (1992), Canada (1989), Brazil (1987), France (1984), Japan (1980), United Kingdom (1977), Switzerland (1974) and Canada (1970).

We are facing a great change in the arena of education for the new millennium. The rapid development of civilization in information age is shattering the roots of previous life patterns. In this context, how can we continue human happiness and prosperity without losing the identity of humanness in the midst of the turmoil caused by the change?

The task of seeking the answer for the question is one for the people all over the world. We firmly believe that the sector of education is one of the right places for us to turn our attention in seeking the answer. From this point of view, the WCCES is increasingly given the significant status on account of its concerns about educational problems of the world and efforts to find and share the answers for the problems.

In preparing the 11th World Congress in liaison with the WCCES, we believe that it is appropriate for us to make an effort in which common prosperity of the world is sought for by connecting highly developed information and civilization with humanization in the global world. From this belief, we assume that the educational paradigm so far should be shifted in commensura-

tion with the needs of new age and try to find meaningful understandings by setting up the Congress theme as "New Challenges and New Paradigms: Moving Education into the 21st Century."

For more concrete and specific fulfilment of the Congress theme, ideas and insights of the scholars of the world may be expected in following theme areas: (1)

theories and theory shifts, (2) higher education, (3) literacy and language, (4) educating all for peace and justice, (5) gender, (6) culture, indigenous knowledge and learning, (7) teacher education, (8) curriculum, (9) educational policy, (10) lifelong learning, (11) worlds of childhood, (12) basic education / education for all, (13) educational reform in societies in transition.

If substantial and concrete searches and discussions of the scholars all over the world occur, education for the 21st century would change in right direction and consequently our quests for the solution could be achieved successfully.



In April and again in July 2000, Steve Andrews went to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), as a consultant on the Asian Development Bank's Post-Secondary Education Rationalisation Project (PSERP) to establish the National University of Laos. Here he explains what the project is about.

Curriculum for University Education in Lao PDR

Steve Andrews

The technical assistance funded by the Asian Development Bank covers every aspect of the newly-formed National University of Laos. My specific brief concerns curriculum and self-accreditation. This component of the project requires six one-month visits, the last of which is scheduled for July 2002.

Since the mid-1980s, the Lao PDR has shifted from central planning to a market economy. Most progress has been made on the economic front, but the post-secondary education system has been less able to respond effectively to the demands of the labour market. This has resulted in a serious shortfall of professionally qualified people in both the public and private sectors.

Much of the failure of the post-secondary system has been caused by inefficiency and lack of coordination. In the mid-1990s, the sector consisted of 38 small institutions managed by seven ministries, one provincial government, one municipality and the Prime Minister's office. Many students embarking on post-secondary education were not appropriately prepared; many staff were underqualified for post-secondary teaching; many buildings and facilities were dilapidated; and programmes were inadequate.

Recognising these problems, the government decided to consolidate and rationalise the system. The PSERP was created to establish a multi-campus university combining 10 separate institutions. The university's opening ceremony was held in 1996, by which time all 10 institutions were under the control of the Ministry of Education.

The 10 previous institutions have been reorganised to form the Faculties of Science, Humanities & Social Sciences, Engineering & Architecture, Medical Sciences, Education,

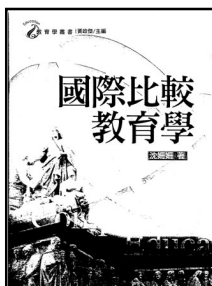
Agriculture & Forestry, and Law & Administration. In addition, a Faculty of Economics & Management has been created; and a School of Foundation Studies provides two years of pre-university education for all incoming students.

The PSERP focuses on all aspects of institutional and functional development. The consultancy on curriculum and self-accreditation advises staff from all parts of the university on principles of curriculum development. It also assists the development of procedures for monitoring the quality and relevance of course design, content and delivery.

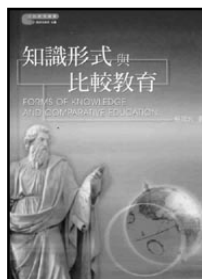
Much needs to be done: the university is still at a rudimentary stage of development, and remains short of facilities, resources, and qualified staff. Also, it is difficult to expect wholehearted commitment from academic staff who for financial reasons need to supplement their incomes with second jobs. Nevertheless, the university's senior management is very positive. This, together with the willingness to learn exhibited by all staff, encourages optimism about the future.



Comparative Education Books Published in Taiwan



International and Comparative Education
[國際比較教育學]
沈姍姍
Oct. 2000. Taipei: 正中書局
<http://www.ccbc.com.tw>



Forms of Knowledge and Comparative Education
[知識形式與比較教育]
Yang, Shen-keng [楊深坑]
Sept. 1999. Taipei: Yang zhi wen hua shi ye gu fen you xian gong si.
[台北市: 揚智文化事業股份有限公司]
<http://www.ycrc.com.tw>



Bi jiao jiao yu [比較教育]
Wang, Ru-zhe [王如哲]
Aug. 1999. Taipei: Wu-nan tu shu chu ban you xian gong si.
[台北: 五南圖書出版有限公司]
<http://www.wunan.com.tw/>

The University of Hong Kong has long involvement with projects conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Projects conducted by CERC members have focused on pre-primary education, science and mathematics education, reading literacy, information technology, and civic education.

CERC now congratulates S.K. Tse and colleagues on a HK\$2.1 million (US\$270,000) grant from the Hong Kong Quality Education Fund to join a new IEA project. Here the team leaders explain what the project will do.

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study: The Hong Kong Component S.K.Tse, R.Lam & J.W.I.Lam



The first IEA study of reading literacy (see Lundberg & Linnakyla 1993; Elley 1994) involved 200,000 nine- and fourteen-year-old students in 31 locations including Hong Kong. The new Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) builds on the earlier work. PIRLS will investigate the interaction of 'distant' conditions such as home factors and 'proximal' conditions such as school and teacher characteristics affecting reading performance.

PIRLS will involve over 30 countries, and will run from 2000 to 2003. The participants must conform to agreed philosophy, aims, scope, and instrumentation. The sampling frame is strictly defined as a minimum of 150 schools and a minimum of 5,000 primary 4 students. PIRLS prescribes the use of questionnaires with multiple-choice and open-ended questions to delineate the various factors affecting reading.

Hong Kong will make a particularly important contribution to the study because it focuses on reading literacy in Chinese. And in addition to the academic merit of this global work, Hong Kong will benefit from the reliable and valid baseline data which will be generated. In 2000, students in the upper grade of the two adjacent grades with the most 9-year-olds were assessed.

Many educators in Hong Kong have asserted that the language proficiency of pupils is declining. The study will provide valuable empirical data for such analysis. It will also promote innovative methods to improve the quality of teaching and learning of reading in Hong Kong.

References:

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A useful book on the history and techniques used in IEA projects has been written by T. Neville Postlethwaite and was published by CERC in 1999. It is entitled *International Studies of Educational Achievement: Methodological Issues*. ISBN: 962-8093-86-X. Price: HK\$100 (local) or US\$20 overseas including postage. Order from cerc@hkusub.hku.hk.

PhD Thesis

CERC congratulates another student on the award of the PhD degree. Li Hui is now teaching at the Hong Kong Institute of Education, where his e-mail address is hui@ied.edu.hk. Below is the abstract of the thesis.

Contributors to Chinese Literacy Development: A Longitudinal Study of Preschoolers in Beijing, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Abstract

This thesis examined factors contributing to Chinese literacy acquisition. The study had two parts, and focused on preschooling in Beijing, Hong Kong and Singapore.

In Study One, 480 Chinese preschoolers were administered the Preschool and Primary Chinese Literacy Scale (PPCLS) and their parents and teachers reported on home and preschool literacy environments, respectively. Results indicated that there were significant societal differences in Chinese literacy attainment. Older children outperformed younger children in all societies, and from the age of four, preschoolers in Hong Kong showed significantly higher literacy attainment than those in Singapore and Beijing. These cross-cultural differences reflect variations in educational policy. Significant predictors of Chinese literacy attainment within each society were the age of child, the home literacy index and teacher qualifications.

Study Two, conducted one year later, included 198 chil-

dren, ranging in age from 3 to 5, who had participated in Study One. These children were re-administered the PPCLS. Results indicated a consistent sequence of Chinese literacy acquisition across the three societies. Proficiency in identification of simple characters and visual/auditory discrimination emerged at age 3-4, whereas accuracy in word recognition and expression appeared later. However, when an analysis of reading errors made by children was conducted, societal differences emerged. Children from Hong Kong and Singapore made significantly more errors due to phonetic-similarity and semantic-similarity, respectively, whereas children from Beijing did not display a consistent pattern of reading errors.

The findings highlight the role of sociocontextual environments in Chinese literacy acquisition. Educational policies, language environments and home/preschool contexts all contribute to variations in literacy acquisition across and within these three societies.

MEd in Comparative Education at HKU

What?

In September 2001, the University of Hong Kong will admit students to the third intake for the M.Ed in Comparative Education.

Why?

Comparison is the basis of almost all forms of enquiry. This course will primarily focus on cross-national comparisons of education systems. It will enable participants to understand better the nature of education systems, and the forces which shape them. The comparisons will generate important insights on a range of inter-disciplinary issues relevant to the social sciences. These include issues of control, curriculum and policy analysis.

For whom?

The course will attract applications from a wide range of settings, by including some core and methodological studies, but also accommodating individual interests and particular projects. While most participants are likely to be citizens of Hong Kong, some will

come from other parts of the world. The course will benefit classroom teachers, administrators, post-secondary lecturers and others.

By whom?

Most teaching will be by members of the Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC). They have extensive expertise and practical experiences in a wide range of topics and societies, including China, other Asian countries, Africa, Europe and North America.

When?

The course will last for two years, part-time. Classes will be held twice a week, on Monday and Friday evenings.

How structured?

The course will have 11 taught modules plus a dissertation. Students will have some choice in selection of modules, to fit their own interests.

How much?

Fees will be HK\$21,050 (indicative) each year. In addition to tuition and super-

vision of the dissertation, these fees give full access to the university libraries and most other facilities. Application forms and other details: www.hku.hk/educate.

For more information:

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Professor Mark Bray
Course Director
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Higher Education in Macau

In July 2000, a team headed by Mark Bray embarked on a consultancy study of higher education in Macau. The review has been commissioned by the Macau government, which wants an external assessment of the current state and appropriate future directions for the size and shape of the sector. The principal team members are Roy Butler, Ora Kwo and Emily Mang from CERC, and Philip Hui from the Hong Kong Institute of Education.

Although Macau is small, the task is complex. The two largest public-sector institutions of higher education are the University of Macau and the Macau Polytechnic Institute. In addition to these bodies are a range of smaller public institutions, and an increasingly-active private sector. The largest private body is the Asia International Open University. Other private bodies include the inter-University Institute of Macau and the newly-formed Macau University of Science and Technology.

The review is looking not only at higher education in Macau itself, but also at the external context within which Macau operates. Many Macau students travel outside the territory for higher education, which raises a question about



the sorts of education best undertaken at home and best undertaken outside. In corollary, a question arises about the types of outsiders that Macau can attract to study in its institutions of higher education.

The consultancy team sees the work as a practical way to apply the principles of comparative education. The study is also revealing many issues of conceptual importance, which have value not only to the people of Macau but also to the wider academic and professional communities. In some respects, the consultancy study can be seen an extension of work published by CERC in 1999 in the book, *Education and Society in Hong Kong and Macau: Comparative Perspectives on Continuity and*



Information and Communication Technology: New Research Agendas for Comparative Education

Percy Kwok

The advance of information and communication technology (ICT) is having a tremendous impact on educational discourse at all levels. During the last two years, I have attended ICT conferences in Guangzhou, Chicago, Toronto, Hong Kong, Plymouth, and Ohio. Among the heated topics were paradigmatic changes in the pedagogical roles of ICT, and promotion of lifelong learning through ICT.

During the conferences, I noted some global commonalities in ICT education. One is that in-service teachers have difficulty coping with new technology and its appropriate pedagogical uses because they have not themselves experienced ICT use as classroom learners. Another common feature concerns disparities in the degree of ICT implementation in schools. The nature and scale of ICT use greatly depends on the cultures of individual societies and institutions.

A large-scale cross-national comparative study

The Second International Information Technology in Education Study (SITES) was conducted under the auspices of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) between 1997 and 1999. Hong Kong participated in the study, along with 25 other countries/systems. The study highlighted similarities and differences in ICT infrastructure, staff development, and management policies. The study had three sections, of which the first used a questionnaire survey of school principals and technology co-ordinators in primary and secondary schools to furnish initial school indicators for various aspects of ICT use in 14 countries. It showed that ICT use is highly correlated with value orientations in school and classroom cultures. Schools in Asia regarded ICT as *a pedagogical tool* for teachers, while schools in Canada, Scandinavia and other western European countries treated the students' use of ICT as *a learning aid* for accessing external databases through the Internet and for communication through e-mail.

Among the fruitful lessons from comparison are the following:

- w** Too much centralisation in ICT curriculum development may not cater for the distinctive organisational cultures which schools tend to have in this domain.

- w** The high costs of ICT education are inevitably at the expense of other investments. In some countries, emphasis on ICT may obstruct the achievement of universal basic education, and may be very inequitable.
- w** Emphasis on ICT usually increases teachers' workloads. In turn, this may create conflicts between teachers and curriculum developers.
- w** Students may get more knowledge from ICT than from their teachers, and may therefore challenge their teachers' status.

The concepts of efficiency and effectiveness enhanced by ICT are still controversial and need to be re-conceptualised. ICT is clearly not a panacea. Increases in student learning may be insufficient compared to the extra effort demanded from teachers; and the costs of installing ICT into school infrastructure may not bring a high rate of return in quality education.

Nevertheless, ICT issues can no longer be ignored. And they create exciting new avenues for research in comparative education.

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Education and Society in Hong Kong and Macau

In November 1999, CERC published Volume 7 in its series CERC Studies in Comparative Education. The book is entitled *Education and Society in Hong Kong and Macau: Comparative Perspectives on Continuity and Change*, and was edited by Mark Bray and Ramsey Koo.

The book has already attracted very positive comments in several professional journals. For example:

- ▼ R.M. Thomas, writing in *Educational Studies* (Vol. 31, No.3, 2000), considered the book “well organized, skillfully written throughout, and convincingly documented with more than six hundred references”. He added that the book “should be particularly appealing to readers interested in strategies for adjusting educational policies and practices to changing political realities”.
- ▼ Yang Rui, in *Compare* (Vol.30, No.2, 2000), observed that the book “makes substantial contribution to the study of colonialism”. During the hubbub of the celebration of Macau’s successful return to the People’s Republic of China in December 1999, he had himself been in Beijing. He was reading the book at the time, and “noted the strong contrast between its dispassionate tone and the flood of emotional programmes on the Chinese media.” This underlined for him the value of careful academic analysis.
- ▼ W. John Morgan, in *Asian Affairs* (Vol.XXXI, No.3, 2000) also had praise for the book. He observed that “each chapter has something interesting to offer”, and, like R.M. Thomas, found the bibliography particularly comprehensive. Morgan also applauded the whole series. He noted first that the series contains interesting general texts by well-known figures such as Philip G. Altbach, T. Neville Postlethwaite, Harold Noah and Max A. Eckstein. He then remarked that the distinctive contribution of the series “has been to the analysis and understanding of education and social and political change in East Asia, with a particular focus on greater China”.



To supplement these comments, below we reproduce with permission the full review by Geoffrey Walford in the *British Journal of Educational Studies* (Vol.48, No.2, 2000):

At first sight, an edited book about Hong Kong and Macau might appear to be of limited interest to the wider world. Some British and Portuguese might retain a nostalgic interest in their former colonial territories, but a book about the nature and experience of education in these two new Special Administrative Regions of China might be thought to be too idiosyncratic for most readers. This is not true, for the book is well worth reading, not only for the material it presents, but because it is also almost a model of what good comparative studies of education should be like.

In outline, following a brief introduction, the thirteen substantive chapters are gathered into four sections. The first four chapters deal with the various levels and sub-sectors from pre-school to higher education. This is followed by a section on political, economic and social issues, including the relationship between church, state and education during the colonial period, the impact of imperialism and colonialism on higher education and the relationship between education and the labour force. The third section focuses on curriculum policies and processes with, first, a broad chapter and then three case studies of civic and political education, history and mathematics. The final two chapters, by Mark Bray, are substantial conclusions that draw together the whole work both empirically and methodologically.

The strength of the book is its genuinely comparative nature. Rather than being a collection of essays that describe aspects of either Hong Kong or Macau, each of these chapters focuses on patterns in both territories and is explicitly comparative. The authors are able to do this because of their thorough knowledge of both - for example, seven of the fifteen contributors have been or still are employees of the University of Macau and all seven had been residents in Hong Kong before moving to Macau. This depth of knowledge shows through clearly in the various chapters. Just as important, the discussions presented in each chapter show the worthwhileness of choosing this particular pair as sites for comparative work. Quite simply, there are sufficient similarities in their history, geography, ethnic and linguistic populations, economy, and current status to make comparisons meaningful, yet there are also significant differences between their educational systems. It is possible to begin to explain the differences because the similarities are so great.

The book directly adds to our understanding of colonial transition and colonialism, but it also has much to say on such issues as centralisation and decentralisation, the role of churches and other organisations in schooling, curriculum control, school management, and privatisation. More fundamentally, it gives a discussion and example of the nature of comparative education which is worthy of emulation.

GEOFFREY WALFORD
University of Oxford

Book details and ordering information are as follows:

Mark Bray & Ramsey Koo (eds.) (1999): *Education and Society in Hong Kong and Macau: Comparative Perspectives on Continuity and Change*. CERC Studies in Comparative Education No.7, Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong. 286 pp. ISBN 962 8093 82 7. Price: HK\$200 or US\$32 including postage. Add US\$5 for airmail.

Order from: cerc@hkusub.hku.hk. Make cheque or bank draft payable to 'The University of Hong Kong'. For Mastercard and Visa credit cards, provide card number, expiry date, name, and address of cardholder.



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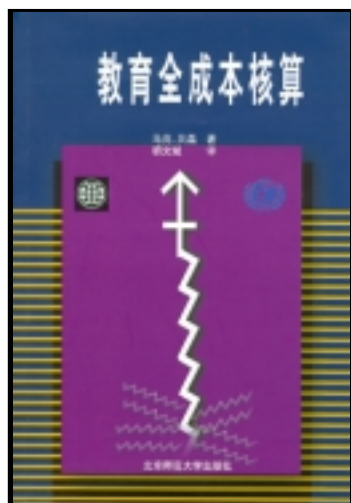
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Bookannouncement:



Counting the Full Cost

In 1996, the World Bank published a book written by Mark Bray entitled *Counting the Full Cost: Parental and Community Financing of Education in East Asia* 《教育全成本核算》. The book was produced in collaboration with UNICEF, and focuses on the costs education in nine countries: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

A revised and updated version of this book has now been published in Chinese. It was translated by Hu Wenbin, who had spent time in CERC in 1997 on the Summer Young Chinese Scholars Programme (see *CERCular* No.2 of 1997). The book has been published by Beijing Normal University Press with sponsorship by the World Bank and UNICEF (ISBN 7-303-05423-5), and is priced at 15 yuan.

CIES 2001*14-17 March 2001**Washington, D.C., USA*

Theme: Global Resonance and Resistance: Affirmative Alternatives for Educational Policy, Practice, and Transformation

Enquiry: Colgate University
CIES/ATTN: Joan Thompson
13 Oak Drive, Hamilton, NY 13346, USA
Fax: 315-228-7857
Website: <http://groups.colgate.edu/cies>

First SEAMEO Educational Congress*26-29 March 2001**Bangkok, Thailand*

Theme: Challenges in the New Millennium

Enquiry: SEAMEO Secretariat
920 Sukhumvit Road
Bangkok10110, Thailand
Tel.: (662) 3910144 Fax: (662) 3812587
E-mail: secretariat@seameo.org
Website: www.seameo.org

Globalisation and Higher Education: Views from the South - An International Conference*27-29 March 2001**Cape Town, South Africa*

Enquiry: Betty Woessner
SRHE
3 Devonshire Street, London W1N 2BA
United Kingdom
Tel.: 44 (0) 20 7637 2766 Fax: 44 (0) 20 7637 2781
E-mail: globalHE@srhe.ac.uk

Gender and Education 3rd International Conference*4-6 April 2001**London, England*

Theme: The Politics of Gender and Education

Enquiry: Cathy Bird, Conference Office
Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL
England
Tel.: (44) 0 20 7612 6017 Fax: (44) 0 20 7612 6402
E-mail: c.bird@ioe.ac.uk

Women and Minorities as Change Agents - International Conference*7-10 May 2001**Gansu, China*

Theme: Women and Minorities as Change Agents

Enquiry: Dr. Wang Jiayi
Faculty of Education
Northwest Normal University
Lanzhou, Gansu, 730070
China
E-mail: wangjy@tsg.nwnu.edu.cn

11th World Congress of Comparative Education (WCCES)*2-6 July 2001**Chungbuk, South Korea*

Theme: "New Challenges and New Paradigms: Moving Education into the 21st Century"

Enquiry: Byung-Jin Lee
11th World Congress of Comparative Education
Korean Comparative Education Society
Kangnae-myun, Cheongwon-kun, Chungbuk
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Tel.: 82-62-520-4200 Fax: 82-43-233-6366
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BOLESWA 2001*28 July - 4 August 2001**Gaborone, Botswana*

Theme: Educational Research - Towards Sustainable Development

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Forty-Sixth Session of the International Conference on Education*5-7 September 2001**Geneva, Switzerland*

Theme: Educational Content and Learning Strategies for Living Together in the 21st Century: Problems and Solutions

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The UKFIET Oxford International Conference on Education Education and Development 2001*19-21 September 2001**Oxford, UK*

Theme: Knowledge, Values and Policy

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