Education Policy, Reform, and School Innovations in the Asia-Pacific Region

Edited by
Ramsey Ding-Yee Koo
Ben Cheong Choi
Maria Rita Lucas
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Foreword

Robert C. Morris
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In an era of what has witnessed rapid globalization and lifelong education there still exists those who would turn the educational clock back to an over-simplified program of the three R’s, a few literary classics, strictly chronological history, and mathematics and science geared to countering foreign trade competition. It is good to have a volume such as this devoted to education’s crucial interdisciplinary problems. The field of international education studies linked to global cultures of the Asian-Pacific region provides a vital link to human understanding and survival.

In international education studies for today’s educators two necessities converge: the need to develop language communication, and the need to develop understanding of common educational practices and priorities. International education studies embrace several types of programs: studies of world languages and communication systems, innovations and technological break-through that affect educational practices, and the role of educational progress and reform.

This volume represents one of the first serious attempts to foster better understanding of international education issues and practices in the Asian-Pacific region. A variety of approaches currently being used, as well as those being reformed are discussed in this publication. The reader will find descriptions of quite different programs from those found in the United States, but programs and approaches that have great merit for the communities they serve. If all the authors of this text were brought together I would suspect that they would defend their varying perceptions of the preferable roles of local and state authorities, as well as school personnel and even professors, and would debate each other warmly. Such varying perceptions are to be expected in an emergent field in which educators of good will are trying to find their way to sound international education programs. The readers of this volume will also find accounts of experiences in teaching in the Asian-Pacific region. They too see many things differently.

In this volume, the readers will also find factual information which should be helpful to those developing programs of international education studies in their own bailiwicks. Described are understandings and interpretations of current practices and relevant approaches. Likewise many resources for preparing educators for similar situations, as well as extensive listings of selected readings are available.

I applaud this volume’s editors, Ramsey Ding-Yee Koo, Ben Cheong Choi, Maria Rita D. Lucas, and Tak Cheung Chan for their diligence and persistence in identifying recent and meaningful approaches that are “dramatically” changing (reforming) the educational landscape of the Asian-Pacific region. You should find their samplings in the field of international education studies as reported in this volume a stimulus to your own independent thinking about what are essential ingredients for sound educational practices. That authors of good will differ as well as agree on approaches is all to the good. In international education studies there are many good roads that lead to Rome.
Notes on Contributors

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Gennievie R. ADA is a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Bachelor of Science in Business Management, and Master of Arts in Childhood Education. She worked as a full time preschool teacher and a part-time college professor at Miriam College, Philippines. Her research, *Preschoolers' Verbal Interaction and Letter Identification Skill: Television Cartoon Characters as Visual Aids*, was awarded during the President's Awards for Research in Miriam College in 2006. She presented the study at the Philippine Association for Graduate Education seminar held in Our Lady of Fatima University, Valenzuela City. She is currently completing a writing workbook for Filipino preschool children.

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Christine Chen is the Founder President of the Association for Child Care Educators (ACCE) and the Founder and President of the Association for Early Childhood Educators-Singapore (AECES). She has been advocating for professional development and learning for educators for 20 years. Dr. Chen served as a member of the Child Care Personnel Accreditation Committee with the then Ministry of Community Development to look into accreditation matters as well as development for the whole profession. She is also a member of the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore. Her interest lies in coaching and mentoring teachers and their leaders in promoting reflective practice and change.

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Ben C. Choi is Assistant Professor of the Department of Early Childhood Education and Deputy Head of the Centre for Early Childhood Research and Development, Hong Kong Institute of Education. Dr. Choi formerly served as Lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Macao University, Department of Educational Planning & Administration, Hong Kong Institute of Education and Senior Officer at the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, Macao. His research interest is on teacher education and education administration and policy. Recent studies include education and support programmes for newly arrived and/or cross-border students from the Mainland, sense of self-efficacy of kindergarten principals and national identity of pre-primary pupils. Dr. Choi has been a consultant to the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, Macao on education and youth affairs projects since 2003.

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Xiaodan Huang is Professor of Education at the Department of Teacher Education of Shawnee State University, Ohio, U.S.A. Her research interests range from teacher education policy to multicultural education. For the past eight years, she has been involved in the English language immersion project in China, visiting the immersion schools, observing teaching, and developing curriculum for the project.
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Yukiko Inoue is Professor of Educational Psychology and Research in the School of Education, University of Guam. Inoue is also Head of the Educational Research and Technology Department. Her research interests include interdisciplinary studies on student learning and development, educational technology for diverse learners, improving university teaching and learning, and social contexts and learning in higher education. Inoue is the co-author of *Teaching with Educational Technology: The Case of the Asia-Pacific Region*, and the editor of *Technology and Diversity in Higher Education: New Challenges, and Online Learning for Lifelong Learning*. She is also a poet and the author of *Roses, You Must Be, and The Window That Reveals Tomorrow*.

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Marilyn N. Malloy Jackson is Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Guam where she is responsible for teaching practice, pre-service, in-service courses, and research activity at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She is Advisor and Program Coordinator, and former Director of the Early Childhood Infant/Toddler and Preschool Demonstration Laboratory Centers. Her research interests are in emergent reading and literacy development. She is engaged in publishing *Children's Literature*, and writing local Culturally Responsive Books for young children. Since 1970, Dr. Jackson has trained and prepared hundreds of teachers and child care providers in Guam and the Pacific Region. She is the founder of the *Guam Child Care and Development Association*. Her interest in professional development for educators and her long time passion for young children's learning earned her the University of Guam *1998 and 2004 Faculty Award for Excellence in Service*.

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Richard Laidlaw works in Stockland, Sydney, Australia. He received his Bachelor of Education and Master of Education (Research and Adult Learning Majors) at University of Technology, Sydney, and then completed his Doctor of Education degree in 2004 at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. He was also awarded a Churchill Fellowship. He worked as Manager VIC & TAS, Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (Government Agency in Education Management Industry) and Senior Manager, Learning & Development in Ernst & Young (Partnership). Currently, Dr. Richard Laidlaw is General Manager HR “C Retail in Stockland. His research interests include School to Work initiatives and effective learning processes.

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Titus S. P. Li is a PhD student in education at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the Netherlands. He was born in China, bought up and educated in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. He had extensive teaching experience in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong before taking up the teaching post in the Faculty of Education, University of Macau in 1993. He then managed a primary school for two years in Hong Kong. In 2003, he returned to Macao working in the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau. His most recent publication "Reform and Challenges of Mathematics Education at the Primary Level in Macao" (2007) is in the Journal of Basic Education. His research focuses on primary mathematics education, comparative education, teacher education and student abnormal behavior.

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