

# APCCE-2017

## 1st Asia Pacific Conference on Contemporary Education

*Theme:*  
*Education for  
Change*

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### VENUE

**Education Development Centre**  
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# Abstracts



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# Conference Chair



**Dr Steven Barrett**  
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## *Biography*

Steven has a doctorate of education from Flinders University in which he focused on educational measurement and educational policy, as well as a doctor of philosophy in labour economics from Adelaide. He has over three decades experience teaching economics and is currently a visiting lecturer in the School of Economics at the University of Adelaide. In the past Steven has published in the area of economics education. Since completing his PhD in 2010 Steven has been attempting to integrate his two areas of doctoral studies. To this end he been exploring issues related to the economics of education.



*Education*



*Abstracts*

# INSIDER INSIGHTS ABOUT EDUCATIONAL PROVISIONS FOR CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW IN CORRECTIONAL CENTRES IN GHANA

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## **Abstract**

Based on two years' of ethnographic fieldwork, this paper discusses gaps in educational provisions for children in conflict with the law in correctional centres in Ghana. Educational activities permeate the entire fabric of correctional institutions for children in conflict with law. These activities play a vital role, and per correctional authorities, contribute to the reformation of these juvenile and young offenders. Notwithstanding institutional efforts to promote educational efforts, ethnographic evidence points to educational provisions being fraught with lack of interest by youngsters as well as pedagogical, gender and structural gaps. A key highlight of this paper is the fact that children in conflict with the law, amidst such constraints, demonstrate the capacity to side track from, as well as appropriate institutionally accepted methods by devising their own seemingly crude ones. These appropriated crude methods, though run counter to the institutionally accepted ones, nevertheless yield useful outcomes. Though, based on a small-scale ethnographic research that does not lend itself to generalisations, discussions reveal relevant insider insights that unearth gaps in educational provisions previously concealed from human rights monitors. Within the grip of confinement, coupled with educational constraints, youngsters demonstrate the capacity to contribute to their own processes of change and development. Discussions draw on an anthropological research conducted from 2008 to 2013 with children in correctional institutions in Ghana, providing first-hand data complementary to most human rights and legal studies. Methods such as life history narratives, participant observations, interviews and also focus group discussions were employed.

**Keywords:** Appropriation, Children in Conflict with the Law, Correctional Centres, Educational Gaps, Ghana.

## TOWARDS EFFICIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN ENGINEERING COURSES

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the impacts on learning of summative (as compared to traditional 'normal' assessment methods - midterms and final examinations) and continuous assessment (CA) methods in higher education since students' approaches to learning are greatly influenced by the assessment methods adopted. The primary goal of selecting CA was to lessen the rate of failure in typical engineering courses (Fluid Mechanics, Dynamics and Mechanics of Material) and measure its effectiveness on learning. The preliminary results reveal a drastic decrease of the number of fails in some courses. Students' perceptions about CA assessment strategy have been collected through questionnaires to better implement the CA method and to enhance the teaching effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Teaching, Learning, Assessment, Higher education.

# THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE HOME/FAMILY ENVIRONMENT ON ARABIC LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AMONG THE ARABIC SPEAKERS IN THE REGIONAL QUEENSLAND CITY OF TOOWOOMBA, AUSTRALIA

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## **Abstract**

This paper endeavours to scrutinize the role of the home/family domain as a key factor that may contribute to the maintenance of Arabic language within the Arabic-speaking community in the regional Queensland city of Toowoomba, Australia. A qualitative approach was utilized in order to explore the language maintenance phenomenon by engaging in the everyday life of the Arabic speakers. Data was collected through participant observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 adults who were selected using a mixed purposeful sampling strategy. The findings of this study suggest that the home/family domain has a positive impact on Arabic language maintenance. The conclusions of this study are envisaged to enrich the knowledge and theories of language maintenance, as well as redesigning the multilingualism and multiculturalism structure of the Australian society.

**Keywords:** Language Maintenance, Community Language, Home/Family Domain, Arabic language.

## BRAINS, MORALITY, AND EDUCATION

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### **Abstract**

A great deal of excitement surrounds the development of the new field of neuro-education which tries to apply findings in neuroscience to issues of learning and education. While this paper takes a skeptical view of these developments, it combines neuroscience and education in a different way. It argues for incorporating neuroscience into the teaching (and even for the resolution) of ethical disputes. Three moral issues prove particularly amenable to neuroscientific data: abortion, animal experimentation and torture. The following three scientific claims help illuminate the respective ethical issues:

1. The fetus does not experience pain until late in the third trimester of pregnancy.
2. Animals, at a certain point on the evolutionary scale, feel pain.
3. The use of loud music on prisoners follows a similar neural pathway as the infliction of a painful physical stimulus.

It proves not only important, but even essential to include neuroscience in the teaching of ethical and legal issues. With this approach, students can learn science in the context of examining controversial moral issues.

**Keywords:** Abortion, Brain, Ethics, Experimentation & Torture.

# EDUCATING AND PUNISHING THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

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## **Abstract**

The American Psychological Association submitted an amicus curiae brief in the US Supreme Court case, *Hodgson v. Minnesota* (1990), arguing that given that adolescents had similar cognitive skills as adults, they should not be required to notify their parents before having an abortion. Yet, a brief in *Roper v. Simmons* (2005) was submitted arguing that since science had demonstrated that adolescent brains were not as developed as adult brains, they lack the ability to take moral responsibility for their decisions. Justice Scalia and many commentators found these positions inconsistent. Other commentators (Steinberg 2009) have attempted to reconcile the differences by claiming that *Hodgson* raised issues of cognitive capacity, whereas *Roper* addressed matters of emotive control. Yet, things are not quite so simple, especially if we recognize the complex interplay between the cognitive and the emotive. This not only has legal implications, but also educational ones. Are there ways to more effectively integrate the cognitive capacities and so-called emotive short-comings of adolescents? Or are we asking the wrong questions? To better deal with these issues, we need to seriously consider the implications of neuro-scientific claims about the adolescent brain. The problem may be as educators and parents that we do not recognize, encourage, and facilitate the cognitive capacities of young people to make moral judgments at a very early age.

**Keywords:** Abortion, Adolescents, Brain Development, Cognitive ability, Moral Responsibility.

## A SURVEY ON THE BIOLOGICAL COGNITION OF URBAN INSECTS FOR RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TAIWAN

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### Abstract

The Ministry of Education in Taiwan began to promote the “Digital Rural Care Program” and actively assisted vulnerable children with digital services and information applications since 2005. Most of the rural primary schools are well equipped with electronic whiteboards, computers, tablets and other digital teaching aids. The cumulative value is up to 20 million US dollars. In the aspects of science learning, observation is the first priority learning skill. Our research term was speculated that the nature and open environment (outside of urban area) is helping students to see more and be sensitive to the unknown subjects that are not introduced in text books as yet. Thus, this state of affairs is problematic since we know that students’ ability of observation has not turned into the way what we surmised. This study used survey data gathered from 128 students of 4 different rural primary schools (official found) in Taiwan and the questionnaire collected data about students’ individual learning behaviors, and cognition on common insects (Silver-fish, Clothing moths, Moths, and *Drosophila*) in home environment. Quantitative results indicate that students of rural area have low self-observation ability, low interested in biological knowledge and even lack awareness in their rich natural environment. Findings could help teachers or the government to develop more course contents to enhance the observation training and encourage students to engage a life observation and self-learning in the future, without setting up the hardware only.

**Keywords:** Bioscience Education, Partial Schools, Cognition, Observation, Insects.

# ATTITUDES AND MINDSETS OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

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## Abstract

This research study focused on understanding the impact that preservice teachers' attitudes and mindsets had on their approach to learning mathematics and how this influenced their potential as mathematics teachers. Students entering primary teacher education courses do so with a wide variety of attitudes towards mathematics and beliefs about people's potential to learn mathematics. Based on initial survey results collected during a pre-study phase, clusters were formed from different combinations of attitude and mindset. These clusters then served as case studies for further investigation, which sought to understand more deeply their views of learning and teaching mathematics, and their responses to student-centred learning. Qualitative research data was gathered via interviews and questionnaires. The findings suggested that both attitude and mindset intertwined in a complex manner to influence preservice teachers' views of learning and teaching mathematics, and that these views are related to their past experiences as learners. The study also found that many participants felt the student-centred experiences were a meaningful approach to engaging learners, but it was clear that students with fixed mindsets were more reluctant to accept a student-centred approach to learning and teaching mathematics. By comparison, students with a growth mindset were more reflective and open to student-centred approaches, such as developing student autonomy and recognizing the teacher as facilitator.

**Keywords:** Mathematics Education, Attitudes, Mind-sets.

## STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY – ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) UNITS IN THE BACHELOR OF BUSINESS

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### Abstract

Graduate employability seems to be a challenging task not only for the graduates themselves, but to universities, colleges and governments as well. Each year thousands of graduates flood the job-market with such high expectations (Shelley, 1994), hoping that what has been taught at the universities and colleges has some bearing on the assurance of landing a job, more so with a high-paying employment. However, with the altering landscape within industries, employers have different ideas and a varying set of yardstick on certain skills to meet with the business needs (Perrone and Vickers, 2003). Hence, graduates may be left with a variations of skills acquired during tertiary education and the needs of the market at the point in time, resulting in a mismatch. Studies have revealed that many universities and colleges across the globe have made surmountable efforts in developing the necessary skills for their students to meet with the ever demanding job market (Harvey 2005; Higher Education Funding Council for England 2003; Yorke, 2004). Koh et al (2013) emphasized that some institutions of higher learning have made “students employability” a cardinal function. There have been syllabuses improvements, quality assurance in universities and colleges, dialogue sessions with employers and other initiative, leading to the narrowing of these gaps of expectation.

Subsequently, such employability expectations cannot be ignored in the Victoria University’s Business program. Off late, there has been an impetus call to review the effectiveness of a crucial module within the Victoria University’s Bachelor of Business (VUBB), which is the Professional Development Units (also known as Business Challenge Units), which drives students to acquire and demonstrate soft skills and cognitive ability in the midst of business dynamics. Hence, the purpose of this study is to birth the opportunity to formally evaluate the curriculum of this module and the need to improve, if any, to meet the business subtleties, with regards to employability skills, both in Malaysia and Australia. This study includes

students from VUBB Malaysia and Australia. Such novelty of research between the two geographical locations has not been conducted before. Furthermore, to date, there has hardly been any formal research to identify the gaps within the curriculum structure with that of its appropriateness in meeting the current demands of employers. This study also takes into account the cultural differences, demographics and skills appropriateness in both countries. The methodology of this research is by adopting samples from Alumni Associations of both Sunway College and Victoria University, involving a sample size of five hundred. Both qualitative and qualitative analysis would be applied in order to have a much vigorous results. The findings will denote the areas of improvements in the professional development unit offered to be of relevance to the current industrial needs.

**Keywords:** Employability, skills, Malaysia, Australia, Business Challenge Units.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY MALE AFRICAN IMMIGRANT YOUTH IN ACCESSING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO

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### Abstract

The presentation is on a participatory research study aiming at better understanding the role played by acculturation, cultural capital and masculinity in first generation male African immigrant youth's efforts to access post-secondary education. Our research team recently completed phase 1 of the study, which consisted of interviews and focus groups with 40 young men who immigrated to Canada from Africa as dependents of economic immigrants or refugees. The young men graduated from high school in Southern Ontario in Canada and have continued on through postsecondary education. Our presentation will highlight findings from phase 1 of our study. Although we asked primarily about their postsecondary education decisions, the young men revealed general themes on their gradual adjustment to life in Canada giving us a good idea of their evolving relationships with parents, school authorities and peers in home, school, and in neighbourhood contexts. More specifically, they discussed the theme of belonging, and the meaning of being young Black men in a society where in their words: "a standard exists for people who are Black and that standard is not very high." African immigrant and refugee male youth face challenges in various aspects of their educational lives, but as this study reveals, these young men still find ways of navigating these challenges to achieve their educational goals. While certain forms of cultural capital are valued over others and can help or hinder one's social mobility, for some African students they incorporated their ethnic cultural capital into this valued cultural capital. The ethnic cultural capital of immigrants forms a crucial part of the integration process and should help inform how school curriculum, programs and policies, and classroom dynamics should be created to serve or support visible minority students in Canadian schools. The participants in this study indicated how their culture shapes their attitudes, especially

in schools. However, they expressed how difficult it is for them to navigate the cultural capital they have in the midst of the strong stereotypes that have already been created about black male youth in Canadian schools and society.

**Keywords:** Cultural Capital, High School Education, Male African Immigrant Youth, Postsecondary Education.





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