

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN HONG KONG: PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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Abstract

With the intensification of transnational migration, issues of social marginalization in hyper-urbanization have become part of a long debate revolving around multiculturalism in plural societies around the world. A Related discussion has focused on citizenship rights and affirmative policies, and often the foci shift to the social welfare and financial implications of these policies, thus creating social boundaries, cultural stereotypes, and inequalities on various levels. In this process, ironically, the core concept of culture in multiculturalism and interculturalism, and how and why it leads to social distinctions has been sidestepped. This is particularly true in Hong Kong, a self-labelled metropolis and "Asia's World City". Hong Kong has been a multicultural society since the nineteenth century, but mainstream society has long been oblivious to its own cultural diversity, and the role of its ethnic minorities. This paper evaluates an anthropologically based intercultural education program held in the past four years, paying attention to how anthropological research on interculturalism was pedagogically applied both in the classroom and in public/community education. The goals and results of the intercultural program were evaluated using models of intercultural competence development (including cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains). Through analyzing field data from participant observation and from evaluations by different stakeholders such as program organizers, instructors and participants, the author examines the way ethnic existences and cultural boundaries were practiced in the everyday lived experiences of Hong Kongers, as well as the range of cultural sensibility that could be developed in different educational settings. The author argues that anthropology as a discipline could be applied in the teaching of interculturalism in both formal and informal educational contexts, using different formats.

Keywords: Intercultural Education, Multicultural Society, Hong Kong.
