



Chinese radicals/words and the construction of science concepts

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the structure of Chinese characters and words and the construction of science concepts in primary education in Hong Kong. Five primary teachers who have taught both Chinese and General Studies subjects were interviewed. Their views on whether Chinese characters and words facilitate the understanding of science, or in contrast result in confusion, were collected. They were also asked if they used to make use of the characteristics in teaching. Findings showed that the teachers agreed that some of the radicals and words do facilitate students' science learning, but others lead to confusion. They also seldom made use of the characteristics of Chinese words to teach science concepts. The findings also provide implications on the issue of subject and integrated teaching. Teachers need to consider integrating Chinese and science teaching when appropriate.