

Researching Teacher Education Policy in Hong Kong

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Teacher quality has been the subject of much attention in recent years. Policy makers in various parts of the world have developed policies to attract, develop and retain high-quality teachers, and have increasingly placed teacher education under central control and direction. Teacher education institutions are criticized for not being able to recruit and produce high quality graduates to serve the needs of schools.

In Hong Kong, teacher education policies in the past decade have often been paradoxical, in areas such as teachers' professional training requirements, teacher demand and supply and the positioning of teacher education in the higher education sector. The presenter contends that there has been a paucity of research on the broad policy and social contexts which influence the development of teacher education policies in Hong Kong. The policy development has often not been well informed by research on issues such as routes of teacher preparation, teacher demand and supply, teacher qualifications, teachers' professional development and teachers' work. Finally, with reference to his recent work in a six-nation research project on teacher quality, the presenter cautions against simplistic interpretation of indicators from cross-national teacher studies.



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Dr. Lai's research interests include teacher education policies, teacher quality, teacher demand and supply, teacher professionalization, teacher workload and teacher change in small class teaching. He was a member of a six-nation Comparative Study of Teacher Preparation and Qualifications. He has published journal papers and book chapters on routes in initial teacher education, alternative teacher certification, qualifications of the teaching force, attractiveness of teaching as a career, graduate teacher policy in Hong Kong primary schools and professionalization of primary school teachers. He has also written newspaper articles on education and teacher education policies.