The Landscape of Curriculum Studies in Hong Kong From 1980–2008: A Review

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While there were few publications on curriculum studies in Hong Kong in the 1960s and the 1970s, 1980s and the 1990s saw the growth in research and publications. This review is mainly based on papers published in Hong Kong journals and the ERIC database as well as selected books related to curriculum studies from 1980 to 2008. The results showed the trends that while there were publications on curriculum theories and conceptual analysis of curriculum issues, there were not many publications on philosophical curriculum studies especially those based on the reconceptualist and postmodernist traditions. In addition, in terms of research traditions in curriculum studies, it seems that the literature cited in this paper gave an impression of dominance of curriculum studies in the area of school-based curriculum development based on the practical traditions. In contrast, there were less curriculum studies based on the scientific traditions. Moreover, in terms of research methods used in curriculum studies, there were many practical curriculum studies

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employing case studies as well as analyses of curriculum materials and plans. Some directions for future curriculum studies are then suggested.

Key words: curriculum studies, Hong Kong, research

Introduction: Context of Curriculum Research in Hong Kong Since the 1980s

While there were few publications on curriculum studies in Hong Kong in the 1960s and the 1970s, 1980s and the 1990s saw the growth in research and publications. Before the 1980s Hong Kong lacked any indigenous publishing facilities specifically for educational studies. The journal *New Horizons in Education* (formerly known as *New Horizons*, published by the Hong Kong Teachers' Association, launched in 1961) and the *Education Journal* (formerly known as *Studium*, published by the Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, established in 1968) were among the oldest educational journals in Hong Kong. The *Educational Research Journal*, under the auspices of the Hong Kong Educational Research Association, was first published in 1986. In the 1990s, more Hong Kong based journals focusing on curriculum studies were initiated. These included the *Journal of Basic Education* (formerly known as *Journal of Primary Education*, 1991, now published by the Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research) and *Curriculum Forum* (1991– 2001, published by the Department of Curriculum Studies, The University of Hong Kong).[1]

According to the analysis of the ERIC database by Lam and Zhang (2008, p. 248), there were five entries on curriculum studies in Hong Kong during the 1980s, increasing to 29 entries in the 1990s. From 2000 to 2007, there were 27 entries.[2] Lee, Leung, and Yin's (2005) analysis of the papers published in the *Journal of Basic Education* from 1991 to 2005 revealed that the category "curriculum, teaching and teacher" (including topics of teacher development and teacher education, curriculum reform and implementation, teaching practice and innovation, teacher belief, teaching approaches and methods, teaching process, textbook, teacher-student relationship and extra-curricular activities) made up 40.53% of all the papers, ranking first among all categories.

There were two comprehensive and authoritative handbooks on research on curriculum that provide an entry to the complicated field. The

Handbook of Research on Curriculum (Jackson, 1992) included "topics and issues within curricular categories" covering topics such as writing and reading, English Language, Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Art education, Physical education and the Extra-curriculum. The more recent *Sage Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction* (Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2008) introduced new sections on "teaching curriculum" and "internationalizing curriculum" as well as new topics or issues such as "identity, community, and diversity: retheorizing multicultural curriculum for the postmodern era" and "immigrant students' experience of curriculum" under the umbrella of diversifying curriculum.

Given the diversity of topics and issues in the field, this review is mainly based on papers published in Hong Kong journals including the *Education Journal* and *Educational Research Journal* as well as major international curriculum journals such as the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *Curriculum and Teaching*, *Curriculum Inquiry*, *JCT: An interdisciplinary Journal of Curriculum Studies*, the *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, *Curriculum Perspectives*, *Curriculum Studies* (now known as *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*), and the *Curriculum Journal*. Local journals such as *New Horizons in Education*, *Curriculum Forum* and the *Journal of Basic Education* as well as ERIC and selected books related to curriculum studies are also referred to as illustrations for the development of curriculum studies research in Hong Kong over the past 28 years. [3, 4]

Inevitably, given the volume of publications and limits of words, a selection had to be made for this review. Articles with keywords such as curriculum and teaching/instruction were given the highest priority. Also, articles related to special needs education and teacher education as well as postsecondary and tertiary education have been excluded. The remaining sections in this paper focus on various categories of curriculum studies followed by a discussion of trends and future directions of curriculum inquiry. It is important to note that the assignment of an article to a particular category was often subjective and arbitrary since many articles could be classified in more than one category (Chan, 1994).

During the process of analyzing the content, and formulating the categories of scholarly outputs, it was found that the frameworks suggested by the above two curriculum handbooks were not befitted. It was then decided that based on the dominance of outputs by Hong Kong curriculum scholars, the following eight features and major categories were identified and discussed: (1) Publications on curriculum/teaching-related policies, curriculum policy-making and curriculum history; (2) Publications on

teachers' curriculum orientations, beliefs and conceptions; (3) Publications on school-based curriculum development and curriculum/instructional leadership; (4) Publications on curriculum and instructional design and research, Target-Oriented Curriculum, subject teaching and learning; (5) Publications on student perceptions of curriculum change, student learning and conceptions; (6) Publications related to curriculum implementation and evaluation; (7) Publications on special issues related to curriculum and teaching in Hong Kong; and (8) Publications on curriculum studies beyond Hong Kong.

Special Features of the Landscape of Curriculum Studies in Hong Kong

Publications on Curriculum/Teaching-related Policies, Curriculum Policy-Making and Curriculum History

Compared with other aspects of curriculum studies, there has been a dearth of curriculum policy-making and decision-making studies in the 1990s (e.g., Wan Chan, 1993). Fok (2005) offered a critical review of curriculum advisory bodies in Hong Kong, suggesting that more studies needed to be done. On the other hand, some scholars offered critical reviews of the status of nine-year compulsory schooling in the 1990s and the curriculum reforms after 1997 when Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty (e.g., Kennedy, Fok, & Chan, 2006). Seven curriculum scholars, for example, commented that the past compulsory education policy "was biased in the direction of quantity rather than quality, had no clear aims and objectives and could not fit the need of the society" (Ho, Li, Yeung, & Chan, 2000, p. 43).

Educational history in general, and curriculum history in particular, have been neglected areas in Hong Kong's educational research. As regards curriculum history or curriculum studies from a comparative perspective, there were a few papers in the 1980s on the development of geographical education (Fung & Lee, 1987), the secondary school Chinese History syllabus (Pong, 1987) and the History syllabus (Cheung, 1987) since the post-war period in Hong Kong. Luk's (1991) study illustrated how British administrators and Chinese educators in Hong Kong during the nineteenth century and early to mid-twentieth century had selectively used Chinese cultural heritage in the curriculum. Mak and Fang (2007, p. 20) analyzed Chinese newspaper reports during the 1930s to 1950s to construct the

development of basic education in Hong Kong, highlighting the "quantitative development of education, growth and decline of public and private schools, quality improvement, educational opportunities and selection, as well as students' attitudes and behaviors."

The study by Morris, McClelland, and Wong (1997) illustrates the evolution of Social Studies as a school subject in Hong Kong from 1971 to 1990s. J. T. Y. Lo (1999) also analyzed the changes of the Hong Kong Social Studies curriculum in 1967–1997, which displayed "evolutionary changes from depoliticization to politicalization, from national detachment to re-convergence, from teacher-centred and transmission approach to child-centred and participatory (activity) approach, from passive citizenship to active citizenship." He also analyzed the interaction of politics and curriculum in the dialectical web of localism, nationalism and globalism in Hong Kong's History curriculum (Lo, 2000, p. 50). Kan and Vickers's (2002) study of the school History curriculum, consisting of two school subjects of Chinese History and History, suggested that "the relationship of colonialism to curriculum development may in Hong Kong's case be better understood in terms of a mutually convenient collaboration between the government and local educational elites." A recent book publication, which displayed an insightful account of the establishment of Chinese History as a school subject, is Kan's (2007) *Hong Kong's Chinese History Curriculum from 1945: Politics and Identity*.

For the government initiated curriculum reform, with the orientation of "Learning to Learn" in the new century, Day (2001, p. 69) lamented, "…the Curriculum Development Institute [CDI] and Hong Kong's curriculum developers are not thinking beyond the narrow confines which enlighten even Hirst's nine 'forms' and that the Key Learning Areas are simply ways of grouping previous 'subjects'." Lam (2001) commented that the curriculum reform was full of contradictions and short of professionalism. Morrison (2003, p. 297) argued that the curriculum reform tended to "temper complexity with eclecticism."

In contrast, the medium of instruction (MOI) and language in education and bilingual education have been issues attracting the attention of educational researchers (e.g., Reynolds, 1984; Ripple, Jaquish, Lee, & Salili, 1984). In the first four issues of the *Educational Research Journal* (1986–1989), some articles focused on medium-of-instruction related issues (e.g., Ho, 1986; Siu & Mak, 1989; Tam, 1986). For the *Education Journal*, there are few papers on language of instruction or language policy (e.g., Kwo, 1987).

There were more articles on MOI related issues in the 1990s and in the new century.

Boyle (2001), for example, examined the complexities of medium of instruction policy since Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) in 1997 and advocated consultation with parents as major stakeholders when implementing future educational changes. Other scholars have also contributed to such debate and policy discourses from various perspectives (e.g., Adamson & Lai, 1997; Chan, 1991; Choi, 2008; Ho, 2008; Leung, 2000; Lo, 1991; Siu, Ho, Siu, & Coniam, 1997; Tollefson & Tsui, 2004;Tsui, Shum, Wong, Tse, & Ki, 1999). With the issue of the consultation document *Medium of Instruction (MOI) for Secondary Schools and Secondary School Places Allocation* in 2005, there have been heated debates (e.g., Tsang, 2005) and studies on the implications of MOI policy for classroom instruction, use of instructional materials and student learning (e.g., Shek, Johnson, & Law, 1991; Yip, Coyle, & Tsang, 2007).

Publications on Teachers' Curriculum Orientations, Beliefs and Conceptions

The teacher is a fundamental component or commonplace of curriculum studies. There have been quantitative and qualitative studies on teacher beliefs. Cheung and Wong (2002), for example, developed and validated a 30-item curriculum orientation inventory. They found that teachers valued five theoretically conflicting orientations, namely academic, cognitive process, social reconstruction, humanistic and technological orientations. Moreover, experienced teachers tended to value the academic orientation and English Language teachers tended to be more humanistic than Science teachers.

As regards Chinese Language teachers' beliefs and conceptions, a study by Leung et al. (1999, p. 43) revealed that Chinese Language teachers held the following beliefs: having strict classroom discipline, having a harmonious teacher-student relationship as beneficial to learning, and subject-based teaching objectives and student-centred teaching strategies being effective. Tam's (2006a) study revealed that the teaching beliefs of Chinese Language teachers could be differentiated into the two main orientations of transmission and heuristics. Regarding cross-curricular issues, a study by Lam and Lee (2000) on secondary school teachers' conceptions of information technology (IT) revealed that teachers had varying scopes of conceptions ranging from being ignorant or uncertain

about what IT was, IT as AV, IT as the computer and IT involving teaching and learning; IT being good and changing definitions of IT. There were also studies on musical beliefs in Western and Chinese civilizations (M. Wong, 2001), Putonghua teachers' beliefs (So, Leung, & Tse, 2004) and Chinese Language beliefs of teaching Chinese culture (Wong & Lam, 2007). There were also studies on Art teachers' beliefs and conceptions (e.g., Lam & Kember, 2004; Wong & Cheung, 2002), Physical Education teachers' curriculum orientations (Ha, 2002), Civic Education teachers' conceptions (e.g., Leung, 2003), History teachers' historical conceptions (e.g., Yeung, 2002) and teachers' conception of curriculum integration (Yeung & Lam, 2007), and teaching and learning General Studies (So, Cheng, Leung, & Wong, 1999).

Publications on School-based Curriculum Development and Curriculum/Instructional Leadership

With the introduction of the School-based Curriculum Project Scheme (SBCPS) by the government in 1988 and the promotion of school-based curriculum development in the new century, school-based curriculum development has been an important theme of curriculum studies in Hong Kong (e.g., Mok, 1991; Wong, 1989). Lo (1998) found that there were several main reasons for not using the disseminated SBCPS materials: dissonance of the projects with the requirements of subject syllabuses and examinations; difficulty in the location of the projects; availability of other teaching materials; and the need for special facilities, knowledge and skills. Difficulties and concerns of curriculum implementation were also echoed in school-based curriculum development of Chinese Language, General Studies and curriculum integration (Chan, 2007; Tam, 2006b). Lo provided further analysis of school-based curriculum development, which was affected by school culture (Lo, Y. C., 1999) and curriculum leaders' interpersonal skill (Lo, 2007).

Through the case study of an elementary school, Law and Wan (2006) found that participating teachers experienced professional development through the processes of planning, implementing and reflecting on curriculum practice and innovations. In an information and communication technology project involving the web-design known as the Knowledge Forum, Yuen (2004) found that four themes contributed to the implementation of innovation: school culture (collaborative culture and strong parental support), principal leadership (supportive with clear

understanding of the innovation), school strategies, and the impact of the curriculum. For utilizing curriculum adaptation strategies to cater for students' individual differences, Lo (2004) found that teachers' worries and concerns included the decline in student learning, the lack of relevant professional knowledge and competence for teachers, workload and time needed for curriculum adaptation and curriculum adaptation to be a strategy of school policy. As regards curriculum integration in primary schools, Leung (2002) identified critical factors for its implementation as related to "teacher," "school" and "education system."

Lee and his colleagues (2007) explored the major challenges faced by Hong Kong Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE) teachers as they developed a school-based Integrated Humanities curriculum in secondary schools. It was found that three major attributes shaped PSHE curriculum development: teachers' perception and receptivity to the integrated curriculum mode, teachers' readiness for pedagogical changes, and the extent of school support for the duration of curriculum planning and implementation. Apart from studies of school-based curriculum change, there were studies on curriculum change and implementation of school subjects such as Geography (e.g., Lee & Gerber, 1996) and Physical Education (Chan & Johns, 1998). Recently, there have been more papers related to the new subject Liberal Studies (LS) in the new senior secondary curriculum introduced in 2009 (Deng, 2009; Fok, 2007). Lam (2007), for example, has argued that it would be desirable to adopt a whole-school hermeneutical learning community for the implementation of LS.

There have been some book and journal publications on curriculum leadership and school-based curriculum development (e.g., Wong & Chu, 2005a). A study by Chan and Cheng (1993) showed that the instructional leadership of principals in Hong Kong secondary schools was characterized by the provision of incentives for learning, enforcing academic standards, and maintaining high visibility. The studies on curriculum leadership and management in secondary schools by Lee and Dimmock (1998, 1999) revealed that principals and vice-principals assumed relatively low levels of direct involvement in curriculum leadership and higher levels of indirect involvement. In addition, linkage and management tended to be more pervasive within departments than between departments. In the case of primary schools, Lau and his colleagues (1992) found that principals' instructional leadership as perceived by teachers tended to emphasize the following aspects: motivating student learning, formulating school goals,

disseminating school goals, as well as monitoring and evaluating teaching (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987).

Publications on Curriculum and Instructional Design and Research, Target-Oriented Curriculum, Subject Teaching and Learning

For the *Education Journal* in the 1980s, there are examples of papers related to humanistic curriculum (or humanities education) (Cheng, S. C., 1980), the planning of the core curriculum (Cheng, 1982), instructional design (Siu, 1983), effectiveness of a curriculum (Cheng, 1986), and the quality of textbooks in senior secondary schools (Fung & Chan, 1984) as well as Geography education (Lam, 1988) and Chinese History teaching (Fu & Au, 1988).

The local journals *Curriculum Forum* and *New Horizons in Education* published many papers related to curriculum development and teaching method (Wu & Tse, 1998; Wu & Ho, 2003). Some papers highlighted curriculum issues such as the core curriculum (Chan, 1995), mastery learning (e.g., Hon, 1993), and the management of teaching resources (Lee & Adamson, 1995) while others focused on curriculum and teaching of different school subjects ranging from Geography (e.g., Lee, 1996; Stimpson, 1995), Putonghua (Lai, 1996), Business (Lewis & Cheung, 1995) to History (e.g., Sweeting & Leung, 1991). Other local journals such as the *Educational Research Journal* also published papers on subject development and teaching. Siu and Siu (1988), for example, analyzed instructional routines in the teaching of Economics, which involved both full-time and part-time student-teachers.

As regards journal publications on the theoretical foundations of curriculum and teaching, Biggs (1987) advocated his three-self presage-process-product (known as 3P) model of learning and teaching. He argued that a deep approach to learning led to better performance than surface approaches and "the use of a poorly understood language as the medium of instruction can only result in surface learning" (p. 11). He also proposed the use of the SOLO taxonomy as a model of curriculum development and criterion-based assessment (Biggs, 1988).

Wong's paper (1991) on paradigms for research on teaching was followed by Fok and Wong's (1999) revisit of the paradigms for research on teaching. Fok and Wong (1995) had also written a paper on textbook design from the cognitive perspective. Law and Wong (1995) as well as Zheng and

Wong (1997), on the other hand, explored the implications of constructivism for instructional design. There were papers related to teachers' professional behaviors (e.g., Cheng, 1987a) and teacher-student pedagogical relationships (Postiglione, 1983). Lee, Lam, and Li (2003) gave an overview of teacher evaluation and effectiveness in Hong Kong, covering studies on classroom environment and instructional analysis. Marton and his colleagues' Variation theory has exerted a significant influence on the research and/or development of subject teaching and learning in Hong Kong (e.g., Chik & Runesson, 2008; Ki, Tse, & Shum, 2005; Marton & Tsui, 2004; Wong, 2006). In addition, the Learning Study model has shown positive impact on student learning and provides an approach for catering for individual differences (Lo, Pong, & Chik, 2005).

The Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC), originating from Targets and Target-Related Assessment (TTRA) (Littlewood, 1993), was another territory-wide curriculum innovation in the 1990s encompassing the subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics (Adamson, Kwan, & Chan, 2000; Biggs, 1995; Fung, 1995). According to the analysis of Morris, Chan, and Lo (1997, p. 20), "they [policy makers] tend to regard the reform as a product perfect and final in itself and blame the non-implementation on teachers…teachers interpreted reforms in terms of their prior experiences and understandings and learnt in ways consistent with those described by social constructivists of human learning." Hau, Ip, and Cheng (1996) discussed the implications of TOC for student assessment and inter-school comparisons of performance task results which might lead to resistance from teachers and the public.

The local journals had many papers related to the teaching of Chinese language, English Language and Mathematics. Many of these papers are largely descriptive or analytical. For Chinese language, there have been papers on a review of the Chinese language syllabus (Fong, 1988), teaching (Ho, 1988; Hon, 1989; Yu, 1984), instructional routines (Ho & Siu, 1991; Lee, F. L., 1999), a school-based curriculum tailoring scheme (Tse & Lee, 1996), classroom questioning (Shum, Chow, Ma, & Shing, 1997), moral education (Chow, 1991), various teaching strategies of Chinese Language (e.g., Chow, 2001), the use of the magnetic board and magic cards in instruction (Suen, Ho, & Mak, 1995), whole language writing (Kwan, 2001; Tse, Tang, Kwan, & Sit, 1994), the teaching of Chinese writing (Kwan, 1997), the teaching of poetry (Fok, 2003), the teaching of recitation (Yeung & Hoyan, 2001), reading instruction (e.g., Lau, 2007), Chinese Language textbooks (e.g., Ho, M. S., 2006; Tse & Shum, 1995), remedial teaching

(Lau, 2001), sentence teaching (Ng, 2001), use of group investigation (Chan & Hui, 2002), the use of a multi-sensory approach to creative essay writing (Ng & Yeung, 2008) as well as papers on "Read More and Write More" teaching strategy (Ho, M. K., 1996) and students' feedback on using "cassette tape marking" in Chinese writing instruction (Ho, 1999). There were also studies related to Chinese Literature curriculum and teaching (e.g., Yau, 2004).

For English Language, there were many papers on English language education in the 1980s and early 1990s (e.g., Falvey, 1991) with foci of remedial teaching (Johnson, 1986), use of newspaper (Mok, 1989), communicative language teaching (Cheng, W., 1980) and grammar teaching (Cheng, 1984). There were papers on analysis of the primary English syllabus with special reference to its relevance for compulsory schooling (Sze & Wong, 1999) and the implementation of the communicative English Language curriculum at secondary level (e.g., Evans, 1997). There were studies related to an arrangement of a camp for improving oral English (Hung & Senf, 1992), a review of communicative language teaching in Hong Kong (Sze, 1992), the washback effect of examinations (e.g., Andrews & Fullilove, 1993; Cheng, 2005), teaching conversations in second language classrooms (Sze, 1995), computer-assisted language learning (Tao & Chung, 1995), messages conveyed in primary classrooms (Bodycott, 1997), the implementation of the Bridge program (Liu & Goldstein, 1998), task-based language teaching (Carless, 1999; Tong & Adamson, 2008), the selection of coursebooks and use and adaptation of textbooks (Lee, Sze, & Chun, 1998, 2001), the use of IT in the English classroom (e.g., Coniam, 2002), the use of a "language-across-the-curriculum" approach in helping students to adapt to an English medium of instruction environment in secondary schools (e.g., Man, Coniam, & Lee, 2002), using podcasts to develop students' listening and speaking skills (Sze, 2006) and using the process approach to teach writing (Ho, B., 2006).

For Mathematics, there were papers on the use of history in the teaching of Mathematics (Lit, Siu, & Wong, 2001) and the impact of IT on the curriculum (Koo, 2001; please also refer to the article on mathematics education by Wong, Leung, Tang, & Chan in this special issue). At the preschool level, Cheng (2007) studied the effect of teaching materials on children's potential logical thinking development in the area of addition and subtraction.

For Science subjects, there were papers on Physics teaching (Lo, 1985), relationships between classroom environment and students' attitudes

towards Science (Cheng & Chung, 1987), Science teaching for civic education (Cheng, 1987b) in the 1980s. Some scholars analyzed Science curriculum documents from different perspectives or orientations. Cheung (2000), for example, used five curriculum orientations to analyze the Hong Kong junior secondary Science syllabus and the results revealed that the syllabus was dominated by the academic and cognitive processes orientations but the humanistic, society-centred and technological orientations were relatively neglected. There were papers on changing Science curricula (Chan & Lui, 1998), teaching Science at the primary level (So, 2002), learning Science through technology (e.g., Law, 1994), and the Biology curriculum and teaching (Pang & Day, 1991; Yip & Yung, 1999), Physics teaching (Law & Tao, 1991) as well as studies on instructional activities in Science classrooms, which found that, for example, "Science lessons were didactic in nature and teacher-student interactions were mainly confined to low-order teacher questions" (Yip & Cheung, 2004, p. 109). These findings echoed other studies and classroom observations in various subjects through school inspections (Lee, 2005b). There were also papers on the teaching of General Studies (e.g., Lo & Cheng, 2001; So, Cheng, & Tsang, 1998; Yip, 1999) as well as curriculum and teaching issues related to Physical Education (e.g., Ha and Wang's overview of physical teaching in this special issue; Wong, P.S.S., 1997).

For book publications in the 1990s, Morris (1992) published *Curriculum Development in Hong Kong* (first edition, 1990), which included a collection of his papers in various local and international journals, and later *The Hong Kong School Curriculum: Development, issues and policies* (Morris, 1996). Together with Lee and Wong's (1996) Chinese book *Curriculum: Paradigms, Perspectives and Design* (first edition, 1994), these books were quite widely circulated. Morris also edited a book series *Teaching in Hong Kong* (published by Longman, Asia), which covered aspects such as helping students with learning difficulties, group work in the classroom, lesson planning, the design and use of worksheets, using English as the medium of instruction, issue-based teaching, assessing students and making the most of teaching and learning resources. There were other books on curriculum development in primary and secondary education (Wong, 1993a, 1993b) and compulsory schooling (Wong with contributors, 1997). In this new century, there were books on curriculum reform (e.g., Kennedy, 2005; Law, 2002; Lee with contributors, 2002; Lo & Li, 2004; Yin & Lee, 2008), curriculum organization (Lam, Chan, & Zhang, 2006), catering for individual differences (Wong & Chu, with contributors, 2002), curriculum

and textbook design (Wong & Fok, 2005), teaching methods and design (Fok et al., 2004) and lesson study (Lo, Pong, & Chik, 2005).

There were three co-edited books, namely *Curriculum and Assessment for Hong Kong: Two Components, One System* (Stimpson & Morris, 1998), *Curriculum, Learning and Assessment: The Hong Kong Experience* (Stimpson, Morris, Fung, & Carr, 2003) and *School Curriculum Change and Development in Hong Kong* (Cheng, Chow, & Tsui, 2000), containing a comprehensive collection of papers related to curriculum studies in Hong Kong. Cheng, Chow, Mok, and Tsui (2000) have also produced a publication entitled *Research and Development of School Curriculum in Hong Kong: An Annotated Bibliography*.[5] In addition, there were books on the application of curriculum and instructional theories for subject curriculum and teaching research. A good example is Wong's (2000) book *Searching for the Knowledge Bases on Curriculum and Teaching*, which adopted a Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) model for the evaluation of Chinese language curriculum and teaching (Lee, 2008).

Publications on Student Perceptions of Curriculum Change, Student Learning and Conceptions

Alongside teachers, students are key components of curriculum development yet they have been relatively under-emphasized in curriculum studies as compared with teachers. There have been ongoing discussions and reflections on the "Confucian Heritage Culture" (CHC) learning phenomenon (e.g., Watkins & Biggs, 1996, 2001; Wong &Wong, 2000).

As regards student learning, Biggs's (1989) study used the Learning Process Questionnaire (LPQ), which had implications for teaching that "should be so arranged as to minimize those factors that are known to encourage a surface approach, and to maximize those that encourage deep and achieving approaches" (p. 15). There were also studies related to classroom climate (e.g., Ho, 1989).

Yung's (1997) study on the attainment of Hong Kong's bottom 20% of students at the end of their nine-year compulsory education surprisingly revealed that there was "an overall predominance of male students with low academic achievement" but "the majority of students [had] average or even above average potential to learn" (p. 170).

There were some studies of students' views of the Chinese Language and Chinese Literature curricula (e.g., Lee, Leung, & Ko, 2000; Yau, 2006). In addition to Stimpson's (1990) review of students' poor knowledge of

places, Lam and Lin (1996) studied Secondary Three students' knowledge of geography of China in Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Macao in the context of the sovereignty of Hong Kong returning to China in 1997. The findings revealed that Hong Kong students were inferior compared with their counterparts in Guangzhou and Macao and there were suggestions for strengthening the China element in the school Geography curricula. In the new century, based on the experience of school-based experimental curriculum project, Yeung (2001) found that students' interest towards Chinese History was enhanced. As regards students' Science knowledge, Chan's (2004, p. 108) study found that the "General Studies curriculum did not produce better or worse overall results of pupils' Science knowledge than the previous Primary Science Curriculum in Hong Kong."

There were also extensive studies on secondary school students' attitudes towards Mathematics (Pun & Cheng, 1981), student learning of Mathematics (e.g., Wong N.Y. et al., 2001), students' Mathematics beliefs (Chiu et al., 2005), students' second language grammar knowledge (e.g., Chiu, Coniam, & Tang, 2006), and the learning strategies of students in Physical education classes (e.g., Fu, 1999). There were also studies on the evaluation of summer camp (Sachs et al., 2003), secondary school students' art museum experience (Lam, 2003) and the contextual influences on group behavior and cohesiveness in out-of-class learning (Yan & Kember, 2005),

For book publications, two co-edited books, *The Chinese Learner* (Watkins & Biggs, 1996) and *Teaching the Chinese Learner* (Watkins & Biggs, 2001), are worthy of attention and the studies on the Chinese learner had implications for future curricular and pedagogical design and implementation.

Publications Related to Curriculum Implementation and Evaluation

Teachers' attitude, in terms of their stages of concern or receptivity to change, is an issue of concern related to curriculum change and implementation. Cheung and Ng (2000) used a Chinese version of a "Stages of Concern" questionnaire, which contained five stages (indifference, information/personal, management, consequence/collaboration and refocusing), to study primary school teachers' stages of concern about the Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC). It was found that Stage five concerns (refocusing) gradually increased in intensity for more experienced TOC teachers. As regards teacher perceptions or receptivity to curriculum change, Lee (2000) found that the variables of perceived non-monetary cost-benefit

of implementing the guidelines, perceived practicality, perceived school and other support, and issues of concern were predictors for teachers' behavioral intentions towards promoting environmental education.

Compared with subject curriculum and teaching studies, there were not many papers published on conceptual and methodological issues related to curriculum implementation and evaluation studies (e.g., Cheung, K. C., 1990; Cheung, S. P., 1998; Pang, 1993). Tang and Morris's (1989) paper provided a good example of evaluating the implementation of the Civic Education Guidelines perceived by History teachers in Hong Kong (Lee, 2005a).

In the 1990s, Cheung and his colleagues (1996a) found that high school students could provide valid implementation data through confirmatory factor analysis, analysis of variance, multi trait-multi method analysis and cross-validation with teacher self-reports and independent observational data. Cheung and others (1996b) also identified the dimensions of curriculum through the nominal group technique.

There were also studies on curriculum implementation in specific school subjects as well as effects of a program on student learning. Johns (2002), for example, examined both the policy-makers, and teachers' perspectives of curriculum implementation of Physical education in Hong Kong and evaluated the implementation from Cuban's (1998) framework using lens of effectiveness, popularity, fidelity, adaptability and longevity. He suggested that the criteria of longevity and adaptability were possibly constructive criteria for assessing curriculum change. In the area of educational effectiveness studies, Cheng, for example, had written papers related to curriculum change involving individual, group and school levels (Cheng, 1996) as well as the characteristics of effective classrooms (Cheng & Ng, 1991). Pang and Yeung (2001), on the other hand, assessed the extent of a project-based interdisciplinary curriculum in a secondary school in affecting students' perceptions of educational outcomes, particularly in enhancing pleasure in learning, through ex-ante and ex-post questionnaire surveys.

Publications on Special Issues Related to Curriculum and Teaching in Hong Kong

In addition to the areas discussed above, there were publications related to activity teaching (Chan, 1983), extra-curricular activities (e.g., Fung, 1987a, 1987b, 1988; Wong & Fung, 1990), Media education (e.g., Cheung, 2001),

Environmental education (Lee, 1993; Tilbury, 1997), Civic or Citizenship education (e.g., Law, 2004; So, 2007; Tse, 2000), the use of instructional technology or information and communication technology in education (e.g., Chin, 1995; Fung & Pun, 2001; Law & Yuen, 2003), Computer education (e.g., Kong, 2008), computer assisted learning (Hau, 1985) and computers across the curriculum (Anderson, 1987), Music education (e.g., Forrester & Wong, 2008; Ng & Morris, 1999), Putonghua education (including the use of Putonghua in teaching Chinese Language) (e.g., Ho, W. K., 1996; Huang, Yang, & Li, 2002; Kwan & Wu, 2005; Leung, 2006; Zhang, 2006), inclusive curriculum and educational practices (e.g., Forlin, 2007; Lo, 2008), project learning and assessment, (e.g., Chan, 2003; Tse et al., 2003) and creativity teaching (Chan, D.W., 2007).

Early childhood education (ECE) has been a growing area of attention in the local field of curriculum studies. P. S. S. Wong (2001) discussed the relevance of developmentally appropriate curriculum for Hong Kong. Fung and Lee (2008) analysed the ECE curriculum documents from Tylerian, Schwab's practical and critical perspectives. There were studies on school-based curriculum projects (e.g., Li, 2004), integrating information and communication technologies into the early childhood curriculum (e.g., Li, 2006), teaching of Chinese handwriting (Ho, Liu, & Lau, 2002), interactive Music curriculum (Lau & Cheong, 2008), and creative rhythmic education (Wong & Lau, 2008).

Publications on Curriculum Studies Beyond Hong Kong

Scholars from Hong Kong have also pursued research and generated publications related to curriculum, teaching and learning studies in China, Macao, Taiwan, Asia and Australia, the United States (e.g., Chiu, 1999) as well as comparative and cross-cultural curriculum studies. In addition, there were edited collections on Cross-Straits curriculum and instructional issues such as partnerships for curriculum and professional development (Wong & Hung, 2003). For China, there were studies on Social Studies education (Fouts & Chan, 1995), teachers' perceptions of curriculum reform (Yin & Lee, 2008) and students' conception of Mathematics (Wong & Sun, 2002). For Macao, examples of such publications focus on textbook and school curricula (Bray & Tang, 1994). For Taiwan, there were publications on subject curricula (e.g., Ho & Law, 2002). For Asia and Australia, there were discussions or studies on curriculum development in the South Pacific (Bray,

1992a), East Asia (Marsh & Morris, 1991), school-based curriculum development in Asia (Kennedy & Lee, 2008) and curriculum implementation of the new integrated Social Science syllabus in Australia (Lam & Lidstone, 2001). For comparative and/or cross-cultural curriculum studies, Bray (1992b) compared the pattern of curriculum development between Hong Kong and Macao. Au (1991) compared the primary school textbooks in Hong Kong and Taiwan from the perspectives of individual modernity-traditionality. Tang and her colleagues (1997) made a comparative analysis of the Chinese Language syllabuses for primary schools adopted by the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Stimpson (1997) compared the status of environmental education in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Kong (1998) made a comparative analysis of the characteristics of Mathematics textbooks in China, U.K., and Hong Kong. Wong and Chu (2005b), for example, compared the curriculum reform, and Tong and Chu (2005) compared teachers' perceptions of project learning between Hong Kong and Shanghai. There have been some publications on comparison of curriculum and instructional reforms between Hong Kong and Shanghai (e.g., Law, Tsui, Zhong, & Yang, 2003). Ho (2007) compared the compilation system and patterns of junior secondary Chinese Language textbooks in Hong Kong and Shanghai while Lo (2007) compared the junior secondary History curricula of Hong Kong and Shanghai. In addition, Dimmock and Lee (2000) drew upon case studies of schools in Hong Kong and Australia and put forward a process of whole-school curriculum design using a backward mapping approach. On the other hand, Marsh and Lai (1996) made a comparative analysis of the two journals, *Curriculum, Teaching Materials and Method* in China and *Curriculum Perspectives* in Australia. Shum (2000) made a comparison of the modes of instruction of teaching Chinese report writing in senior secondary classrooms in Melbourne and Hong Kong.

Trends and Future Directions

The above brief, descriptive review of selected publications on curriculum studies in Hong Kong has shown that curriculum studies has generated a substantial number of books and journal articles especially since the 1990s. There are a few observations and propositions, which need further in-depth analysis. First, while there were publications on curriculum theories and conceptual analysis of curriculum issues, there were not many publications

on philosophical curriculum studies especially those based on the reconceptualist and postmodernist traditions. This is quite different from the situations in Taiwan and China where there were scholars advocating the reconceptualist and postmodern perspectives (e.g., Gau & Hsu, 2005).

Secondly, in terms of research traditions in curriculum studies, it seems that the literature cited in this paper gave an impression of dominance of curriculum studies in the area of school-based curriculum development based on the practical traditions which "show us how curriculum theories and reforms work out in practice" (Walker, 2003, p. 149). In contrast, there were less curriculum studies based on the scientific traditions which might involve controlled experiments for comparing alternative curricula and objective inquiry into curriculum questions related to learning, on the one hand, and studies based on the humanistic traditions in which "philosophy, history and criticism are the most prevalent forms of humanistic scholarship" (Walker, 2003, p. 142), on the other.

Thirdly, in terms of research methods used in curriculum studies, there were many practical curriculum studies employing case studies as well as analyses of curriculum materials and plans. It is, however, noteworthy that there were fewer publications related to action research (e.g., Berry, 2006), which could be promoted through university-school partnerships. For scientific curriculum studies, there were studies using attitude measurement, survey research methods, achievement testing and teaching experiments. More could be done to employ longitudinal methods and synthesis of best evidence, meta-analysis and policy-research methods. For humanistic curriculum studies, while there were studies using historical methods, more could be done to employ autobiography, biography, connoisseurship and criticism as well as critical methods, philosophical analysis and ethnographic methods.

Fourthly, among various themes or topics of curriculum studies, there have been papers on the issue of Medium of Instruction (MOI) policy with a recent proposal of fine-tuning by the Education Bureau. School-based curriculum development and TOC as well as curriculum and teaching of three key school subjects or Key Learning Areas, namely English Language, Chinese Language and Mathematics, has generated many publications while more research and publications are needed for other school subjects and cross-curricular issues. It would be worthwhile to consider whether more work should be done to cover the subject curriculum and teaching work. For example, there have been quite a lot of publications on science curriculum

and teaching. Moreover, more could be done to analyze scholarly works published by local or non-local scholars in the journals published in the Chinese mainland and Taiwan. Compared with secondary and primary schooling, more research and publications on early childhood curriculum and teaching are required. In addition to these observations or propositions, the following directions or themes for future research are proposed: assessment, pedagogical and learning research as well as comparative curriculum studies.

Last but not least, curriculum studies in Hong Kong have been heavily dependent on work undertaken elsewhere, especially in the U.K., Australia and the U.S. Thus, it is difficult to define a distinctive Hong Kong approach to curriculum planning, curriculum implementation and curriculum research. Also, there has been a strong emphasis on research and analysis related to the government initiated curriculum reforms. The results seem to be a neglect of theory and have a tendency to focus on practical issues.

Assessment is obviously a key component of curriculum studies (alongside aims and objectives, content and teaching methods). McClelland (188, p. 44) argued that to recognize achievement in a broad secondary school curriculum, it would be desirable to have the "same examination: different syllabus. This would involve a common paper, an alternative paper and a strong component of school based assessment." In recent years, there have been an increasing number of publications related to trends of assessment such as assessment for learning and school-based assessment in the contexts of basic education curriculum reform and new senior secondary curriculum reform in Hong Kong. For the trends of assessment including assessment for learning (e.g., Wong, 2007), there were papers on teachers' views of assessment (Liu, 2007), and the implementation of a criterion-referenced test for facilitation of better student learning (Zhu, 2005). For the topic of School-based Assessment (SBA), there were studies on teachers' concerns of SBA (e.g., Cheung & Yip, 2004) and teachers' beliefs and coping strategies of SBA (e.g., Tam, 2008).

As regards pedagogical and learning research, listening to students' voices and studies of children's experiences of the formal and hidden curriculum could be pointers for understanding and addressing students' needs. There is also a dearth of longitudinal studies of teaching effectiveness, with the exception, for example, of Chan's (1985) study of the effectiveness of informal teaching in primary schools in Hong Kong using the activity approach. In addition, there were many studies on

students' motivation and student learning from psychological perspectives which might have implications for curriculum and teaching. More efforts are needed to consolidate findings and insights from such studies.

In spring 2001, the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (IAACS) (http://www.iaacs.org/) was established and, as Pinar (2008) argues, the development of curriculum theories gradually evolves from the phase of reconceptualization to internationalization. Further, Gough (2003) argues that for internationalizing curriculum inquiry, "scholars from different localities collaborate in reframing and decentering their own knowledge traditions and negotiate trust in each other's contributions to their collective work" (p. 68). For curriculum inquiry, Adamson and Morris (2007, p. 263) argue that, "all curriculum research involves some degree of comparison — one is always (at least implicitly) referring to some 'Other' when analysing a phenomenon." Connelly, Xu, Eisner, and Jackson (2008) refer to the influence of cultures including Confucian thought on curriculum dialogue and remark that, "there is promise in the meeting of Confucian and Western culture, provided the former is not subsumed by the latter and is, instead part of reciprocal cultural and educational learning" (p. 530). Against this backdrop, (comparative) curriculum studies by Hong Kong scholars alone or in collaboration with curriculum scholars elsewhere could be further encouraged because such studies would be potentially beneficial to the development of curriculum theories and the improvement of curriculum development in different societies.

In addition, there has been increasing attention given to the development of Asian education and Asian curriculum studies (e.g., Kennedy & Lee, 2008; Lee, in press). Some Asia-based journals such as the *Asia-Pacific Journal of Education*, the *Asia-Pacific Education Review* and the *Asia-Pacific Educational Researcher* have recently been included in the journal list of the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), involving both professional and international readerships. Meanwhile, the Chinese mainland has developed a Chinese Social Science Citation Index (CSSCI) journal list, which includes the journal *Curriculum, Teaching Materials and Method* while Taiwan has developed the Taiwan Social Science Citation Index (TSSCI) journal list, which includes the *Curriculum and Instruction Quarterly*. More work could be done to consolidate curriculum scholarship on Hong Kong in these publication venues, which could shed light on future directions for curriculum inquiry (e.g., Lee, Lu, & Huang, 2009).

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Notes

1. The Faculty of Education and the Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research of the Chinese University of Hong Kong developed the Chinese Educational Resources Information Center project (C-ERIC) from 1995–1998 (http://www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/ceric/index.htm). The database for Hong Kong journals includes the following six journals: *Asian Journal of Counseling*, *Curriculum Forum*, *Education Journal*, *Educational Research Journal*, *Journal of Basic Education*, and *New Horizons in Education*.
2. When the ERIC database is searched, the keywords employed are "curriculum" and "Hong Kong." The periods between 1980 and 2008 and between 1990 and 2008 showed that there were 259 and 226 entries respectively. It is, however, notable that some articles, after careful reading, may not be directly related to the studies of curriculum and teaching in Hong Kong.
3. Because of word limits, some articles of similar titles but different emphases written by the same authors would not be all cited. For example, Carless's (1997) "Managing systemic curriculum change: A critical analysis of Hong Kong's Target-Oriented Curriculum initiative" published in the *International Review of Education*, *43*(4), 349–366, and Carless's (1999) "Perspectives on the cultural appropriacy of Hong Kong's Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC) initiative" published in *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *12*(3), 238–254 were related to the Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC).
4. There are some relatively new refereed journals in Hong Kong, which are not covered in this review. Examples are *Journal of School Quality Education* and *Hong Kong Teachers' Centre Journal*, which were established in 2001 and 2002 respectively.
5. There were books and articles related to general and subject curriculum and teaching issues written by curriculum scholars in Hong Kong. Readers are encouraged to follow up curriculum scholars' other writings if interested.

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