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Looking at the Impact of a Public Examination Change on Secondary Classroom Teaching: A Hong Kong Case Study

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Abstract: Evidence exists to suggest that public examinations have washback effects on teaching and learning. Washback, a common term used in applied linguistics, is the influence of testing on teaching and learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Two areas of washback studies have recently been conducted: those relating to 'traditional' tests which are thought to stifle innovative teaching and those relating to cases where a test has been specifically changed in order to encourage innovation in the classroom. This study was conducted within the second context, where major changes were introduced into the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) in English in 1996 with the intention of bringing about positive washback effects on classroom teaching. This paper describes what has happened within this research context and mainly discusses the examination impact on classroom interactions to discover whether more learning opportunities have been created by teachers to allow students to construct, develop and apply their knowledge in Hong Kong secondary classrooms.

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The Impact of Teacher Feedback on Student Self-talk and Self-concept in Reading and Mathematics

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Abstract: The relationships between teacher feedback and students' self-talk and self-concepts in the mathematics and reading contexts were investigated in six rural elementary schools (n= 747). The Teacher Feedback Scale (TFS, Burnett, 1996a), Self-Talk Inventory (STI, Burnett, 1996a) and The Self Scale (TSS, Burnett, 1994; 1996b; Burden, 1999) were used to collect the data. Structural equation modelling was used to test Burnett's (1999) mediating model in the specific areas of reading and mathematics. The results provided strong support for the model indicating that self-talk (positive and negative) mediated between subject-specific teacher feedback (ability, effort and negative) and academic self-concept (evaluative and descriptive). The importance of providing ability feedback as well as effort feedback in the classroom to primary students is highlighted with implications for teachers discussed.

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Multicultural Teacher Education: Implications for Critical Mass and All-minority Classes at a Predominantly White University

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Abstract: This qualitative study explores, from 1996 to 1998, minority student initiations in a critical mass] and an all minority multicultural seminar. Students' perceptions of their experiences in each seminar were also examined through their written reflections and personal interviews. Interactions were more frequently initiated in the critical mass seminar where minority students often felt pressure to educate their nonminority peers. Yet, these same students reported feeling more comfortable but slightly intimidated in the all-minority seminar. Although our research focuse son students in teacher education, it has broader implications for educators and policy makers at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI).

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Life's Little Lessons: Teachers' Stories of Life Experiences on Practice

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Abstract: This article explores the relationship between life experience and pedagogy of four elementary teachers of culturally diverse students in the Southeastern United States. These teachers have had similar and contrasting experiences and have uniquely drawn from them and applied them to teaching in diverse classrooms. Accordingly, the study examined these teachers' practices in diverse classrooms, using their own life experiences as a framework for these practices. The pivotal life experiences of these four teachers seemed to focus on dimensions of culture (e.g. encounters with racism, rank in family birth order, exposure to military culture) and teacher and student relationships (e.g. attention provided by a teacher, negative attitudes expressed by a teacher). Findings revealed that 1) these teachers have fashioned their teaching styles and practices after their own backgrounds and have discovered the duality of personal and professional experiences; and 2) teachers who understand themselves in complicated ways maybe more reflective about the complex lives of their students.

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Influence of the Motivational Climate in Physical Education on Third Grade Students' Task and Ego Orientations

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Abstract: Research which examines the impact of the motivational climate created by teachers on students' goal orientations has great potential for improving understanding of achievement related behavior in physical education (Carpenter & Morgan, 1999). The primary purpose of this study was to ascertain whether manipulating the motivational climate of physical education lessons influenced third grade students' goal orientations. A secondary purpose was to explore the influence of the motivational climate on the goal orientations of males and females. Participants (40 males and 40 females) were randomly assigned to one of two experimental groups or a control group. Experimental groups were taught identical content within a task-involving or ego involving climate. Treatment verification was achieved by videotaping all 30 lessons and coding them with the Physical Education Climate Assessment Instrument. Pupils' dispositions for the task and ego orientations were measured with the Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire prior to and following instruction. Test analysis of variance tests revealed that both experimental treatments led to changes in students' goal orientations but that there were no differential effects across genders. Students taught within a task-involving climate strengthened their task orientations and students taught within an ego-involving climate strengthened their ego orientations.

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