

A Critical Analysis on Hong Kong Educational Reform: 3+3+4

Presented by

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Introduction

- Since the **1980s**, Hong Kong has experienced **2 waves of educational reform** to major technological advancements, economic transformation, globalization and competition.
- ***1st wave of educational reform***: aims at internal effectiveness, notably learning and teaching in schools
- ***2nd wave of educational reform***: intends for interface effectiveness

Government Documents

- The discussion of Hong Kong educational systems
 - **1965 White Paper:** Education Policy
 - **1974 White Paper:** Secondary Education in Hong Kong over the Next Decade
 - **1977 Green Paper:** Senior Secondary and Tertiary Education: A Development Program for Hong Kong over the Next Decade
 - **1978 White Paper:** The Development of Senior Secondary and Tertiary Education

Hong Kong educational reform: From 3+2+2+3 to 3+3+4

- English model has been fully penetrated Hong Kong education system (1842 – 30 June 1997)
- Hong Kong's sovereignty has been under political transition from the United Kingdom to Mainland China (1 July 1997 – Now).

Hong Kong educational reform: From 3+2+2+3 to 3+3+4

- Mr. Tung Chee-hwa, the first Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (hereafter called “HKSAR”) declared his blueprint for Hong Kong educational reform from his Policy Address on 8 October 1997.
 - Enhance the abilities of innovation and knowledge to Hong Kong students thus to increase Hong Kong’s competitiveness and manpower.
 - Economically, Hong Kong can get abreast of the growth of knowledgeable economy and the development of Mainland China.

Hong Kong educational reform: From 3+2+2+3 to 3+3+4

- Fanny Law, Secretary of Education and Manpower Bureau also stated that
 - *“there is an urgency to reform our education system...”* Education is definitely providing Hong Kong citizens obtain *“with the ability to think critically and laterally”*

Hong Kong educational reform: From 3+2+2+3 to 3+3+4

- 334 is a must in the second wave of Hong Kong educational reform:
 - The transition of political sovereignty
 - Align with international higher education development
 - Knowledge economy
 - Societal developments
 - Globalization
 - Accountability

Hong Kong educational reform: From 3+2+2+3 to 3+3+4 (Timeline)

September 2000: Education and Manpower Bureau suggested that a new academic structure (i.e., 3+3+4) can replace the existing British educational system (i.e., 3+2+2+3).



2003: Anthony Leung Kam-chung led Education Commission established a working group (i.e., 17 committee members). The recommendations have been submitted it to HKSAR.

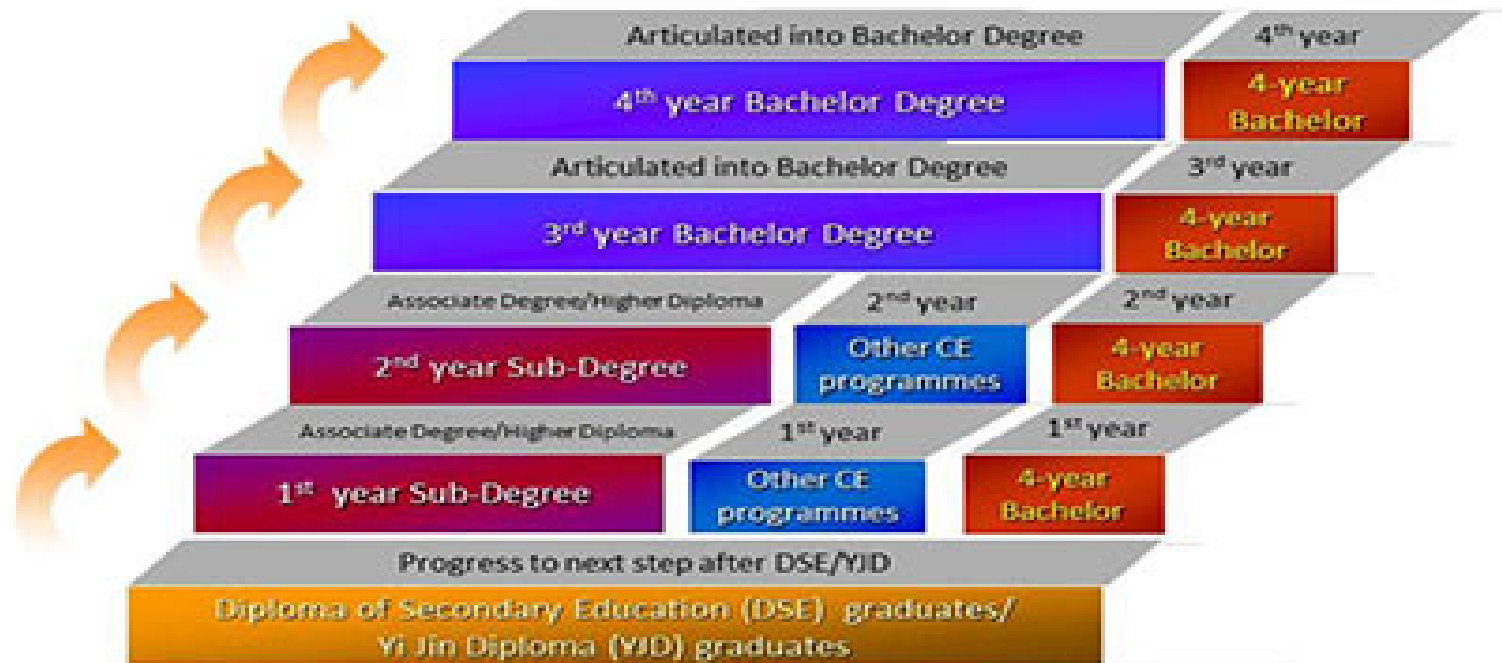


October 2004 - January 2005: A series of public consultation have been held.



2009/2010 academic year: New Senior Secondary Curriculum and the public examination was administrated

Multiple Pathways for HKDSE graduates



Source: <http://www.fste.edu.hk/en/study-paths/multiple-pathways-for-post-secondary-education/>

Research Methodology

- A **qualitative research** approach
- **Substantial archives in government documents** and unpublished information
- **22 semi-structured**, in-depth face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders participated in Hong Kong 334 educational reform from February to March 2016.
 - Senior government officials of the HKSAR government
 - Program Leaders, Executive Officers and Associate Heads of higher education institutions
 - Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union
 - Secondary school Principal
 - Secondary school frontline teachers
 - Overseas education agency
 - Working group members of Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education
 - NGOs
 - 4 HKDSE graduates (i.e., past sub-degree students and now they are undergraduates)
 - 4 HKDSE graduates (i.e., current sub-degree students)

Research Methodology

- Interview aspects:
 - The academic expectations and students expectations under new Hong Kong academic structure
 - The difficulties or obstacles in implementing 334 structure in the institutions
 - The comparative advantages between old and new academic structures
 - The major factors for Hong Kong to enhance quality education hub in the forthcoming years.

Academic Expectations

- The program curriculum inclines towards **generic** and **applied learning subjects**.
- The well-qualified **teaching staff** should acquire **a board academic knowledge**, as well as their **innovative teaching pedagogies** are expected to transfer practical skills and applicable knowledge to students.

Academic Expectations

- The frontline teachers expressed that Education Bureau **offer psychological courses or additional counseling support** to encourage teachers understand different students' personalities.
- The curriculum:
 - **Increasing the credit requirements, introduction and expanding of common core/general education, faculty-based admission, enriching the co-curricular learning experiences for students, the freshmen year, as well as Capstone projects, resulting in an increased flexibility to the curriculum.**

Students Expectations

- Students supposed that the **Student Learning Profile reflects their personalities** through the participation of **OLE** and **extra-curricular activities**.
- HKDSE graduates indicated that the school organized student development activities contain a wide variety of enrichment activities(i.e., **study tour, volunteer, mentorship program, summer internship program**) and applied learning elements (i.e., **site visits**).
- HKDSE graduates suggested that the school allocate more self-study places to students. **Campus facilities management** is a key issue of developing quality education in the long-term.

The Obstacles in Implementing 334 Structure

- The interview respondents pointed out that **students enrolled in UK independent schools have been dramatically increased** since 2010.
- In the education review process, HKSAR government appointed the Chairmen of advisory committees is from either **non academic leaders or business**. The committee members are fully **occupied by their full time job**.
- At the higher education level, the tertiary institutions have faced some resistances to changes at various levels within the institution.

The Obstacles in Implementing 334 Structure

- During the process, **departments** are emphasis on **program specific ratio** while **universities** are focused on **general education ratio**.
- At the secondary school level, schools allow students to select their preferred elective subjects based on their interest and ability. High discrepancies of learning abilities among the students in a class present a problem.

The Obstacles in Implementing 334 Structure

- Education Bureau has further **reduced funding for secondary schools**. To address a problem, each school has established New Senior School Committee consists of Principal, Vice-Principal, Discipline Leaders and Senior Graduated Teachers to review the subjects periodically.
 - **Phrase out low students' enrolment in subjects and then lay off relevant Contract Based Teachers.**
- **Applied learning subjects are now diverted to vocational training institutions.** HKDSE students are eligible to choose only 20 electives subjects during their studies.

The Obstacles in Implementing 334 Structure

- In the circumstances, **generic education programs (i.e., Associate Degree)** has shown an upward trend and vocational training programs have demonstrated a downward trend. The design of HKDSE overlaps with **some foundation programs (i.e., Pre-Associate Degree, Yi-Jin Diploma Program, Foundation Diploma Program etc)**. These foundation programs would be gradually phased out.

The Comparative Advantages between Old and New Academic Structure

- HKCEE is a **screening process** of screening out students whose have a low learning ability. We can say that the **old academic systems show favor to elite students.**
- Nevertheless, the old academic structure failed to maintain sustainable development in Hong Kong education system. Based on HKCEE and HKALE syllabus, the overlapping between HKDSE program curriculum and the first year universities program curriculum have been removed. Also, students have to prepare for both HKCEE in 1.5 years and HKALE in 1.5 years, and thus they have **limited learning time for taking part in other learning activities.** The **program curriculum is rather specialized and narrow.**

The Comparative Advantages between Old and New Academic Structure

- The HKDSE program curriculum allows students to learn different generic subjects and take only 1 public examination for 3 years. As a result, students are able to **learn different aspects of knowledge and obtain more learning time.**
- **HKDSE adopted standards-referenced reporting (hereafter called “SRR”) to replace norm-referenced.** SRR describes as “candidates' levels of performance are reported with reference to a set of explicit and fixed standards of performance”

The Comparative Advantages between Old and New Academic Structure

- Students from the old system have stronger academic background when they enter the university. Whereas, students from the new education system, they were more open to embrace and take advantage of the new education system and are more proactive in exploring the unknown, as well as engaging in the various co-curricular opportunities available to them.
 - *From our interview with students, students from the old system commented that “the old 3 year curriculum was too intense, they had little opportunity to explore and better equip themselves to enter the job market, and see that the new 4 year curriculum had more time and opportunities for them to explore and better prepare for their further studies and career development.”*

The Comparative Advantages between Old and New Academic Structure

- With an additional year to their degree program, as compared to the previous 3-year undergraduate curriculum, **students have more opportunities to achieve language enhancement and explore various experiential learning components (e.g. internship, corporate projects, student exchange, research opportunities in their own institution or overseas).**

The Key Factors for Hong Kong to Enhance Quality Education Hub in the Future

- Ensuring that the programs help students to thrive not only in **academic training**, but also various competencies to enhance their **employability**.
- Providing students with opportunities for international exposure, integrating different cultures, this would strengthen students' **international outlook**.
- Increasing the authority to **secure educational research funding** from international/regional organizations.

The Key Factors for Hong Kong to Enhance Quality Education Hub in the Future

- **Establishing IT-enabled learning environment.** New course management systems/platforms, with the increasing by using technologies in teaching and course management.
- Recruiting the **teaching staff** not only possess **an extensive academic knowledge**, but also acquire the **multi-task skills**.
- Inviting **academic advisors** from famous overseas universities to **carry out periodical reviews of program design**.
- **Establishing sound education research centers and implementing education research funding projects.**

Conclusion

- The introduction of education policy “*must be subject to a continuous process of review and be receptive to new ideas.*”
- 334 education reform has highlighted the symbol of **policy transfer** in Hong Kong. Comparing with the past education reforms, 334 education reform has **shifted from localization to globalization**. The driving forces behind 334 education reform are mainly **political and economic factors**.

Conclusion

- From the top-down approach, it is highly recognized that 334 education policy has exhibited only one direction. HKSAR formulated the policy has misaligned with different education operators. The obstacles in implementing 334 structure and concern about other stakeholders (i.e., students and frontline teachers) interest have been seriously ignored. The inherent in the HKDSE system is still remain rigid, as well as Hong Kong frontline teachers have a low social status. HKDSE has found it difficult to do a progressive education reform in Hong Kong.

Forthcoming Highlight

- This presentation topic will become the keynote speaker session:
- Hong Kong International Conference on Education, Psychology and Society (HKICEPS), 15 December 2016, Hong Kong

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Thank You

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