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Teacher Education and the University: a comparative analysis with implications for Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT *The university of education might be seen as a new type of university, which has emerged in recent decades in Asia, and which may be able to contribute both to teacher education and the needs of the knowledge society in new ways. This article begins with a historical overview of the development of universities and normal colleges in Western and Asian societies. It explores the value orientations of these two types of institution, and their links to the different historical periods in which they emerged. These contrasting value orientations are schematized in the second part of the paper, which addresses its core question: how can teacher education attain a level of excellence parallel to that of universities, while maintaining those values of the normal college that are relevant to the knowledge society? A comparative historical analysis of three Western and three Asian societies in the third part of the paper gives an overview of different ways in which this dilemma has been resolved. The fourth part then draws out four distinctive models of teacher education that have emerged historically, and evaluates them comparatively. The paper concludes with comparative reflections on teacher education in Singapore and Hong Kong, suggesting the model of a university of education as uniquely suited to the Hong Kong situation, and possibly only culturally viable in an Asian environment.*

In a certain sense, universities have been teacher education institutions from their earliest founding. If we consider the universities of Europe, the first degree given was the masters degree, and the idea was that anyone who reached this standard would have the right to teach in any university in Europe, the so-called "*ius ubique docendi*" (Hayhoe, 1999, pp. 4–5). Of course, they were teachers of the relatively small number of elite students in the arts, philosophy, medicine, law and theology—all male. If we consider Chinese traditions of higher education, those who were most successful in institutions such as the *Taixue*, the *Guozijian*, and above all the imperial examination system, became scholar officials, while the next echelon of scholars, those who did not succeed in passing the highest level of examination, the *jinshi*, often became teachers in non-formal academies (*shuyuan*), in clan schools and in

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private schools (*sishu*), and were highly respected as literati in their local communities (Hayhoe, 1999, pp. 10–12). However, there was no real "profession" of teaching, parallel to that of traditional bureaucrat, medical specialist, theologian/religious leader or legal expert.

Only with the creation of mass systems of schooling in the 19th century, first in Europe, then in North America and gradually around the world, did the need arise for a large number of teachers, able to manage modern schools established as public institutions outside of home and family, with forms of organization and timetabling that to some degree reflected the patterns of modern factories. Their task was to inculcate basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic to the majority of children. The institutions created to train these teachers, in France, the United States and England, were called *écoles normales*, normal schools or colleges of education. They were developed separately from universities and they were open to women (Ogren, 1995, pp. 1–4), who had been barred from universities from their founding in the 12th century up to the mid-19th century (Noble, 1992). Normal schools focused on training teachers with basic knowledge in a range of core academic subjects, and craft type skills that would enable them to manage modern classrooms, handle and discipline young children, and provide them a basic preparation for entering the world of work by their early teens. Gradually, as educational thought and theory developed on the basis of newly emerging disciplines of psychology and sociology, as well as the more traditional discipline of philosophy, this craft knowledge gained a degree of respectability and a theoretical basis as a kind of applied science of education.

The ethos and style of the normal school or college was quite distinct from that of the university. It had a strong commitment to overall moral formation, dealt with basic disciplines of knowledge in an integrated way, and focused on the development of professional skills almost along the lines of a craft. By contrast, universities maintained a strong commitment to theoretical disciplines of knowledge, compartmentalized by specialization, to the standards of value neutrality that had made possible the emergence of modern science, and to an intellectual discourse of liberal ideas and open-ended questions. In France and England, universities retained the responsibility for preparing secondary school teachers throughout the modern period. Right up to the 1960s and 1970s, university graduates in subject disciplines such as physics, chemistry, history and economics went directly into secondary teaching positions without being required to undergo any professional formation in education. There was thus a striking difference between the ethos and intellectual formation of primary and secondary teachers.

The three Asian communities that we will consider in this article followed rather similar patterns, although these developed a little later than those of Europe and North America. Japan was the first to put in place a modern schooling system in the late 19th century, and to establish a system of normal schools for the training of primary school teachers. Early in the 20th century, China developed modern education under the influence of educators from Japan and Europe, establishing normal schools and colleges as the earliest modern higher institutions. This was done with a great sense of urgency to modernize in the face of imperialist incursions.

Taiwan's system of modern schooling and teacher education diverged from that of Mainland China after 1949, but shared the same foundations and roots in the developments of the first half of the 20th century. As in Europe and North America, normal schools and colleges were among the first higher institutions to welcome women students, leading to the emergence of the first profession to be dominated by women, with the possible exception of nursing. The establishment of modern universities in Japan and China took place over the same period, but followed models such as Berlin, Paris, Oxbridge and Yale, with structures and curricular orientation quite different from those of the normal colleges.

Conflicts in Value and Orientation between Teacher Education Institutions and the University

With advances in education over the 20th century, and the movement to mass higher education from the 1960s, normal schools and colleges have naturally sought to upgrade themselves to the level of universities. Teachers have demanded an academic and professional formation equivalent to that of other professions, such as law and medicine, which had been a part of university life for much longer. The transition from normal school to university has taken different forms in the United States, England and France. In the patterns of change in Japan and China/Taiwan, one can see elements of all three Western traditions, as well as features that may owe something to the very different cultural traditions and educational legacies of these societies.

Nevertheless, the core problematique of this transition lies in the deeply rooted differences in value orientation between the university and the normal college. How was the normal college to be upgraded to an institution with the scholastic rigour and standards of a university, while maintaining its commitment to the practical improvement of schools and teaching? How could the teaching profession achieve the status enjoyed by other professions, while remaining true to its mission of developing the potential of all children? The core conflicts between the normal college and the university are schematized in Table 1 by identifying a set of polarities of value.

Each of the six modern societies referred to (England, France and the United States in the West; Japan, China and Taiwan in the East) have approached the dilemma created by these polarities in somewhat different ways. Each created university-level institutions for the formation of teachers that have their own unique characteristics. The next section of this article will sketch out a profile of the historical transition that has taken place, or is underway, in each society.

Hopefully, these comparative historical reflections will be of intrinsic interest to readers. It may also be appropriate at this point to reveal the practical intention of this article. That is to provide a context for reflecting on possible directions for Hong Kong, where the upgrading of teacher education to the university level is a very recent phenomenon. Hong Kong has inherited both the educational traditions of the West, through its long period of development as a colony of Britain, as well as the educational heritage of China, with the majority of its population being Chinese.

TABLE 1. Contrasting orientations of the university and normal school

University	versus	Normal school
Theory	versus	Practice
Specialized disciplines of knowledge	versus	Integrated learning areas
Value neutral approaches to knowledge	versus	Morally directive approaches to knowledge
A relatively impersonal environment	versus	A nurturing environment with strong mentorship ties between teachers and students
The liberal pursuit of all questions/intellectual curiosity	versus	Action oriented and field-based knowledge
Academic freedom and autonomy	versus	State control and professional accountability
An orientation to deep-level understanding and long-term change	versus	A craft orientation towards high standards of practice

From 1939 to 1993, teacher education for the majority of teachers in Hong Kong, particularly those in primary schools and teachers of subjects such as the arts and physical education at secondary level, took place in colleges of education. These provided 2- or 3-year sub-degree training after secondary schooling. The values and orientation of this training followed very closely those of the normal college.

With the rapid expansion of university education in the 1980s, there was a precipitous decline in the quality of entrants to colleges of education, as more and more secondary graduates gained access to university education. In 1994, the five colleges of education were merged into a new Institute of Education and subsequently placed under the University Grants Committee as the eighth public tertiary institution in Hong Kong. The Institute's upgrading to university level and status has since been taking place at a rapid speed. It thus faces the dilemmas arising from these value polarities in immediate and practical ways. The article will therefore conclude by applying the comparative reflection and evaluation on the teacher education transition in six societies to the case of Hong Kong Institute of Education. Parallel developments in Singapore will be taken as a kind of contrasting case to that of Hong Kong.

Comparative Reflections on the Transition from Normal School to University

The American Case

There can be little doubt that the United States historically led the way in upgrading teacher education to an all-graduate profession, a process that was completed by the middle of the 20th century, earlier than in any other society. Over the first half of the century, the normal schools that had developed in all parts of the United States

were either upgraded to become local comprehensive universities or were merged into the faculties of education of major national universities. In some cases, they had been established by universities, but as attached non-degree colleges for those not up to degree study: "poor stepchildren of academe" in the words of one historian (Lucas, 1997, p. 39).

Those that developed into locally oriented comprehensive universities have continued to be dominated by large faculties of education, and to have teacher education as a major responsibility, alongside of undergraduate programs in broad areas of the liberal arts and social sciences. Few of these local comprehensive universities have other traditional professional faculties, such as medicine, engineering, or law, with the result that teacher education is a highly valued and central aspect of their work. Thus, some of the values on the right-hand side of Table 1 have served to shape these institutions towards an ethos of direct social responsibility, a strong sense of local community and identity, and a nurturing and morally conscientized environment.

For those that became faculties of education at major national universities, two striking examples (both associated with the famous philosopher educator, John Dewey) show the possibilities and pitfalls. The University of Chicago, where Dewey taught in the early part of the century, and established his first Lab School, has had a high-profile faculty of education, famous for its traditions in the economics and sociology of education and comparative education. There were times when practice and local school improvement were emphasized at the University of Chicago. However, the tendency to privilege theoretical research in basic disciplines led the faculty of education to a situation where it had gradually become removed from the needs and realities of the Chicago school system in the 1980s. As a result, the university decided to close down the faculty in 1996, citing its failure to make any positive contribution to the improvement of education in the locality (Altbach, 1998). By contrast, an equally high-profile faculty of education at the nationally prestigious Columbia University, where Dewey taught subsequent to his early career in Chicago, managed to preserve an independent identity under the name "Teachers College Columbia". It has been able to balance high standards of scholarship with a genuine and sustained contribution to improving schools, curricula and teacher standards in the New York area, and nationally.

When a group of deans of education from well-known national universities formed the Holmes group in the 1980s and made concerted efforts to shape teacher education, their solution to the "Chicago problem" of the dominance of traditional university values was to create professional school networks, which involved close linkages with a group of schools that could provide a practical context for field service, action research and professional revitalization. This has been fairly effective, but has required a constant state of alert, as the drift towards conventional academic values is a particularly strong tendency in major comprehensive universities (The Holmes Group, 1986; 1995).

The overall resolution of the problem in the United States has resulted in two major types of institution. On the one hand, there are local or regional universities with strong faculties of education that have a high profile within their overall ethos.

On the other hand, there are faculties of education at major national universities, some having an independent identity, such as Teachers College Columbia, and others being standard faculties of education that maintain and develop strong professional values through a network of professional schools.

The Japanese Case

We turn next to East Asia, as Japan was the second country after the United States, historically, to move towards an all-graduate profession for teachers. In the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, Japan had developed a large number of normal schools and colleges to train teachers for the modern education system that has been so important to its economic rise. These were developed under the influence of European models, French and German, and they provided a large cohort of well-trained teachers for primary and early childhood education, under a highly centralized organizational model. With the American occupation after World War II, Japan was strongly influenced by the American model, and by American concerns to support democratization and decentralization. As a result, Japan became the second country in the world to move towards an all-graduate profession for teachers. Higher education was restructured in ways that absorbed some of the former normal colleges into university faculties of education. Others were developed into prefectural level universities with a strong focus on education.

In effect, the Japanese adopted an open model of teacher education, which allowed universities of all kinds (public and private, national and local) to provide courses for teachers' professional development as long as these courses were approved by the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, the actual certification of teachers for primary and secondary school teachers was put into the hands of prefectural authorities, who selected the very best of those qualified by universities and colleges through competitive examinations for positions in their schools. The fact that teachers are civil servants, with commensurate salaries and benefits, has made the profession quite attractive. In a typical year, only 20% of those qualified in higher education institutions to enter the profession are able to succeed in prefectural level examinations for the selection of new teachers. This has made the teaching profession in Japan far more competitive than in the United States, in spite of a broad similarity in the nature and level of education programs within colleges and universities.

Like the United States, Japan thus ended up with academically strong faculties of education at major national universities, which prepared many secondary school teachers, and a small percentage of primary school teachers, and prefectural level universities (public and private), which tended to focus on education as a major field, as well as having programs in social sciences, liberal arts and new fields such as environmental studies. These institutions prepared the majority of primary and early childhood teachers. Some of these were called "universities of education" because of their strong orientation towards education. Many of their graduates worked in fields allied to education in their local communities, since only a minority was successful in competing for teaching jobs. Nevertheless, in the 1970s, the

National Council of Education, in setting forth an agenda for educational reform, felt that much more had to be done to raise the status and quality of the teaching profession, and ensure a good supply of highly qualified and highly motivated teachers for the nation's schools. Four important recommendations of this Council were implemented in the late 1970s and the 1980s, which contributed to enhancing the quality and status of the profession (Shimihara, 1995, pp. 169–179):

1. In 1974, the Human Resource Procurement Act committed the government to increasing teachers' salaries to 30–40% above that of public employees with equivalent qualifications.
2. Between 1978 and 1982, three new public universities of education were founded in the prefectures of Niigata, Tokushima and Hyogo, with undergraduate programs for primary teachers, and graduate programs to offer opportunities for ongoing professional development for inservice teachers. They set high standards for education as the major focus of undergraduate and graduate work in prestigious public institutions (Government of Japan, 1990, pp. 32).
3. In 1988, a program providing a 1-year internship for every new teacher education graduate was approved and funded by national legislation, as an effort to ensure that teachers' practical competence and classroom skills were given the kinds of support and development that university level institutions often were unable to provide.
4. A further significant reform was strong encouragement given to local and national universities to develop graduate level courses for serving teachers, and the recognition of graduate qualifications in terms of promotion and salary for serving teachers.

Japan's open teacher education system has involved faculties or schools of education at major comprehensive universities as well as the development of local or regional universities of education, which have a particular commitment to setting high standards for the teaching profession, and which have been able to incorporate some of the values of the normal school: a focus on professional practice, close links to the local community and a range of integrated knowledge areas, such as environmental studies, community development, and adult and lifelong education. The approach to knowledge in these universities of education covers all the subjects taught at primary and lower secondary levels in school. In addition, the field of education is developed in ways that serve both the formal teaching profession and the needs of other organizations and agencies for training, lifelong learning and adult education. It is thus a model quite distinct from that of the major comprehensive university, and one that has a unique contribution to make to local and regional economies as well as to the teaching profession.

The English Case

The transition from college of education to an all-graduate teaching profession in England has many parallels with that of the United States, except that it took place considerably later, in the 1960s and the 1970s. Some of the former colleges for

training primary and secondary teachers were absorbed into the faculties of education of major universities, while others developed into colleges of higher education providing bachelor degree level programs for preservice teachers, as well as other undergraduate programs in the arts, social sciences, and various applied fields. Some of these became full-fledged universities in the movement towards mass higher education of the 1980s and early 1990s.

The Institute of Education of the University of London was able to maintain a leading role because of its unique status within the federated University of London, giving it the autonomy and status of a fully fledged university of education, and enabling it to set standards for high-level research in education, as well as for preservice and inservice programs for primary and secondary teachers, mainly at the postgraduate certificate level. Its role has some parallels with Teachers College Columbia in the United States. The integrated Bachelor of Education was a more common degree in the colleges of higher education and new universities, although these institutions also run postgraduate certificate programs for university graduates choosing to enter the teaching profession.

Growing political concerns about the academicization of education as a field of study, and the perceived tendency for university programs to become more and more remote from the actual needs and concerns of teachers and schools, resulted in government initiatives in the 1980s and early 1990s far more radical than those adopted in Japan or the United States. Government laid down criteria that courses of professional training must satisfy, and issued sets of competences that beginning teachers must demonstrate as a condition of certification. A Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) was set up to oversee the implementation of these changes and to advise government on the development of professional preparation. In 1993, CATE was replaced by a Teacher Training Agency (TTA) to continue the process of accreditation and also to serve as the channel through which universities and colleges obtained funds to provide professional education for teaching (Maguire & Ball, 1995, pp. 246–249).

While teacher training remained a responsibility of older and new universities, all programs had to meet the stringent professional and practical requirements of the TTA before gaining on-going accreditation and funding. Much of the field service and professional training aspect of education programs were required to take place within primary and secondary schools, and this gave schools a remarkably high degree of responsibility for the design and management of this aspect of professional preparation. This initiative has been highly controversial, and much resented by many in the university community, but it does illustrate a rather radical approach to ensuring that some of the valuing of practice, integrated learning, mentorship and accountability to society that had characterized the former colleges of education could be brought back into university programs for teacher education.

If we sum up the experience of historical transition from normal college to university-level institution in these three countries, we can see two major modalities. One is the absorption of former normal colleges into national level comprehensive universities, where faculties of education tend to be given lesser respect and importance than traditional faculties such as medicine, law, engineering and arts and

science, and are likely to face pressures for increasing academicization. The other modality is their development into local or regional universities, in the Japanese case called "universities of education", where the faculty of education has a leading role in the institution and sets standards of its own, which integrate some of the values of the traditional normal college. Both types of institution are able to make their contribution to teacher education, with a somewhat different emphasis and focus, and subject to national mechanisms put in place to ensure a reasonable supply of quality teachers for the schools.

The university of education, or local comprehensive university dominated by a large faculty of education, has the special feature of being a modern university whose ethos is shaped by education as a cross-disciplinary and applied field. This marks it out from traditional comprehensive universities that tend to have an ethos dominated by either pure academic disciplines or traditional professions such as medicine and law.

The French Case

The third type of institution that has its roots in continental Europe, particularly 19th century France, and was to have a considerable impact on teacher education in the former Soviet Union and China/Taiwan, is the normal university. It is an institution quite distinct from either the national comprehensive university or the local university of education. Probably *the Ecole Normal Supérieure*, one of the prestigious *Grandes Ecoles* set in place shortly after the French Revolution, best embodies the model that was to be particularly attractive for modern socialist nations (Judge, Lemosse, Paine & Sedlak, 1994, pp. 47–54). It was one of the new institutions established by the modernizing French state in areas of key importance, such as engineering, commerce and political science. The term *Ecole Normale* meant a school that established a standard or norm for the teaching profession. The *Grandes Ecoles* in France were given a higher status than the universities, and selected their entrants through a highly competitive set of examinations (*concours*) for entry to the civil service. Interestingly, these examinations were based on the influence of the Chinese traditional civil service examination system, introduced to France by Jesuit missionaries and French philosophers in the 17th and 18th centuries. All those selected were paid as civil servants from their time of entry, and were groomed for leadership throughout their years of higher education, then assigned positions on graduation.

Those selected for the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* were expected to set the highest standards in education for the nation, and the institution itself provided facilities for teaching and research in all the major disciplines of knowledge that related to the school system—mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, economics, ancient and modern languages and literatures. It was thus a comprehensive university without the traditional professional fields of medicine and law, or newer fields such as engineering and commerce. It fostered teaching and research at the highest levels as a specialized institution setting educational standards for the whole nation. Graduates mainly became teachers in the universities or the most prestigious

secondary schools, or officials of the national education bureaucracy. This model was adopted in both the Soviet Union and China, with one major normal university being established in each region, to set educational standards for the region, and all graduates assigned leading positions in the system. In China, even before 1949, the model had been attractive, so that major normal universities trace their history back to the early part of the century, and are found in Taiwan as well as the Mainland.

In France there was always a clear divide between primary and secondary teachers. Those teaching at secondary schools and at universities were all called *professeurs*, with the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* setting the standards, while teachers for primary schools and *écoles maternelles* (kindergartens) were called *instituteurs* and were trained in locally based *écoles normales* that had also been established shortly after the French Revolution. Each academy or university district in the country had one such leading school for young men, and a separate one for young women, while many of the departments at a lower level within each academy also had such schools for the training of teachers (Judge, Lemosse, Paine & Sedlak, 1994, pp. 55–63). These local institutions were characterized by values rather similar to the normal schools and colleges of education of the United States and England, with a strong moral orientation, and a focus on primary teaching as a kind of craft occupation. A particular feature of the French context was the emphasis on nurturing republican values in the young.

France was one of the last of the Western industrialized countries to move towards an all-graduate profession for teachers, and when this was done, with the passing of the Orientation Law of 1989, the patterns that emerged were quite different from those in the Anglo-American world. The local normal colleges were neither absorbed into the faculties of education of major comprehensive universities nor were they upgraded into normal universities or local universities of education. Rather, one University Institute for Teacher Formation (*Institute Universitaire pour Formation des Maîtres* (IUFM)) was formed in each academy, separate from the university, but cooperating with it in the work of teacher education. The IUFM was located on the campus of the *école normale* of the major city within the academy, while linking up to it the campuses of former normal schools at the department level. All prospective teachers now had to enter after gaining a licence in one or two subject areas from the university, and complete 2 years of professional education.

The first year focuses on knowledge in the subject disciplines to be taught, as well as some professional studies, in preparation for national competitive examinations for a teaching position. Like Japan, all teachers in public schools in France are civil servants, and the competition for teaching jobs is fierce—with often only 15–20% of those academically qualified successful in being selected. The second year focuses on professional courses in areas such as educational psychology, teaching methodology and curriculum development, as well as extensive field service experience in schools, which is greatly facilitated by the close links between the campuses of the former normal colleges and local schools. All teachers, at primary and secondary level, are now given the title of *professeur*, and they have equal salary scales.

This new structure has been in place for 10 years, and a review of the work of the 28 IUFM established in 1990–1991 is now underway. The fact that IUFM have an

independent legal status, although they work very closely with universities, with some overlapping academic appointments, enables them to retain a close link to schools and a strong emphasis on professional practice. They have been able to integrate some of the important values of the normal school into a new framework that requires of all teachers the academic status and level of university graduates.

One might say that France has thus produced two rather unique models of teacher education: the normal university in the 19th century, which had a wide influence in the later socialist world; and the University Institute for Teacher Formation (IUFM) in the late 20th century, which is unique to the French context, and so far has not been emulated elsewhere.

The Chinese Case

The normal university, as a comprehensive university of the arts and sciences, with a mandate for setting high standards for teachers and education was an attractive model for new socialist regimes, with higher education systems oriented towards macro planning for a socialist economy and polity. Parallel to universities of engineering, medicine, and agriculture, normal universities served the special function of setting high standards for the training of teachers at all levels, particularly secondary and higher education. China had already established several such universities before 1949, and with the reorganization of the whole higher education system along Soviet lines in 1952, a normal university was established at the national level in each of China's six major regions (Hayhoe, 1999, p. 80). A few years later, each province established a normal university at the provincial level, to lead in the training of teachers for the province. These institutions took the lead in training secondary teachers, and in educational research, while normal colleges and schools at the sub-degree tertiary and upper secondary level continued to train teachers for the huge number of primary and lower secondary schools, particularly those in rural areas. There is thus a four-tiered system of teacher education (Leung & Xu, 2000, pp. 180–183).

The training of teachers at all levels was a monopoly of single-purpose normal universities and colleges in China until most recently. The same was true for Taiwan, which had several normal universities following the same model, as well as normal colleges, all publicly supported and responsible for teachers at all levels from early childhood to upper secondary education. The one exception in Taiwan was the faculty of education of the National Chengchi University (University of Politics), which holds a special role within the Taiwan system of higher education as the institution carrying forward the historical tradition of the *Guomindang*'s Whampoa Academy. Taiwan managed to upgrade all teacher education to the degree level, by upgrading all programs in its normal colleges to the undergraduate level in the 1980s. Only in 1994 was a new law passed that opened up the provision of teacher education to other universities, public or private, who were able to meet certain general state standards for teacher certification (Fwu, 2000, pp. 241–244). Taiwan thus now has an open system, with considerable competition. Although teachers in Taiwan are not civil servants, they are guaranteed an income by the government that

is somewhat higher than those with equivalent qualifications in the civil service, thus making the profession quite attractive to young people.

After the Cultural Revolution in China, when teachers suffered greatly, teaching careers tended to be very unattractive to young people, and normal universities thus were less competitive in attracting the best secondary graduates than national comprehensive universities, engineering and polytechnical universities, or even some other specialized institutions such as foreign language universities or universities of finance, economics and law. However, by the mid-1990s, great efforts had been made to improve schools, especially in urban areas, and to raise the salaries and working conditions of teachers. As part of this trend, China also began to move towards an all-graduate profession, particularly in urban areas. In some places, national normal universities have absorbed nearby normal colleges or inservice teacher education colleges in order to make possible university level training for primary and lower secondary teachers, and forms of inservice professional upgrading that are fully integrated with the standards of undergraduate and graduate degree programs. In addition, quite a number of prestigious national comprehensive universities have established colleges of education, and are undertaking new initiatives in teacher education and educational research.

However, in a situation where many mergers of specialized institutions established under Soviet influence with more comprehensive institutions are being officially encouraged, normal universities and colleges are forbidden from merging with other types of institutions. The only mergers they can enter into are those that involve other institutions dedicated to teacher education. The Chinese government sees this as essential to maintaining the status and standards of teacher education, as a more open system for the preparation of teachers develops. In rural areas in China, there is still a dearth of well-qualified teachers holding college or even secondary level diplomas, so it is likely to be a very long time before an all-graduate teaching profession throughout the country will be possible.

Institutional Models for the Upgrading of Teacher Education: a comparative historical evaluation

The historical overview of the upgrading of teacher education in three Western and three Asian societies already given has yielded four distinct models, whose strengths and weaknesses will be considered in this section of the paper.

- Model A: Normal colleges absorbed into major comprehensive universities as faculties of education (United States, England, Japan).
- Model B: Normal colleges upgraded to become universities of education, or local comprehensive universities in which faculties of education play a leading role and shape the ethos (Japan, England, United States).
- Model C: Normal colleges merged into independent university level institutes that cooperate with universities in the training of teachers for primary and secondary schools, but have their own separate legal existence (France).

- Model D: Normal colleges upgraded to or integrated within normal universities that retain a strong profile as single purpose universities focused on the teaching profession (China/Taiwan).

Model A has the advantage of full parity of status and dignity for education, alongside other major faculties and professions. It has the problem, however, of a tendency to academic drift and the devaluing of excellence in professional practice, mentorship and the integrated learning areas appropriate for primary schools. The autonomy of major comprehensive universities also can easily result in a situation where resources are moved from education to other fields, and the government has little control over the supply of teachers. This model probably works best in an open system that allows for some single purpose education institutions as well.

Model B has the advantage of education as the field that provides a defining identity for a university institution, with natural links to professional practice and school improvement. It provides an environment supportive to teacher formation as a primary goal, and makes it possible to guarantee a supply of teachers. It also makes possible the development of fields such as adult education, the training of trainers, lifelong learning, and profession-specific education, that may be useful for many sectors of the knowledge society, including the corporate world, government, professions such as law and medicine, and community organizations for the elderly, new immigrants or other groups. In some situations, however, Model B may not be adequate for the task of preparing teachers for upper secondary education in fields such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, economics. For this, it may depend on a supply of graduates from major comprehensive universities.

Model C has the advantage of parity of esteem and status for education as an undergraduate and graduate field of study, separate from but equal to other major disciplines and professional schools in universities. It encourages a focus on education and its various disciplinary bases in psychology, philosophy, sociology, economics, etc., and gives less attention to the subject areas that provide the substance of the school curriculum. For these, it depends largely on the university. It is supportive to high-level research in education, both theoretical and practical, and does make possible the guarantee of a stable supply of teachers. There is less danger of academic drift in a situation where the educational institution has a legal existence independent of the university.

Model D provides well for both the education in basic disciplines and in professional fields for teachers at all levels from early childhood to upper secondary education, with a tendency to give highest importance to secondary education. It is likely to have a strong academic orientation, and for there to be a real pull for support to go to basic research in major disciplines of the sciences and social sciences, rather than for education. It is less likely than Model B to support moves towards the embrace of areas such as adult learning, lifelong education, training of trainers, etc. This is linked to its historical emergence in the 19th century, when the role of the teacher, especially at secondary and tertiary levels, was to inculcate knowledge in specialist disciplinary fields.

Conclusion: implications for Hong Kong

As noted earlier, a major purpose in writing this article was to set a context for reflecting on the Hong Kong situation, and specifically on future directions for the recently established Hong Kong Institute of Education. Since comparisons are often made between Hong Kong and Singapore, in terms of the educational challenges faced by both societies, teacher education developments in Singapore are first sketched out in this concluding section, then the Hong Kong situation is considered. Singapore has a legacy somewhat similar to that of Hong Kong as a former British colony, although its geographical and demographic size is considerably smaller. Singapore has been an independent nation since 1965, while Hong Kong became a special administrative region of China in 1997, with a guarantee of autonomy over all internal affairs, including education, for a 50-year period. Singapore seems to have reached its own solution regarding the place of teacher training in its higher education system, but it is questionable what Hong Kong might learn from it. This may be due both to differences in the historical development of education in the two societies, and differences in the character of their higher education systems.

At the time of independence, Singapore had a teacher training college, providing sub-degree training of teachers for primary and secondary schools, and two universities. The University of Singapore had an English medium of instruction, and the Nanyang University used Chinese as a medium of instruction and had strong leftwing and Chinese patriotic leanings. The University of Singapore had a School of Education, performing educational research and postgraduate diploma programs for graduates in subject disciplines of its own or from the Nanyang University, who became upper secondary teachers.

Under political developments that are well known, the Nanyang University was forced to close down in the years after independence, since little place could be found for its graduates in a predominantly English professional employment situation. The University of Singapore was brought under firm control of the government, with no provision for a buffer that would provide any form of autonomy (Selvaratnam, 1994, pp. 71–73). In 1971, the School of Education at the University of Singapore was closed down, and its courses were transferred to the Teachers' Training College. In 1973, the Teachers' Training College was upgraded to an Institute of Education, and it became the sole locus for training all teachers for the schools. Much of this was done at the sub-degree level, but there were also postgraduate diploma courses for university graduates preparing to teach in secondary schools, and some graduate programs, inherited from the University of Singapore. Degrees were offered under the auspices of the University of Singapore. In 1984, the Institute was joined by the College of Physical Education, which was treated as an autonomous body directly responsible to the Council of the Institute of Education. Over these years, the Institute was also mandated to do considerable in service training for teachers and principals in the form of diploma-type programs recognized by the Ministry of Education.

In 1991, the Institute was merged with the Nanyang Technological University. The latter had been developed as a college of technology on the campus of the

former Nanyang University, but under direct government control and supervision. It was now upgraded to university status, and combined with the Institute of Education. The Institute of Education still retains an identity, with four schools of its own (education, arts, science and physical education) in a federated relationship with the Nanyang Technological University, and responding directly to government in its major developments (Gopinathan & Ho, 2000, pp. 200–202). Throughout the 1990s, it began a series of degree programs for teachers at the primary and lower secondary level, but the numbers in those programs remain small, and the majority of primary teachers are still trained in sub-degree diploma programs. The model is thus close to model C, a strong institute of education within a federated university structure, with the difference that it continues to do a large amount of sub-degree teaching training, and offers all the disciplines of knowledge and integrated learning areas needed for the schools. The decision to merge the Institute with a technological university, rather than with the national comprehensive university, seems to have been more a matter of size and balance, than one of coherence in terms of the needs of teacher education.

The main feature of the Singapore higher education model might be seen as one of direct government control over all aspects of higher education, and a rationalization that has given the Institute of Education a complete monopoly over teacher training at all levels. This enables it to be directly responsive to government in terms of its training modalities, its research and the numbers of teachers it prepares for all levels of the system. It also means there is no competitive pressure for excellence in terms of factors such as student choice, and competition for research grants, or the diversification of programs or of modalities of interaction with the school sector. Its role in the Singapore higher education system reflects the overall patterns of the system—highly centralized and rationalized, with teacher training and educational research under direct state control.

By contrast, Hong Kong has a strong tradition of university autonomy. The creation of the University Grants Committee in 1965, as a buffer between the publicly funded higher education sector and government, has led to a much more diversified higher education system than that of Singapore. Each institution has had a distinct mission and identity, and different emphases in terms of field of knowledge and orientation towards basic or applied areas of research. Thus, of two former polytechnics, one has retained a strong orientation towards applied professional fields in its teaching and research, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, while the other, City University, has moved towards a comprehensive university model. A new science and technology university, the HKUST, has set very high standards for the region and internationally in these specific areas over a relatively short period. By contrast, a small liberal arts university with longstanding historical roots, Lingnan University, has made a virtue out of its size and specific orientation towards the arts and social sciences.

The two major comprehensive universities with long traditions have strong faculties of medicine as well as such professional faculties of law and engineering, and arts and science. Each has a large faculty of education, with somewhat different orientations. Hong Kong University's Faculty of Education tends to give greatest

attention to the subject disciplines taught in schools, while the Faculty of Education of the Chinese University of Hong Kong focuses more on the professional discourses of education, with particular strength in educational psychology, and school improvement. Finally, one Christian university, the Hong Kong Baptist University, has developed into a comprehensive university focusing on arts and sciences with a small department of education, able to contribute to teacher education in certain specialist areas. None of these have had either the inclination or the capacity to take on the task of professional preparation for all of the teachers needed by the school system, from early childhood education to secondary. Rather, they have tended to focus on training university graduates for secondary subject teaching, graduate studies in education, educational research, and a few pace-setting programs such as the bachelor of education in language education.

Given the way in which higher education evolved in Hong Kong over the 1980s, it was not surprising that the Education Commission, a government advisory body, decided to form a new tertiary institution with a particular mandate for education in 1992. This was done by merging the five colleges of education responsible for preservice and inservice training of teachers at the sub-degree level into the Hong Kong Institute of Education in 1994. The new institute can assure a steady supply of teachers for the schools, while striving to upgrade teacher education to an all-graduate profession. This is being done in a situation where professional standards of excellence in education are the dominant concern, rather than accommodation to the traditional academic values of the comprehensive university. The location of the Institute's new campus in a range of hills on the edge of a country park provides surroundings that are reminiscent of the settings of traditional Chinese academies or *shuyuan.* These were institutions that nurtured progressive traditions of education over many centuries since the Song dynasty in various parts of China.

What kind of university-level institution should the Institute strive to become? The earlier comparative analysis suggests two distinct possibilities for Hong Kong: Model B, the university of education; or Model D, the normal university. These two would make for different strategic choices and directions for the Institute as it moves forward.

Model D would suggest developing a full range of disciplines, covering all subjects taught in schools up to upper secondary education, together with all of the educational fields needed for excellence in pedagogy, school management, curriculum development and related areas. It is a model that reflects a rather traditional approach to schooling, as the inculcation of subject knowledge in young minds. It is also a model that sees the school sector as separate and distinct from society as a whole, and gives little attention to how its fields of knowledge or professional areas of study might relate to the wider needs of a learning society. For these and other more practical reasons, relating to its standing and the resources it is able to command for subject discipline research, there are intense debates in both Taiwan and Mainland China over its long-term viability. It may or may not survive as one of the last remnants of the dream of a socialist utopia that attracted so much time and attention over the 20th century.

There can be little doubt that Model B, the university of education, is more

appropriate to the present Hong Kong context. First of all, the whole Hong Kong education system is undergoing a reform oriented towards a stronger emphasis on learning to learn, the integration of key learning areas in the curriculum, the improvement of young people's skills in communication, problem-solving and analytic thinking, and the development of capacity to make intelligent use of information technology. While traditional subject disciplines such as mathematics, languages, basic and social sciences have a significant role to play, educational fields such as learning psychology, teaching methods, educational sociology, curriculum theory, philosophy of education, classroom organization, and adult learning are equally important to the success of the reforms. The integration of these areas with basic knowledge in selected disciplines through bachelor of education programs prepares teachers who understand the structure and learning demands of their subject disciplines as well as the individual needs of learners in the classroom at different age levels.

The curricular emphasis of the university of education prepares young people for teaching in early childhood, primary and secondary schools, as a priority, but also provides them with knowledge and skills likely to be useful in many different sectors of the knowledge society. As both the government and corporate sector become increasingly aware of the need for lifelong education to keep up with the changing needs of the knowledge society, employees equipped with substantial knowledge of educational psychology, curriculum development methods, motivational theories of learning and various approaches to developing human potential would have a particular value.

The university of education is able to carry forward positive dimensions of the normal college tradition, and apply them effectively to the rapidly changing needs of the information age; not only in the school sector, but also in other sectors. The strategic choice and direction this would suggest is one that would leave high-level subject studies in areas such as physics, chemistry or economics to the comprehensive universities, which are well equipped for teaching and research in these areas, and able to prepare specialist teachers. It would give priority to a wide range of educational studies, relevant to the needs of the knowledge society, while also building excellence in basic knowledge areas needed for teaching, including academic, expressive, moral and aesthetic areas. It would nurture scholarship at the highest levels, but a scholarship oriented towards the needs of the learning society.

Finally, it may be useful to say something about the concept of a university of education. We have noted through our comparative analysis that the term was first used in Japan. Subsequently, this type of university has also been established in South Korea. In the United States and England, normal schools or colleges of education have tended to be transformed into local comprehensive universities, with strong programs in the arts, sciences and social sciences, alongside education. In some cases, there has been a deliberate effort to distance themselves from the tradition of the normal college, because of the low status it was perceived to have, compared with the university. In addition, in the West, the term university has been taken by many people to denote a sense of comprehensive or universal knowledge, due to the strength of the historical tradition of the European university. This is so

in spite of the fact that the term *universitas* originally simply meant the guild of scholars, and had no particular reference to the breadth of knowledge areas in the university's curriculum.

In Asia, by contrast, the term university has always been associated with the status or standing of the institution, relative to other parts of the education system. The fact that European-style universities came late in the history of education in China and Japan means the concept itself carries less resonance from the past. If anything, the notion of a university of education, with a strong orientation towards integrated learning areas, a deep sense of moral responsibility and professional accountability, and a concept of research as field-based knowledge, demonstrated more through practical application than theoretical debate, has a particularly close fit with Chinese traditions of scholarship. If education is to be elevated to one of the most respected and most demanding areas of knowledge in the university, this is more likely to happen first in Asia, than in the West.

A future Hong Kong University of Education would thus complement Hong Kong's seven other public universities in a diverse and autonomous system of higher education. It would have the unique mission of laying a strong foundation for the knowledge society from the bottom up. It would also be in a position to communicate some of the strengths of China's progressive educational traditions to a global arena, and demonstrate the ways in which they are taking on a new relevance with the emergence of knowledge societies.

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