Compare Vol. 31, No. 3, November, 2001, pp. 329-345.

Creating A Vision for Teacher Education between East and West: The Case of the Hong Kong Institute of Education

Abstract

This article might be described as a case study, depicting the process of vision development for a new institution of teacher education, established in a time of political transition for Hong Kong. The focus is on issues of cultural identity, and the first part of the article lays out a framework for civilizational dialogue in the post Cold War period. Next the context of educational development is analysed, including the emergence of this new institution, and the demands placed upon it to support a range of educational reforms after Hong Kong's return to China in 1997. Part three of the article describes the process of developing a vision statement, and the ideas that informed it. Part four gives a careful look at four of the nine guiding values chosen for the Institute, showing the particular shape they give to the development of the vision, and the ways in which they are linked to the dialogue of civilizations.

Introduction

This article sets out to share the experience of one newly established teacher education institution in developing its vision and guiding values. The location of this institution in the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, a British colony from 1842 to 1997, and a part of China since July 1997, raises complex and fascinating issues of cultural identity. The article thus begins with a section on civilizational dialogue, setting forth one possible way of reflecting on the opportunities and challenges posed by the end of the Cold War, and the beginning of a more serious appreciation of the core values of Asian civilizations in the global community. Part two of the article sketches out the context of education in Hong Kong, in the period leading up to Hong Kong's return to China, and the establishment of a new tertiary institution for teacher education. Part three describes the

process whereby members of the Institute developed a vision statement for the Institute, involving a large number of staff and students, as well as teachers in local schools, in the process. Part four turns to the guiding values which were developed through the same process, looking closely at four of them, and suggesting how they may be linked to the broader challenges of cultural identity and the civilizational dialogue.

Civilizational Dialogue

For a very long period of time, global dialogue was dominated by debates between capitalism and socialism, between right and leftwing tendencies in politics. An important function of education was to socialise children and young people into one or other of these major political ideologies, and global cultural and educational interaction tended to be drawn into the service of one or other of these opposite ideological camps. Taking a long historical perspective, it is interesting to note that both political ideologies emerged from the modernization experience of Europe, particularly the 19th century, when socialism was developed by thinkers in France, Germany and Britain, among other countries, to deal with the distortions and inequities which had become evident in the development of capitalism.

Two scholars whose work probed beneath this ideological divide and touched upon fundamental civilizational issues underlying global interaction were the Kenyan Arabic scholar, Ali A. Mazrui, and the Norwegian scholar and founder of Peace Studies, Johann Galtung. Perhaps the fact that both of them came from rather small countries, on the periphery of global developments, enabled them, in the 1970s, to form perspectives somewhat different from dominant ones on the left or right.

In his extensive writings on African economic development, democratisation and higher education, Ali Mazrui cautioned African countries against adopting a second Western-derived orthodoxy, Marxism-Leninism, in their attempts to reform the capitalist patterns they had inherited from European colonisers. His classic article on the African university as a multi-national corporation, published in the *Harvard Education Review* in 1975, suggested that African countries should develop their indigenous languages and culture in a domestication of the colonial heritage, and then should diversify the sources of

knowledge they brought into the university - drawing upon scholarship from China, India and the Middle East as well as the West (Mazrui, 1975).

Johann Galtung developed a "structural theory of imperialism" which demonstrated how many parallels there were in the patterns of domination and penetration between Western capitalist influences in developing countries and Soviet socialist influences. He proposed ways in which developing countries could forge solidarity among themselves and assert a stronger autonomy in their interactions with the dominant world powers, whether capitalist or socialist. (Galtung, 1972, 1980) His ideas were particularly seminal to the efforts of the non-aligned nations in the 1970s to work through the United Nations organisations and develop a new international economic order. (Kim, 1979, 1984) This was followed in the 1980s by UNESCO's efforts to create a new world information order, and give special focus to cultural development. Diverse nations around the world were encouraged to build with pride upon their own cultural roots, and assert their own values and perspectives, even as they interacted with major developed nations, and sought to use the opportunities provided by multi-lateral or bilateral development aid for effective economic development.

From the perspective of much of the developed world, however, the concerns of the Cold War continued to dominate global dialogue. The struggle between capitalism and socialism, both globally and at the regional or national level, remained in the forefront. Development aid tended to serve geo-political or ideological ends, no matter how altruistic was its rhetoric. However, the sudden and unanticipated collapse of the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1991, changed this situation dramatically. For many, it was a sad moment when the cruelties and inadequacies of this dominant version of European-derived socialism were fully exposed. The struggle for justice has subsequently taken more diversified forms.

Two years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the summer of 1993, Harvard professor of political science, Samuel Huntington published his now famous article on the "Clash of Civilizations" in the *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, and started off a fierce debate over the shape of the struggles for domination that would go on in the post Cold War Era. Huntington's main point was that Western nations would need to be prepared for forms of conflict in future which had much deeper roots than the intra-Enlightenment conflicts

between capitalism and socialism characteristic of the Cold War. Future conflicts would arise from the profound differences in values of other civilizations, which had achieved considerable economic development while retaining belief systems distinct from those of Western countries. The two civilizational groupings which he felt could post the most serious threat, because of their economic power, were Confucianism and Islam. (Huntington, 1993, 1996)

Huntington's approach was that of a realist political scientist, and his message to Western countries was that they needed to recognise the fact that cultural convergence did not necessarily accompany economic modernization. Other civilizational perspectives were likely to be around for a long time, and the West had better gain a deep understanding of them, in order to protect itself from potential future conflicts. This was a negative angle, but it was also possible to look at this situation in a positive light. What could be learned from major eastern civilizations in the new space that opened up with the end of the Cold War?

In October 1992, a conference was held at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, affiliated with the University of Toronto, under the title "Knowledge Across Cultures: Universities East and West." The purpose was to reflect on the contribution that might come forth from three major eastern civilizations - Chinese, Indian and Arabic - in the post Cold War period, when resources from diverse civilizations could be drawn upon to shape the world of the future. The university was seen as having a particular responsibility to bring cultural resources that had been submerged under the bi-polarism of the capitalist-socialist struggle back into the mainstream for consideration. (Hayhoe *et al*, 1993)

In May 1994, a follow-up conference was convened from the Chinese side, and held in the Yuelu Academy (*Yuelu shuyuan*), founded in 976 A.D. and situated on the campus of Hunan University in Changsha. This time the focus was on the future of higher education in the 21st century, and the ways in which several strands of Eastern civilization and its traditions of higher education could contribute to a reshaping of the university. There were interesting challenges on the level of both epistemology and institutional patterns. On the epistemological level, there were papers outlining how philosophical perspectives of such Daoist philosophers as Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi could contribute to higher education discourse

and student development, also considerations of the contemporary relevance of Sinic approaches to science and of Sufi cosmology. Issues of evaluation were taken up in several papers, in relation to fundamental perspectives of knowledge construction, and the integration of local cultural knowledge. The interaction between knowledge in the media and in higher education was discussed in ways that challenged traditional university curricula. Finally, several Eastern models of higher education, including the Chinese *shuyuan*, the Korean *sowon* and the Arabic *madrasseh* were given attention. (Hayhoe & Pan, 1996) Overall, there was a sense of the tremendous richness of alternative approaches to knowledge and institutional organisation that were available to higher education as it moved into the 21st century.

The reason for this rather lengthy discussion of a particular way of interpreting the post Cold War era is that this paper will look at the case of the Hong Kong Institute of Education and its visioning process more from the perspective of civilization and culture, than that of political and social transition. There is a rich literature on Hong Kong education, in the period leading up to the transition, and the challenges and choices it has faced. Issues of decolonisation, neocolonisation and possible recolonisation, in the new relationship with the China Mainland, have been raised, and the implications for education explored. (Law, 1997) There has also been a careful scholarly scrutiny of the political transition, and its outcomes in terms of democratic development. (Pepper, 2000; Baum, 2000) This paper will seek to probe the cultural and civilizational challenge that faces teachers and teacher education in a society with a very strong legacy of language, culture and institutions from Britain, yet even deeper roots in Chinese language, thought and history, due to the fact that about 98% of the population is Chinese.

Challenge and Opportunity in Hong Kong

A colony of Britain from 1842 to 1997, Hong Kong has often been regarded as one of the most capitalist cities of the world. The combination of British law and a stable colonial government, a remarkable entrepreneurial spirit supported by large capital investment from local Chinese as well as Chinese farther afield, and a highly disciplined and hardworking labour force, made possible remarkable economic growth and adjustment to changing

circumstances. (Lau, 1997) Hong Kong is located on the south China coast, and its New Territories have an extended border with the biggest socialist country on earth, Mainland China. Here, side by side, were the two extremes of the Cold War situation. The fact that many Hong Kong people were refugees from Communism in China, has meant that the divide between these two societies has been very deep.

Nevertheless, undergirding the sharp ideological divide between capitalism and socialism, and the suffering this had brought to many families caught on one side of the border or the other, was a shared civilization going back for several millennia, a shared language and literature, a shared history and ways of being and thinking in relation to one another that were very different from Western ways. From the perspective of culture and civilization, Hong Kong has always been a very Chinese city. Some of the most sensitive debates that have kept recurring in education over the years were related to the language of instruction, whether it should be English or Cantonese, the local dialect of Chinese. As the return to China became imminent, the issue of the teaching of Putonghua, the national language of China added further complexity to these issues. (Adamson & Lai, 1997)

The deep cultural and linguistic affinity with China had made it possible for Hong Kong people to reconnect to China very quickly in the period after 1978, when Deng Xiaoping opened up the country to three new orientations - modernization, the world and the future (known and constantly cited in the Chinese educational reform literature as *sange mianxiang)*. He also called an end to internal political movements that had kept China closed to the outside world. It is very clear when one looks at the change in Hong Kong's skyline between 1978 and the mid 1990s, that China's steady pace in economic modernization, created opportunities that were vital to Hong Kong's ability to move from a focus on light industry, to a situation where financial and management services, combined with ever increasing property values, became the mainstay of the economy. With the Sino-British joint agreement of 1984, followed by the drafting of the Basic Law, a kind of mini-constitution for the Hong Kong special administrative region of China, completed in 1990, Hong Kong people gradually adjusted to the reality of a historic return to China in July 1997, when the 99 year lease on the New Territories came to an end. Beijing's suppression of the student democracy movement in June 1989 was no doubt the most troubling point in this adjustment,

leading to great local concern over issues of human rights and democratic development, and giving the last governor, Chris Patten, a rationale for seeking to speed up the process of democratisation. (Patten, 1998, chapter 2; Cradock, 1999)

The most striking educational development of the decade leading up to Hong Kong's return to China, was the rapid expansion of higher education. In 1969, the Hong Kong government had made a commitment to 9 years of compulsory education for all children, and by 1979 there was full provision for all to complete lower secondary education in publicly supported secondary schools, and for most to complete another two years to reach Form Five, or the British O-level standard. However, higher education had remained fairly restrictive, with a relatively low percentage of students entering Form 6 to prepare for university entrance over a two-year period, and only two universities, Hong Kong University, founded in 1911, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong founded in 1963. In the early 1970s, about 2% of the age cohort entered university, and by 1985 this had risen to 4%. Between 1985 and 1996, there was a dramatic broadening of university access, rising to 18% of the age cohort, in 7 tertiary institutions.

This was accomplished by the founding of a new university, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in 1991, and by upgrading the programs and status of five other institutions which had been doing mainly sub-degree higher education: The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the City University, the Baptist University, the Academy of Performing Arts and Lingnan University. (University Grants Committee, 1996, pp. 16-17) There have been many interpretations of the reasons for this dramatic move to mass higher education. Clearly, there were concerns about the increasing need for highly educated personnel, especially with fears of a brain drain which were intensified after the repression of the student movement in 1989. In addition there was a sense that this might be important politically, in terms of Hong Kong being fully prepared for self-rule under the principle of one country two systems. (Postiglione, 1997) It is striking to note, also, the parallels with China's own dramatic expansion of university education through the 1980s and 1990s. (Hayhoe, 1995)

Ironically, this expansion in higher education did not facilitate changes in the school

curriculum intended to prepare children and young people for Hong Kong's historic transition. Whereas the colonial government had tended to foster a traditional and rather neutral curriculum, once the return to China became inevitable, efforts were made to develop guidelines for civic education across the curriculum (Curriculum Development Council, 1996), to introduce contemporary political and social issues into the secondary social studies curriculum and to develop a new liberal studies curriculum for Form six, that included modules such as Hong Kong Studies, China studies, and other relevant contemporary themes. However, in its competition for the best students, and the highest possible level of government funding, the greatly expanded university system tended to give greatest importance to A-level examination results in student selection. This resulted in a situation where traditional curricular patterns remained entrenched, and only a minority of secondary schools took the new curricula seriously. (Morris & Chan, 1997) The basic education system was thus further reinforced in patterns of curriculum directly subservient to the public examinations.

The one group which had been left out of the huge expansion of higher education were the teachers for primary and lower secondary education. Four traditional teachers' colleges, the earliest founded in 1939, and one having a technical focus, continued to prepare certificated teachers in two to three year sub-degree programs, while an institute for language in education was established in 1980 to offer non-degree programs for in-service teachers. The last step in the expansion of tertiary education was to take place in the mid 1990s. In 1992, the Education Commission, a high-level government policy body, proposed the merging of these five institutions into the Hong Kong Institute of Education (Education Commission, 1992, pp. 66-77). The Institute was created by ordinance of the Legislative Council in 1994, with a mission to become a centre of excellence in teacher education, and to gradually develop degree level programs for teachers. In 1996, the Institute was placed under the University Grants Committee, alongside the other public tertiary institutions having degree granting status, giving it an autonomous status with relation to government.[1] By contrast the former teachers colleges had been administered by the Education Department, and all staff had been civil servants. The initial plan was for a small number of degree granting programs to be developed, and the majority of programs to continue at the sub-degree level.

However, in his first policy address in October 1997, the new Chief Executive, Mr. Tung Chee Hwa made a dramatic change to this plan. One of his five commitments to "enhance the professional status of teachers" was to "require all new teachers to be trained graduates." (Tung, 1997, p. 30) The University Grants Committee was given the task of studying the timetable and means needed to achieve this target. He also called for "a very careful look at the whole structure of our education system" (Tung, 1997, p. 34), to be carried out by the Education Commission. The Commission started its deliberations in the spring of 1998, and by May 2000 it had completed three phases of consultation, including the development of new aims, a framework for education reform and finally a detailed blueprint for structural change. (Education Commission, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a). In September of 2000, a set of reform proposals was formally presented to the Chief Executive. (Education Commission 2000b) The new aims for education were summed up in terms of the enjoyment of learning, creativity, excellence in communication, and commitment to society and nation. The new patterns proposed to reduce the pressure of public examinations by removing those at the end of primary six, and possibly reducing those at the end of secondary schooling from two sets, at Form Five and Form Seven level, equivalent to O level and A level in Britain, to one set that served both as a completion of secondary and as a mechanism for selection to higher education. This was intended to create space for much greater integration of learning across the curriculum, and a more balanced emphasis on both academic learning areas and such cross-curricular concerns as civic education and aesthetics.

It was in the time period just before the Education Commission began to formulate new aims for education that the Hong Kong Institute of Education moved to a new unified campus, in Tai Po, in the New Territories, closer to Shenzhen than Kowloon. Legally one institution since 1994, it finally had the physical conditions to function as a unified institution, and its first task was to set out a new vision for its future development. The University Grants Committee had given it the mission of becoming a centre of excellence for teacher education, but this needed to be given more vivid and concrete form in a vision statement that would clarify its particular niche within Hong Kong's higher education system, and focus the efforts of all its members. The next section of this paper will describe the visioning process, and the vision statement, which was decided upon just as the Education Commission was beginning

its deliberation on new aims for education.

Creating a Vision for Teacher Education

The term vision was chosen for this exercise, rather than mission, since the Institute's mission had been defined by the University Grants Committee as becoming a centre of excellence in teacher education. But what would this mean in a society that had just undergone reunification with China after 155 years as a colony? What role should teacher education play in the building of a new identity with reference to China, the Asia Pacific and the international community? What contribution could and should it make to local reforms in education which had finally been given high priority on government's agenda?

The writer took up her position as director of the Institute in late September 1997, and her first priority was to establish a vision committee, which could address these questions. It included a student representative, a representative from the Association of Lecturers, a number of scholars and administrators from different sectors of the Institute and two well known school principals, one primary and one secondary. The many meetings that followed were a kind of journey, which proved exciting yet also daunting.

The committee started by addressing the simple question: "what is a vision?" A few definitions that helped to focus members' thinking went as follows: "A clear mental picture of a preferred future state." "Something that goes beyond our normal boundaries of thinking and takes us into the realm of future possibilities." "A rational projection of the present, which generates emotion and excitement." "Something that provides focus and energy, that binds us together around a common identity and sense of destiny."[2]

Beyond these helpful definitions, members felt the need for examples of how other organizations created their visions, and managed to achieve them. Quite a number were discussed, and one which proved particularly stimulating was that of SONY. Its vision was developed in the early 1950s, when Japan was suffering from the aftermath of defeat in World War 2, and Japanese products were despised. "Fifty years from now," stated SONY's founders, "our products will be as well-known as any on Earth... and will signify innovation

and quality that rivals the most innovative companies anywhere.... 'Made in Japan' will mean something fine, not shoddy." The envisioned future - "becoming the company most known for changing the worldwide image of Japanese products as being of poor quality" (Collins & Porras, 1997, p. 237) - was breathtaking in its simplicity and vividness, also in the simple fact that it has so clearly been achieved. Corporate success was a by-product of values that combined an intense loyalty to Japanese culture and national identity with respect and encouragement of individual ability and creativity.

While SONY provided an example from the world of business, two examples from the world of education, one positive and one negative, were also a stimulus. One committee member, in wishing to raise our sights as high as possible, threw out the challenge that the Institute should strive to become an "MIT in Education." Clearly such an achievement in terms of an international reputation for excellence was far in the future. Yet the Massachusetts Institute of Technology had been founded at a time when technology was a relatively low status area of knowledge, with classical literature, philosophy and basic sciences having far greater prestige. Not only had it achieved world pre-eminence, but contributed to raising the quality and status of technology as a field of knowledge which became valued and understood in entirely new ways. There seemed to be lessons here for the fields of primary and early childhood teacher education, which had long occupied the very lowest rungs of the academic ladder in Hong Kong.

A negative example which stirred considerable discussion was the case of the University of Chicago, whose School of Education had held a commanding role in teacher education since early in the century. In 1996, it was closed due to low enrolments, lack of leadership and a lack of connection to professional practice. Although it had once actively contributed to the improvement of schools in the Chicago area, in recent decades the emphasis had moved to prestigious research in basic disciplines such as psychology and sociology, rather than practical concerns of professional improvement in learning, teaching and school management. By contrast, some other major faculties of education in the U.S., associated with the Holmes group, had set out to reform their approaches to teacher education through a re-valuing of school-based approaches to professional development for teachers, and strong networking between schools and faculties of education. (Altbach, 1998, p.4)

This example of the possible negative effects of a "university culture" was a particularly important one to the Institute. Committee members were aware that its foundation lay in the heritage of the five teachers colleges which had been closely linked to local schools, and had a long tradition of craft standards in the practice of teaching and school management. It became clear that a major challenge would be raising academic and professional standards to a level acceptable for university accreditation, while emphasising field-based professional practice and the improvement of learning, teaching and school administration.

Language was an important element in the development of the vision. A decision had to be made early in the process of deliberation as to whether it would be crafted first in English or Chinese, two very different languages in their patterns of conception and expression. Although Institute staff are largely fluent in English, it is the only one of the eight tertiary institutions whose predominant language of instruction is Chinese, reflecting the needs of local schools where Chinese is the medium of instruction at pre-primary and primary levels. It was a natural decision that the vision statement should be crafted first in Chinese, and then translated into English. This provided the advantage of the rich, concise and flexible expressive capacity of Chinese.

What length and shape should a vision statement take? Committee members decided on a core statement of about 100 words which would focus on the heart of the Institute's endeavour. An additional series of guiding values would touch upon some of the specifics of the Institute's commitments and reflect elements in the regional location and civilizational heritage. Every word, in both Chinese and English, was subjected to intense debate and scrutiny. Nor was the discussion limited within the confines of the committee. Two institute-wide forums were held, where drafts were discussed in both languages, and many suggestions came forward from students and staff. In addition, an open e-mail line provided a channel for ongoing deliberation. The core statement which was agreed upon after about eight months of deliberation goes as follows:

"By the early 21st century, the Hong Kong Institute of Education will become a leading

university-level institution in the Asia Pacific, best known for raising the status and quality of education. We will provide a creative and dynamic environment for learning and research. We will nurture knowledgeable, caring and responsible teachers who are able to excite the interest of each and every student. As they and their students experience the sheer joy of learning, all dimensions of their potential will blossom. A culture of lifelong learning will become a reality."

The influence of the examples discussed above can be seen in some aspects of the statement. The SONY vision had made an explicit commitment terms of time and space, with a time span of fifty years, and a determination to exert a world wide influence. Members of the Institute's vision committee felt that 20-30 years should be the time frame for the Institute's vision, and the opening words, "by the early 21st century," resulted from much discussion around the degree of specificity that should be set forth. In terms of space, the Asia Pacific was seen as the arena for the fulfilment of the Institute's vision, rather than the global community The commitment to elevating both the quality and status of education was directly inspired by the example of MIT, particularly the way it had dramatically changed the image of technology as a field of knowledge.

However, the core focus was on learning as a joyful process, a kind of natural unfolding of ability in a wide range of areas, not only traditional school subjects. It is seen as a process wherein the joy is shared by teacher and student, in such a way that an addiction to learning spills out into every arena of life, and continues through the different phases of life. There is also a concern with learning as an effective process, resulting in the full development of potential in all dimensions where children have distinctive capabilities and talents. Here Howard Gardner's work on "multiple intelligences" had a strong influence on the committee. (Gardner, 1991, pp. 80-81)

The SONY vision had put Japanese culture and national identity at the heart of its concern. By contrast, parallel concerns did not find their way into the Institute's core vision statement. In spite of the use of the Chinese language, and a strong awareness among committee members of Hong Kong's unique situation and the challenges of culture, national identity and civic responsibility that faced it, members felt this arena would be more

appropriately dealt with in the guiding values, which will be discussed in the final section of this paper. If the Institute focused on the challenge of ensuring a joyful and effective learning experience for each and every child in Hong Kong, it was felt this would give broad leeway for a range of new programs in teacher education, and for considerable experimentation and exploration. For the purpose of program development, the Institute had already developed a set of *Guiding Principles for Teacher Education* and *Key Attributes of a Good Teacher*, which drew heavily on the literature of teacher education.[3] However, in the vision, the focus was on the learning experience of children.

Finally, there was a sense that the core vision needed to be reduced to an even simpler form, a phrase that could become as natural as breathing, and remain in the forefront of everyone's thinking in each phase of institutional development. Efforts were made to involve all of Hong Kong's 1200 schools at this point, by inviting their teachers, along with the staff and students of the Institute, to participate in a competition which could result in a short phrase that would contain the core ideas of the vision statement. While there were many interesting submissions to this competition, none were judged fully satisfactory. In the end, members of the committee itself decided upon the phrase "Optimising each child's potential through the shared joy of learning and teaching." It had been a real effort of intellect, spirit and emotion to reduce the vision statement to twelve words and twelve characters in the two languages. Subsequently this short phrase has served as a kind of focal point in many intense debates and discussions about the strategic development of the Institute.

Between East and West: Guiding Values for the Institute

A concurrent aspect of the Institute's vision building had involved the development of a set of nine guiding values. Many specific points of concern considered for the core vision statement were subsequently included in these guiding values. In this final section of the paper, the first four guiding values, which are specifically linked to issues of cultural identity and civilizational dialogue, the focus of this paper, are discussed. They include its concept of excellence, the place of early childhood education, the language policy, and civic education. The five other guiding values covered a range of areas from the principle of equal opportunity and equitable work and study conditions for all staff and students, to effective

collaboration locally and internationally, and the commitment to enhancing creativity and effectiveness in teaching, learning, research and administration through an IT-rich environment.

The creation of a new institution opens up new possibilities, especially at a time when a new cultural and civic identity is being established with Hong Kong's return to China, and when there is a new openness to dialogue among civilizations in the global arena. Hong Kong has been heir to two very different civilizations - that of China and that of Britain, or perhaps more broadly of Europe and the West. A new institution for teachers, coming into being in the final years of transition from colony to special administrative region of China, has a unique responsibility and opportunity to foster this new cultural and civic identity at the most basic level - in the early learning experiences of the majority of children. In the development of the vision statement, there was intense debate and discussion over the regional or spatial framework that should be set forth, and the final decision was to see the Institute's setting as the Asia Pacific. This is clearly a spatial or geographical category, but there are also elements of a civilizational category, in the sense of recent debates over "Asian values" and the "Asian century", also the growing interest in such Pacific countries as Canada, USA and Australia, in balancing the Asian heritage with the European heritage which has tended to dominate their history.[4]

The Institute finds itself in a unique situation where it can blend elements from these distinctive heritages in ways that could be valuable to both East and West. On the one hand, as it embraces more self-consciously than ever before values that are part of its Chinese heritage, it may be able to demonstrate ways in which they can contribute to teacher education in a global arena. On the other hand, with a colonial heritage that absorbed and embodied Western values for a longer period than most other East Asian societies, the Institute is also in a position to explore how important values of the Western enlightenment tradition may contribute to excellence in education in East Asia.

The first and most all encompassing of the Institute's guiding values reads as follows: "We promote a concept of excellence that combines scholarship, professionalism and community service." European traditions of scholarship, based on deeply rooted values of

university autonomy and academic freedom, have tended to privilege theoretical scholarship, providing greater recognition and reward to those who excel in theory than in practical professional contributions. By contrast, the Chinese tradition of scholarship is rooted in a concept of knowledge that sees action as the essential basis of theory, and social advancement as the most persuasive evidence of effective knowledge in action. (Tu, 1976) Teachers in traditional Chinese society often had their education in the non-formal academies or *shuyuan* which encouraged individual study, mentorship by senior scholars, aesthetic expression in poetry and painting, and the exploration of a wide range of knowledge sources beyond the canon for the civil service examinations. However, the over-riding concern with social harmony and good governance made these institutions a place where excellence had to be demonstrated in practice, not only in theory. (Meskill, 1982; Hayhoe, 1999, pp. 10-13)

There is thus a rich epistemological and institutional heritage to be drawn upon in ensuring that professionalism and community service are an integral part of the ethos of scholarship being developed by the Institute. Its geographical location, in a quiet green valley remote from Hong Kong's famous urban skyline, serves as a natural reminder of this tradition. Its challenge is to build positively upon the craft traditions of the modern teaching profession associated with normal colleges which developed outside the ambit of the university in Hong Kong, as in many Western countries, and move towards a scholarship which integrates values from the Chinese academy as well as the university into its concept of excellence. Hopefully, this will enable it to avoid the kinds of academicism that have sometimes characterised the Western university, diluting its capability to serve the needs of local schools, and transform the learning experience of children, as in the case of the University of Chicago.

The second guiding value reads as follows: "We affirm early childhood education as the foundation of lifelong learning." This value is perhaps most clearly connected to the core vision of "optimising each child's potential through the shared joy of learning and teaching" and gave members of the School of Early Childhood Education great encouragement as it highlighted the importance of their work. That such an obvious commitment would need to be given strong expression in the Institute's guiding values reflects Hong Kong's historical context. While the colonial government had guaranteed nine years of basic education to all children since the late 1970s, as noted earlier, it had left pre-primary education to private

providers, and given little attention to the professional preparation of teachers at this level. There was, in fact, no established program of pre-service education for kindergarten teachers, only in-service training programs that provided some basic skill training for the majority of teachers, and a part-time certificate program for the few who wished to go to a higher professional level. This had resulted in forms of early childhood education strongly influenced by the market, and by parental pressures to ensure that their children would be equipped to compete successfully in the examination oriented learning patterns of the primary school system.

As the Institute developed a three year pre-service certificate of education, and a Bachelor of Education in early childhood education, there were lively debates over the approach to scholarship and professionalism. To a considerable degree the new programs are being built upon the wealth of new knowledge about the early years of physiological and psychological development coming from research in the West, and great emphasis is being placed on exploratory learning, constructivist pedagogy and the encouragement of creativity. At the same time there has been an awareness that there are elements in Chinese and Japanese traditions of learning that support young children in developing empathy with others, powers of observation, and the ability to connect emotionally and aesthetically with the world of animal and plant life, which are linked to Buddhist and Daoist philosophy. (Gerbert, 1993) These are sometimes superficially viewed as passivity and conformity from a Western perspective, but they may in fact foster creative thinking in another mode.

In order to provide an institutional framework for the integration of values and practices in early childhood education from China and the West, the Institute entered into a three-way partnership with Nanjing Normal University, the first institution in China to have a doctoral degree in early childhood education, and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Scholars from all three institutions have worked together in the design and teaching of the B Ed. program, seeking to set the highest possible standards of professionalism and scholarship for this first bachelor-level degree in early childhood education in Hong Kong. The intention was to capture the strengths of the professional knowledge and wisdom coming from both civilizations. In some ways it was a response to the questions posed so perspicaciously by Howard Gardner after his study of

education in the arts in China: "Might it be possible to capture the strength of both systems, building upon knowledge attained in developmental and educational science, but taking into account the admittedly different value systems of the two cultures? And might there be more than one way to produce an individual rooted in tradition and yet open to new ideas?" (Gardner, 1989, p. 297)

Our third guiding value related to language capability and competence. At first members of the vision committee embraced the Hong Kong government policy of supporting three spoken languages and two written languages (*sanyu liangwen*). The government's aim is for all children to attain fluency in their mother tongue of Cantonese, China's national language of Putonghua and the international language, English, as well as becoming competent in written Chinese and English. After many years of research and debate, the Hong Kong Education Department launched a policy of Cantonese as the main medium of instruction for lower secondary education in 1997, granting exemption to 114 of a total of around 400 secondary schools, as these schools were able to demonstrate the capacity of their teachers and students to study in the medium of English. The policy drew a great deal of international attention, and was the cause of considerable dismay among parents, who saw English medium schools as being more prestigious.

Nevertheless, for the most part it was well received by students and schools. Many secondary schools voluntarily moved to mother tongue teaching, while a relatively small number appealed decisions that required them to teach in the mother tongue.[5] Students found relief and pleasure in being able to study their main secondary subjects in their mother tongue, rather than through a language in which neither they nor their teachers were fully comfortable. For most secondary students and teachers in Hong Kong, the kind of "creative and dynamic environment for learning" depicted in the vision statement would only be possible in a situation of mother-tongue education. In addition, the preservation and further development of Cantonese as the main language of instruction was important as a statement of autonomy and local identity.

Concurrent with this policy on medium of instruction, various kinds of support for enhancing the teaching of English and creating an English language environment were

provided by government, including a Native English Teachers scheme which enabled each secondary school to hire at least one native speaker. Extra resources were also provided for the teaching of Putonghua in secondary schools, and interest in Putonghua among Hong Kong young people grew, as links to the China Mainland multiplied. Generally, the demands of learning Putonghua, a northern dialect of Chinese which had been adopted as the national spoken language in the 1920s, and used as the medium of instruction throughout China since the 1950s, were far less difficult than the learning of English. The common written language of Chinese provided an important basis for oral comprehension and the development of good conceptual skills.

The Institute's vision committee felt this language policy suited Hong Kong well, yet did not go far enough in terms of the challenge of civilizational dialogue. Language competence and communicative ability should go beyond the pragmatic needs of one's living environment and the political exigencies of local and national identity, it was felt. It should be a part of an opening up of the mind, and the development of flexibility of thought and imagination. With this consideration in mind, the concept of "multilingualism" was adopted and the third guiding value runs as follows: "We support multilingualism to encourage flexibility of mind and access to the wisdom of the world's diverse cultures." Such intrinsic goods as the ability to see things through the lens of another culture, and an appreciation of other cultures, were judged as important as communicative competence for pragmatic purposes. Fascination with the world of Chinese civilization, and with the international arena to which English opened the door, was also more likely to foster the sustained motivation needed for language mastery than pragmatic pressures related to employment opportunities, which have tended to dominate Hong Kong education.

As an international language, which is widely used by writers in Asia and Africa as well as in Britain and North America, English can truly be seen as a window on the world. (Pennycook, 1996) Thus the notion of "access to the wisdom of the world's diverse cultures" went somewhat beyond the ideas of East and West that have tended to shape the civilizational dialogue. Future teachers coming out of the Institute should be capable of bringing into their classrooms both the rich world of Chinese culture and history, and pedagogical insights or broader socio-cultural ideas coming from a range of societies where English is widely used,

including nations such as India, Singapore and South Africa, as well as Britain, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, the sense of enrichment that comes from mastery of English and Chinese may well stimulate them to consider taking up a third or fourth language. Fluency in Cantonese, Putonghua and English gives them an experience of linguistic inter-relationships that could make the links from English to French or Chinese to Japanese both natural and culturally fascinating.

The fourth guiding value had crucial relevance to Hong Kong's civic and political development since the return to China on July 1, 1997: "We uphold civic education as a means of fostering social justice and environmental responsibility within the institute and in the wider community." Deng Xiaoping's formula of "one country, two systems" gives Hong Kong people responsibility for their own destiny, in terms of the design of their social and political institutions, and the care of their environment. They are taking this up in the context of an ongoing dialogue over "Asian values" ranging from strongly critical positions, such as that of the last governor, Chris Patten, (Patten, 1998) to defenders of a distinctive Asian way of thinking, such as Kishore Mahbunani, Singapore's ambassador to the United Nations. (Mahbuhani, 1998) The whole gamut of views is reflected in Hong Kong's own political figures, who have come under close scrutiny in the first few years after the handover. While the Institute's vision statement did not make explicit reference to this dimension, it is implicit in the spatial commitment to the Asia Pacific. It was also a major concern of the Education Commission, in their delineation of new educational goals of enjoyment, creativity, communication and commitment to society and nation.

The Institute is responsible for the teachers that go into the majority of schools in Hong Kong, from early childhood to the lower forms of secondary school, and its graduates take up the task of educating a new generation of children and young people in civic values and national identity. The challenges of citizenship that face them can be seen on four levels - local, national, regional and global, with Hong Kong developing a new polity as a special administrative region of China, strengthening its ties to Mainland China, and taking up a regional and global role that reflect its economic dynamism and capacity to lead in the global financial arena. While the Institute has focused mainly on the local challenges in its early years, it has also actively developed collaborative links with normal universities in all parts of

China, on issues of moral and civic education, as well as reaching out to partners in Thailand, Japan, Cambodia and Korea, and working with UNESCO.

In the February of 1999, a Centre for Citizenship Education was established, which integrated the work of four different academic departments, in order to ensure effective cross-curricular teaching, research and community service in this area. The vision of citizenship developed by the centre embraces three dimensions - that of personal values, civic responsibility and environmental stewardship. In all three dimensions, one can see the possibility of drawing upon the Chinese civilizational heritage to balance and complement such features of the colonial heritage as the legal system and the protection of individual freedom, which have contributed so much to Hong Kong's past success.

In the arena of personal values, a liberal rights-based morality could be complemented by a Confucian virtue-based morality, which has been described as "maximalist" in the sense that "nothing in human existence is void of moral significance and the moral situation is the life of each person in its entirety." (Lee, 1996, p. 374) The Confucian emphasis on self-overcoming, self-cultivation and self-realization provides a framework for a positive and demanding program of moral and spiritual development for the individual that is not necessarily in conflict with concepts of individual freedom, but may enrich them. The values dimension, promoted by the Citizenship centre, includes the skills of values clarification and moral reasoning among youngsters, the ability to identity virtues valued within the society either as an inheritance of the cultural tradition, or newly developed to fit the fast changing society, as well as the attitude and determination to uphold those values and virtues.[6]

In the arena of civic identity and responsibility lie the most controversial issues in the East-West dialogue, those relating to the balance among collective well being, the protection of individual rights and freedoms and the full democratic participation of all members of society. (Bauer & Bell, 1999; de Bary & Tu, 1998; Montgomery, 1998) A new generation of children are being educated as new patterns of government take shape, and they need to be given a critical understanding of the historical and cultural values that underlie the issues being debated by political leaders and party activists. The Citizenship centre has set one of its tasks as to study, inform and improve the processes by which students, as future citizens,

acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions that are prerequisites for active and effective participation in civic life. Issues covered include national identity, rights and responsibilities, democracy and human rights, as well as the relationship between the individual and collectivity in all these issues.[7]

Finally, in the arena of environmental responsibility, there is a high degree of consensus on the urgency of the need to educate children from their earliest years in environmental stewardship. Here again Chinese thought and philosophy, including all three of the philosophical and religious traditions most central to it, Confucianism, (Tucker & Berthwrong, 1998) Daoism and Buddhism, (Tucker & Williams, 1997) encourage a strong sense of human interrelationship with the natural environment. There are tremendous resources here for the fostering of a healthy environmental consciousness and commitment to environmental protection, which could well complement the important work that has been done in this area in the West in recent years. Active participation of the Institute's lecturers and students in the green school movement locally and in the Asia Pacific region has been an important practical expression of this commitment.

Conclusion

This article has depicted the experience of members of one institution, the Hong Kong Institute of Education in creating a vision and a set of guiding values for its future, at a time of transition, as Hong Kong was reunified with the China Mainland. The framework chosen for this account has been that of civilizational dialogue, in the period since the end of the Cold War, and the possibilities this has created for an institution with a heritage from both Asia and the West. The vision developed by staff and students of the Institute was a simple and compelling one - preparing teachers who would able to optimise the potential of each and every child, and engage all children in learning experiences so enjoyable and empowering that they would be launched on a journey of lifelong learning from their earliest years. The guiding values suggest the possibility of integrating aspects of Chinese and Western traditions of scholarship and professionalism in a distinctive concept of excellence, and of developing approaches to early childhood education, language education and citizenship education which may have something unique to contribute to both the local and the global

community.

Fortunately for the Institute and its students, the Hong Kong government's Education Commission has recommended a series of structural reforms for the whole education system which are intended to remove examination pressures and provide the space for lively and satisfying approaches to learning and teaching. It is too early to say how soon these reforms will be implemented, but it appears likely that the Institute's first Bachelor of Education graduates, who will be entering the teaching profession in the autumn of 2001, will benefit from a more open and spacious classroom and school environment.

NOTES

1. The one exception is the Academy of Performing Arts, which remains directly funded by government, and is not under the University Grants Committee.

2. These definitions were provided by Dr. Thomas Leung, Vice-Chairman of the Institute's Council, and head of a consultancy company called *Vision in Business*. He was an advisor to the Vision committee.

3. These two documents were developed before the design of the Institute's first Bachelor of Education program for primary education in 1996 and early 1997. They were based on a staff survey, wide consultation with staff and a review of the local and international literature on teacher education. After being endorsed by relevant committees, they provided the framework for program aims and objectives, and can be found in most of the Institute's program documents.

4. The journal *Education about Asia*, published three times a year by the Association for Asian Studies since 1996, is one important example of efforts to bring the Asian heritage into primary and secondary classrooms in North America.

5. While the press focused on the 22 or so schools which appealed the decision, with fourteen of them succeeding in establishing their credentials to teach in English, the more remarkable story has been that over 200 schools accepted the mother tongue education policy without appeal. Originally there had been only about 75 secondary schools with a tradition of teaching in the mother tongue.

6. This sentence is taken from an internal document outlining the goals for the citizenship centre, developed by Professors Lee Wing On and David Grossman, who are co-heads of the centre.

7. Internal document outlining the goals for the citizenship centre.

REFERENCES

ADAMSON, R. & LAI, W. A. (1997) Language and the Curriculum in Hong Kong: dilemmas of triglossia, in: BRAY, M. & LEE, W.O. (Eds) *Education and Political Transition: Implications of Hong Kong's Change of Sovereignty* (Hong Kong, Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong), pp.87-100.

ALTBACH, P. (1998) Issues in the Development of Education for Teaching: Hong Kong in International Perspective, *Comparative Education Bulletin*, 1, (Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong), pp. 2-5.

BAUM, R. (2000) Democracy Deformed: Hong Kong's 1998 Legislation Elections - and Beyond", *China Quarterly*, 162, pp. 439-464.

BAUER, J. & BELL, D. (Eds) (1999) *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

COLLINS, J. & PORRAS, J. (1997) *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* (New York: Harper Business)

CRADOCK, P. (1999) *Experiences of China* (London: John Murray)

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (1996) *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools*, Hong Kong, The Education Department)

DE BARY, W. & TU, W.M. (Eds) (1998) *Confucianism and Human Rights* (New York, Columbia University Press)

EDUCATION COMMISSION (1992) *Education Commission Report No. 5* (Hong Kong, Government Printer)

EDUCATION COMMISSION (1999a) *Education Blueprint for the 21st Century: Review of Academic System, AIMS of Education Consultation Document* (Hong Kong, the Printing Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government)

EDUCATION COMMISSION (1999b) *Review of Education System: Framework for Education Reform, Learning For Life*, (Hong Kong, the Printing Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government).

EDUCATION COMMISSION (2000a) *Review of Education System: Reform Proposals, Excel and Grow* (Hong Kong, the Printing Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government).

EDUCATION COMMISSION (2000b) *Learning for Life, Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, the Printing Department,

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China).

GALTUNG, J. (1972) A Structural Theory of Imperialism, *Journal of Peace Research*, 8, pp. 81-117.

GALTUNG, J. (1980) *The True Worlds: A Transnational Approach* (New York, The Free Press)

GARDNER, H. (1991) *The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach* (New York, Basic Books)

GARDNER, H. (1989) *To Open Minds* (New York, Basic Books)

GERBERT, E. (1993) Lessons from the Kokugo Readers, *Comparative Education Review*, 37 (2), pp. 152-180

HAYHOE, R. et al (Eds) (1993) *Knowledge Across Cultures: Universities East and West* (Toronto, OISE Press & Wuhan, Hubei Education Press) [Published in English and in Chinese, under the title *Dongxifang daxue yu wenhua*]

HAYHOE, R. (1995) An Asian Multiversity? Comparative Reflections on the Transition to Mass Higher Education in East Asia, *Comparative Education Review*, 39, (3), pp. 299-321

HAYHOE, R. & PAN, J. (Eds) (1996) *East West Dialogue in Knowledge and Higher Education* (New York, M.E. Sharpe)

HAYHOE, R. (1999) *China's Universities 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (Hong Kong, Centre for Comparative Education, University of Hong Kong, 1999)

HUNTINGTON, S. (1993) The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs,* LXXI, (3), pp. 22-49

HUNTINGTON, S. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, Simon and Shuster)
KIM, S. (1979) *China, The U.N. and World Order* (Princeton, Princeton University Press)

KIM, S. (1984) *The Quest for a Just World Order* (Boulder, Colorado, Westview press)

LAU, C.K. (1997) *Hong Kong's Colonial Legacy: A Hong Kong Chinese's View of the British Heritage* (Hong Kong, The Chinese University Press).

LAW, W.W. (1997) The Accommodation and Resistance to the Decolonisation, Neocolonisation and Recolonisation of Higher Education in Hong Kong, in: BRAY, M. and LEE, W.O. (Eds.) *Education and Political Transition: Implications of Hong Kong's Change of Sovereignty* (Hong Kong, Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong) pp. 41-64

LEE, S. H. (1996) Liberal Rights or/and Confucian virtues, *Philosophy East and West*, 36 (3),

pp. 367-381

MAHBUNANI, K. (1998) *Can Asians Think?* (Singapore, Time Books International)

MAZRUI, A. (1975) The African University as a Multinational Corporation, *Harvard Educational Review,* Vol. 45 No 2, pp. 191-210

MESKILL, J. (1982) *Academies in Ming China: A Historical Essay* (Tuscon, Arizona: University of Arizona Press)

MONTGOMERY, J. (ed) (1998) *Human Rights: Positive Policies in Asia and the Pacific Rim* (New Hampshire, Hollis Publishing)

MORRIS. P. & CHAN, K.K. (1997) The Hong Kong School Curriculum and the Political Transition: politicisation, contextualisation and symbolic action, in: BRAY, M. & LEE, W.O. (eds) *Education and Political Transition: Implications of Hong Kong's Change of Sovereignty* (Hong Kong, Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong), pp.101-118.

PATTEN, C. (1998) *East and West* (London: Macmillan)

PENNYCOOK, A. (1996) English, Universities and Struggles over Culture and Knowledge, in: HAYHOE, R. & PAN, J. (Eds) *East West Dialogue in Knowledge and Higher Education* (New York, M.E. Sharpe), pp. 64-82.

PEPPER, S. (2000) Elections, Political Change and Basic Law Government: The Hong Kong System in Search of a Political Form, *China Quarterly*, 162, pp. 410-438.

POSTIGLIONE, G. (1997) Hong Kong's Universities within the Global Academy, in: POSTIGLIONE, G. & TANG, J. (Eds) *Hong Kong's Reunion with China: Global Dimensions* (New York: M.E. Sharpe; Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), pp. 239-268.

TU, W.M. (1976) *Neo-Confucian Thought in Action: Wang Yang-ming's Youth 1472-1509* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press)

TUCKER, M. & WILLIAMS, D. (Eds) (1997) *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions)

TUCKER, M. & BERTHWRONG, J. (Eds) (1998) *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth and Humans* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions)

TUNG, C.H. (1997) *Building Hong Kong for a New Era*, Address by the Chief Executive, the Honourable Tung Chee Hwa at the Provisional Legislative Council meeting on 8 October, 1997. Hong Kong, the Printing Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government)

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE (1996) *Higher Education in Hong Kong: A Report by the University Grants Committee* (Hong Kong, the Government printer).