

* Where are Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong Curriculum?

Liz Jackson and Yanju Shao, University of Hong Kong
lizjackson@hku.hk, yjshao@hku.hk

* Where are Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong Curriculum?

This research made possible by:

University of Hong Kong Seed Funding Grant (2013)

University Grants Committee Early Career Grant (2013-2015)

- * Background Information
- * Research Plan
- * Preliminary Findings
- * Future Goals
- * Impact
- * Presentation Outline

Senior Secondary Liberal Studies (SSLS)

* Required along with math, English, Chinese

* Aims:

Help students appreciate and respect diversity in cultures and views in a pluralistic society. (CDC, 2007, p. 5)

* Challenges:

* Interdisciplinary, new (2009)

* Lack of preparation and good resources

* **Background Information**

Textbooks in the Curriculum

- * Trend: Overreliance in new subjects
- * Most commonly used resources
- * Teach a “hidden curriculum” of attitudes
- * Reveal cultural assumptions and values held as part of national self-understanding
- * Concerning from a multicultural or social reconstructionist perspective on education
- * SSLS texts not approved by the EB

* Background Information

Related Research in Hong Kong

- * Relying on textbooks for SSLS (Wong 2012)
- * SSLS teachers need PD (Cheung 2009)
- * Hard to assess; teach critical thinking
- * Disparity of “classroom knowledge” and “familiar knowledge” for minorities (O’Connor 2012)
- * Minority students experiencing bullying and prejudice by educators

* **Background Information**

Prior Research Experience

- * Multicultural educational issues
- * Relationship between informal and formal education (mass media and pop culture)
- * Teachers lack background training and knowledge for discussing complex social and political issues
- * Textbooks can be inadequate to the task, meaning more pressure on the educator to find good resources and self-study

* Background Information

Research Question

How are ethnic and religious minorities in mainland China and Hong Kong represented in Senior Secondary Liberal Studies textbooks and officially recommended supplements?

- * Phase 1 (2013): Sample Textbooks
- * Phase 2 (2014-2015):
 - * All major SSLS Texts
 - * Resources provided by the CDI
 - * Officially recommended web sources on HkedCity

*Research Plan

Research Methodology

- * Parallel analysis to increase objectivity
- * Quantitative analysis:
 - * What percentage of sources deal with topics?
 - * How much text space versus imagery?
- * Qualitative analysis:
 - * Key Words in Context
 - * Text Coding
 - * Pictorial Coding
- * Teacher Reliability Exercise

***Research Plan**

What are “ethnic & religious minorities”?

- * People recognizable in China and Hong Kong who are not part of the Han group (national and international groups).
- * People recognizable as religious, part of a religious group, or involved in practice.

How do we find them?

- * **Recognizability:** Han are invisible, “normal, unmarked majority” (Zhao & Postiglione 2010)

We aim to capture these social differences as they appear to the student and teacher.

*Research Plan

Trends Related to HK Ethnic Minorities

- * There is “ethnic integration in Hong Kong”: *People from over 120 nationalities live in the Chungking Mansions...Shanghainese, South Asians, and people from African countries. They live in harmony...*
- * Nondiscrimination by ethnicity is a human right.
 - * UN Declaration & HK Race Discrimination Bill
 - * *Discrimination against newcomers and exclusion of ethnic minorities may weaken social cohesion.*

* Preliminary Findings

HK Ethnic Minorities as Disadvantaged

- * Appears in sections alongside new arrivals and indigenous inhabitants of New Territories
- * In examples they need help and protection:
 - * Example of language and legal trials.
 - * Domestic helpers face discrimination.
- * *More...have low educational qualifications [so] work in non-technical professions...reducing their social mobility...at the grassroots level.*
- * *Face disputes and conflicts due to their different race, appearance, skin color, living habits and religious beliefs...*

***Preliminary Findings**

HK Ethnic Minorities: Who are they?

- * Majority of references are to “grassroots” Southeast Asians, domestic helpers, and Africans
- * A few references found to people coming from Europe, the UK, and Americas, but only in anecdotal examples rather than in full text
- * Facts also given: Just over 5% of the population
- * Many examples of discrimination given against disadvantaged, in employment and riding buses

***Preliminary Findings**

Chinese Ethnic Minorities

- * Very limited discussion overall.
 - * Mentioned twice in relation to family planning.
 - * Mentioned in the last pages of the second book on *Modern China*.
- * Discussion of different cultural festivals
- * Discussion of taboos and “exotic” features
 - * Kazak cannot have someone count livestock...
 - * Jingpo (Kachin) avoid waking people...
 - * Dangling coffins and Tibetan celestial funerals
- * “Rich and colorful customs,” but “small”

* Preliminary Findings

Who is missing?

- * In Hong Kong...
 - * Non-disadvantaged ethnic minorities (population minorities versus political minorities)
 - * The “disadvantaged” covers a large group
 - * No one from Japan, Korea, Australia, etc.
 - * No general discussion of ethnic minorities
- * In China...
 - * No general discussion of ethnic minorities
 - * Only “rich and colorful” exotic things

* Preliminary Findings

*SSLS Aims:

Help students appreciate and respect diversity in cultures and views in a pluralistic society. (CDC, 2007, p. 5)

*In Hong Kong...

*Is it assumed student appreciate and respect non-disadvantaged minority cultures and views?

*In China...

*Focus on “exotic” makes it hard to respect diversity and connection of culture to views.

*Preliminary Findings

*SSLS Aims:

Help students appreciate and respect diversity in cultures and views in a pluralistic society. (CDC, 2007, p. 5)

*How is cultural contact understood in the texts?

- * Emphasis on the need for harmony, integration
- * Assimilation discouraged in favor of relation
- * However, much support given to Huntington's "clash of civilizations thesis"

*Preliminary Findings

- * Clash of Civilizations:
Countries attract similar and repel others...
9/11 resulted from conflicts between Christian and Islamic views; was “proven.”
- * Muslims and Arabs as sources of conflict:
 - * Human rights, democracy are incompatible
 - * In countries with Islam, no gender equality
 - * Many images, textboxes, and anecdotes about women’s dress and roles and terrorism
- * Most common non-Chinese ethnicity discussed.

* Preliminary Findings

- * Continue with more comprehensive review of SSLS text sets and related resources
- * Answer the question: How do the resources help achieve the multicultural aim of SSLS?
- * How is multiculturalism understood in HK?
 - * Cross-national comparisons
 - * In relation to MCE and MNE
- * Assist with pre-service teachers, CDI, and text editors for improving resources and use of materials

* Future Goals & Impact

*Thank you!

- * Point 1: Regarding the textbook, a list of questions are raised, such as, who writes the textbooks? How often the textbooks are adopted? What factors decide the adoption of a particular set of textbooks? Especially, what is the process to produce the textbooks?
- * Point 2: Except textbooks, is there any other access to liberal studies in Hong Kong, for example, what role does media play for the liberal studies of senior secondary students?
- * Point 3: Focusing on the representation of ethnic minorities students within the SSLS textbooks, how to perceive the cultural connections between the EM students and the majority group?

* **Feedback from the audiences**