

Re-examining teaching and learning in citizenship education: a tale of two Chinese cities

Law, W.-W., & Xu, S. (2020). Re-examining Citizenship Education Teaching and Learning: A Tale of Two Chinese Cities. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 52(1), 138-159.

This article compares and re-examines citizenship education (CE) teaching and learning in Hong Kong (HK) and Guangzhou (GZ), China. It questions two stereotypical perceptions – that China schools indoctrinate students, and that CE lessons in HK are more open than those in mainland China. Data are drawn from some 30 lesson observations, 1,200 questionnaires, and 80 teacher/student interviews from six sampled HK and GZ schools. The findings suggest both cities are similar in terms of teaching/learning CE, due to globalization and domestic changes, and have similar CE conditions more conducive to open pedagogies (e.g., inquiry-based approaches) than indoctrination. HK's greater socioeconomic openness does not ensure its CE is more open than GZ's, for pedagogical and non-pedagogical reasons.

Keywords: Citizenship education, pedagogies, indoctrination, inquiry-based approach, China

This article compares citizenship education (CE) teaching and learning in Hong Kong (HK) and Guangzhou (GZ), China. CE equips students with civic/political knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions (Banks 2008) demanded by social/political orders (Biesta 2009). Discourses on citizenship, globalization, and nationalism (e.g., Coulby and Zambeta 2005; Petrovic and Kuntz 2014) have dominated recent CE research, and international comparative CE studies have highlighted students' civic knowledge, attitudes and engagement (Schulz *et al.* 2010; Schulz *et al.* 2017; Torney-Purta *et al.* 1999).

However, concerns about CE pedagogy and effectiveness have emerged, sparking calls for more empirical research into CE teaching/learning (Evans 2006). Kennedy, Lee and Grossman (2010) revealed diverse CE pedagogies among 13 Asian-Pacific societies, while Lee (2010) associated different pedagogies with different CE domains. Kennedy, Lee and Grossman (2010) had participant countries/areas self-report their CE pedagogies, but neither compared them using the same instruments nor generated instruments for comparing classroom-level CE teaching/learning.

HK's 2012 anti-national-education demonstrations motivated this study. At then-President Hu Jintao's (2007) urging, HK intensified its national education and proposed a mandatory Moral and National Education (MNE) subject for primary and secondary schools. However, this sparked popular fears that China's political education mode would be extended to HK, resulting in massive public demonstrations, hunger strikes, and the occupation of the HK's government headquarters environs (HK01 Editorial 2017); facing great social pressure, HK authorities shelved the curriculum (Hong Kong Government 2012).

Various studies have attributed the anti-national-education movement to Hongkongers' reaction to China's communist CE model and fear of indoctrination (Yam 2016); the reinforcement of Hongkongese identity through public activism (Morris and Vickers 2015); and educators' preference for HK-oriented liberal citizenship (Lai and Byram 2012).

Two stereotypes informed Hongkongers' fears about China's CE pedagogy. First, that education is a Communist Party of China (CPC) political indoctrination tool. For example,

Chen (1969) contended that Mao-era (1949-1976) Chinese education indoctrinated students to create ‘new socialist [persons]’ obedient to the CPC and strongly conscious of class struggle, Li (1990), Xie and Li (2010), and Xie, Tong and Yang (2017) asserted post-Mao Chinese CE ‘indoctrinates’ students to love socialism, their nation, and the CPC (p. 4), and Cantoni et al. (2014) claimed China’s recently-revised senior secondary curriculum ‘effectively indoctrinates’ students to accept questionable CPC claims (p. 30). Zhao and Fairbrother (2010), however, found some China schools have piloted more open, student-centric approaches, while Lee and Ho (2008) and Zhu (2012) claimed China has reduced CE’s ideological/political elements and expanded it to include personal-social and global dimensions.

The second stereotype is that HK’s society and CE are both more open than China’s. Scholarism (2011) and the Parents’ Concern Group on National Education (2013) both saw MNE as emulating China’s political education model, contending HK’s CE was more open. Critics suggested the CPC would use MNE as a ‘political tool... counter to the principles of education’ (Panel on Education 2011, pp. 11, 21), disseminate ‘biased information,’ and brainwash HK students ‘to accept certain concepts and values’ and ‘identify with the government unquestionably’ (pp. 14, 17), unlike HK’s existing CE, which encouraged critical thinking. Second, critics stated the MNE curriculum ‘cover[ed] only the positive side of the Mainland’ (p. 21), avoiding controversial issues. MNE supporters replied that HK students were independent thinkers, that HK’s was a pluralistic society with easy access to information, and MNE did not ‘[preclude] the teaching of any topics’ (Panel on Education 2011, p. 11).

No comparative, empirical studies of classroom-level CE teaching/learning in HK and China have been conducted to clarify Hongkongers’ perceptions or inform HK’s withdrawal of MNE. Most HK studies have focused on changes in CE policy and curricula due to globalization or HK’s retrocession (e.g., Fairbrother and Kennedy 2011; Lee 2008), while most studies on China’s CE have focused on policy/curriculum responses to globalization and domestic changes. Some China-based studies have claimed indoctrination is part of China’s CE, but have neither clearly defined indoctrination nor offered direct empirical classroom evidence thereof. The extant literature illuminates developments in CE policies and curricula, but fails to explain similarities/differences in CE pedagogies and lessons, and lacks sufficient research instruments for empirically comparing classroom-level CE teaching/learning.

This study compares CE teaching/learning in HK and GZ, the capital of Guangdong Province. GZ was chosen because it shares many historical and cultural background factors with HK—both were once administered by Guangdong, both have been exposed to Western countries since the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing (HK as a British colony and GZ as a treaty port), and HK and GZ people share a common local dialect (Cantonese) (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2016), similar cultures, and familial ties. Geographic proximity and daily intercity train services have facilitated frequent economic, social, and cultural interactions.

This study examines HK and GZ CE lessons, in terms of class activities/atmosphere, teaching approaches, and learning strategies. Data were drawn from lesson observations, student questionnaires, and teacher/student interviews. The study found the cities’ CE teaching/learning had more similarities than differences, their CE conditions were more conducive to open pedagogies than indoctrination, and HK’s greater socioeconomic openness did not ensure its CE was more open, for both pedagogical and non-pedagogical reasons.

Pedagogies and Classroom Climate for Teaching Citizenship Education

Per Brady (2010), different pedagogies have different assumptions about teacher and student roles, and can be placed on a spectrum ranging from indoctrination to inquiry. Merry (2005) proposed four core elements of indoctrination: (1) discouraging critical thinking; (2) using

easily-disputed or unsupported teaching content; (3) coercive teaching methods; and, (4) forced acceptance of what is taught. Whether seen as ‘necessarily pejorative’ or ‘ethically or educationally justifiable’ (Snook 2010, p. 2), indoctrination has been criticized as an authoritarian, non-discursive teaching style (Huttunen 2003) undermining learners’ role in learning, suppressing their autonomy and critical thinking (Young 1997), and paralyzing their intellectual capacity (Tan 2008). However, the learner’s perspective must be considered; if students can accept or reject contents through their own rational evaluation, such teaching is not indoctrination.

At the other extreme are learner-oriented approaches that encourage students to master critical thinking—i.e., utilizing relevant information (including divergent views) to reach a justifiable conclusion (Kurfiss 1988). These approaches emphasise learner autonomy and view teachers as facilitators, presenting varied views in an innovative, balanced manner and empowering students to evaluate and opine on content freely (Hess 2004; Leming 2010), particularly when teaching controversial issues (Hess and McAvoy 2015; Ho *et al.* 2017). Teachers may offer personal opinions to stimulate discussion, but must ensure diverse views are heard (Hess 2004).

Learner-oriented approaches require an open classroom climate to enhance students’ civic knowledge of and interest in political and social issues (Schulz *et al.* 2017), but have been criticized for understating the roles of teachers, parents, and authorities, overstating students’ ability to manage complex issues (Leming 2010), undermining students’ learning autonomy, and being ‘too individualistic and rationalistic’ to address emotional elements of learners’ cultural, social, and religious backgrounds (Ho *et al.* 2017).

Contexts of the study: social change and CE

In recent decades, HK and GZ have experienced different social changes and globalization challenges, with different citizenship implications. To prepare students to meet new demands, both cities reformed their CE curricula, making similar changes in pedagogies and learning styles, and adopting similar multidimensional CE frameworks.

Social contexts

HK’s status as a former British colony, current international trade/finance centre, and longstanding East-West nexus informs its CE. On 1 July 1997, HK retroceded to Chinese sovereignty; however, China may not introduce socialist systems into HK, and HK may keep its original institutions, freedoms, and lifestyle until 2047 (National People’s Congress 1990). HK was promised a high degree of autonomy and self-governance (except in foreign affairs and defence) and the right to select its Chief Executive and legislature through universal suffrage. While economic and social ties between HK and China (including GZ) have multiplied and intensified since retrocession, the US-based Heritage Foundation rates HK’s economy as the world’s freest (Miller and Kim 2017).

However, since the 1 July 2003 demonstration—in which 500,000 Hongkongers protested the HK government’s performance and proposed national security legislation (Wong 2004)—Beijing has exercised high-level intervention in HK governance, resulting in greater political control, increasingly tense HK-Beijing relations, a general erosion of freedom, and increased press self-censorship (Hong Kong Journalists Association, (2017). More recently, China issued an unprecedented White Paper declaring its ‘comprehensive jurisdiction’ over HK (State Council 2014) and rejecting the popular election of HK’s Chief Executive, instead allowing a small group of electors to choose among pre-screened candidates (Ortmann 2015).

In 2014, demanding the popular election of an unscreened Chief Executive in 2017, Hongkongers launched Occupy Central, a 79-day civil disobedience campaign (Jones 2017) in

which thousands blockaded key business and government areas. The movement ended violently, and failed to attain its goals.

GZ's CE has been situated in the context of a CPC-led China. Since 1949, the CPC has dominated China's politics and governance, upheld socialism as the state orthodoxy, and exercised tight political control over 'threatening' and 'destabilising' activities. In 2012, China began cracking down on churches, arresting human rights lawyers/activists, and increasing its control over the media and NGOs (Agence France-Presse 2018; Congressional-Executive Commission on China 2017; Feng 2017). GZ's CPC-appointed Mayor Wen Guohui (2018) urged officials and Party cadres to have 'their bones engraved and blood filled with Xi Jinping's thoughts on socialism,' and urged strengthening social control by installing more real-time surveillance cameras.

In the early 1980s, Guangdong was the pilot area for China's 1978 Open Door reform (Lu 2001), and has, since 1989, been China's biggest GDP contributor (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2016). Since 1978, GZ has experienced significant economic and social changes (Flew 2006; Tanner 2015), and increased global exposure, access to information, and freedom of speech/expression has redefined GZ people's affiliation to the world, state, economy, and society, and their domestic rights and responsibilities within the CPC-prescribed political framework.

Curriculum reform for globalization

HK aims to produce flexible workers suitable for emerging global industries. Fearing existing educational problems might prevent this, HK adopted a 'learning to learn' curriculum, encouraging teachers to act as facilitators and embrace diverse teaching resources, and students to develop seven priority values and nine generic skills (Curriculum Development Council 2001; Education Commission 2000), and made Liberal Studies, an inquiry-based senior secondary elective (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 2010), mandatory for admission to publicly-funded universities.

Unlike HK, GZ must implement national educational policies and curriculum structures (Guangzhou Bureau of Education 2017). Like HK, however, mainland China also wants students prepared for domestic and international challenges; accordingly, its Ministry of Education (2001; 2011) first reformed (2001) then fine-tuned (2011) the national school curriculum, with GZ being a pilot area. While stressing the need to foster students' patriotism and socialist values, the reform sought to shift from a knowledge-transmission teaching/learning paradigm, to an 'active learning' and 'learning to learn' model (Ministry of Education 2001) that better connected students' learning to their lives and fostered their critical thinking and inquiry skills. Thus, fostering students' independent and critical thinking, student-centric teaching, and inquiry-based learning are curriculum reform goals shared by HK and GZ.

CE curriculum and textbooks

Historically, HK has promoted CE through extracurricular activities and various subjects, rather than stand-alone CE courses (Lee and Kennedy 2013). Since 1985, HK has broadened CE's HK-based focus to include students' membership, rights, and responsibilities at multiple (Personal-social, local, national, and global) levels (Curriculum Development Council 1996; Education Department 1985), and added concrete topics to help students understand China and strengthen their national identity (Education Bureau 2008).

Since 1997, HK has introduced various national education initiatives to foster students' Chinese identity, patriotism, and nationalism (Tse 2007). However, pressured by Beijing to do more, HK introduced a mandatory MNE subject for implementation in primary schools in

2012, and secondary schools in 2013-14. This initiative intensified Hongkongers' fears about integration with China, and activist groups asserted Beijing would use MNE 'to indoctrinate [HK] youth' (Yam 2016, pp. 42-43) and 'brainwash' (*xiniao*) students into uncritically accepting biased content about China, and, in June 2012, urged its withdrawal (Parents' Concern Group on National Education 2013). HK officials argued it would be difficult to 'brainwash' students in HK's open society, claiming the MNE's aim was to develop students' 'independent and critical thinking' skills (Curriculum Development Council 2012, p. 3). Nonetheless, protests drastically intensified, and, in October, the government shelved the Curriculum Guide; however, it later incorporated national education into junior secondary schools and made Chinese history a mandatory subject (Curriculum Development Council 2017; 2018).

HK's CE guidelines (Education Bureau 2008) prescribe four dimensions of civic knowledge: personal/social (health, self-esteem, personal responsibility, etc.); local (students' HK identification, rights, and responsibilities, and HK issues and problems); national (national identity, basic China information, national opportunities/challenges, etc.); and global (world citizenship, international organizations, ethnic/cultural diversity, etc.). GZ's six CE dimensions address similar issues and concerns, but different contents (Law 2017).

While HK teachers can develop their own CE teaching materials and topics (Ng and Leung 2004), GZ schools follow national CE curriculum standards, use officially-sanctioned CE textbooks, and students must pass both internal and public CE examinations. Although all grades' textbooks incorporate inquiry-based learning elements (Law and Xu 2017), many scholars and Hongkongers still consider Chinese CE a state indoctrination tool.

The research method

This study compares HK and GZ CE teaching/learning, and investigates whether CE lessons in each are more conducive to classroom openness or to indoctrination. Specifically, it examines four major areas: (1) class interactions; (2) students' freedom of expression; (3) teachers' teaching concerns/roles; and, (4) students' learning strategies/roles.

Participants

This study enlisted three junior secondary schools in each city for in-depth CE lesson observation, through personal connections. Data collection was completed in GZ in late 2013, and was published first (in Law and Xu 2017). Due to the 2012 anti-national-education movement and 2014 Umbrella Movement, HK data collection was not completed until mid-2015. The GZ schools (A, B, and C) were public, with ordinary student intakes; the HK schools (D, E, and F) were government-funded, but were managed by non-government bodies.

[Table 1 around here]

Participants were students and teachers of 29 observed classes (14 HK, 15 GZ); four School A and C classes participated in the survey, but not in lesson observation (Table 1). The study collected 1,190 student questionnaires—787 GZ, 403 HK. Twenty-nine percent of participants were in Grade 7, 34% in Grade 8, and 37% in Grade 9; 48% were male and 52% female. The study interviewed 23 observed teachers (11 HK, 12 GZ) individually, and 60 observed students (28 HK, 32 GZ) in small groups.

Data sources

To enhance comparability and construct validity, the same three data collection instruments were used in all schools (Yin, 2014).

The first (non-participant lesson observation) focused on CE teaching/learning activities, teacher questions/feedbacks, and student participation/responses to determine first-hand whether easily-disputed contents were taught, and whether students were coerced into accepting them. The average lesson times in HK and GZ were 45 and 42 minutes, respectively (Table 1). All observed lessons were recorded, then transcribed for analysis.

The second instrument was a student questionnaire administered to all observed classes (before observation) and four unobserved GZ classes to gather data on students, classroom activities, teachers' CE emphases/concerns, classroom atmosphere, teachers' teaching/engagement practices, and students' learning/engagement strategies, to reveal how free students felt to share their views in CE lessons. Most of the questionnaire's 75 items were author-developed based on values and citizenship education pedagogy literature; several questions on classroom atmosphere and teaching approaches were adapted from Brown et al. (2001), 1999 CIVED, and 2009 ICCS. All items showed high internal consistency (Cronbach's alphas from 0.81 to 0.95).

The third instrument—semi-structured interviews conducted later in the day of the lesson observations—provided opportunities to clarify the views of the CE teachers and students, and the meanings of their classroom activities (Cohen *et al.* 2007). Teachers were asked about their pedagogical preferences, the types of questions they asked, the feedbacks they offered, and how they handled differences of opinion in class. Students were asked what teaching methods helped them explore controversial issues, what classroom activities were enjoyable/informative, and how they responded when others' opinions differed from theirs. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Two additional measures enhanced the study's comparability. First, to ensure their clarity and understandability, questionnaire and interview questions were revised after consulting with CE experts/teachers, and again after piloting in each location. Second, to enhance respondents' common understanding, the study added examples to illustrate some questionnaire/interview terms and questions, and asked local CE experts/teachers to assess the utility thereof for students.

Data analysis

Qualitative data were analysed using NVivo (Bazeley and Jackson 2013). Interview/observation transcripts were post-coded, and research-related clusters and themes generated. Observed lessons were further analysed by type, frequency, and duration of class activities. Bloom et al.'s (1956) six-level question taxonomy was used to categorize CE teachers' questions/feedback.

Using SPSS and AMOS, the study employed principal component analysis (PCA) and hierarchical linear modelling (HLM) to analyse survey data, and confirmatory factor analysis to test for measurement invariance. PCA was used to find smaller component sets (summary variables) by combining two the study's 70 variables into single factors, considering the data's total variance (Bryk and Raudenbush 2002; Fabrigar and Wegener 2011). All but one observed variable (Question 43) could be reduced into 14 principal components (PCs) (Table 2) that combined to explain 63.05% of variance, ranging from 7.475% of total variance for the first component (C1: student's criteria for accepting views received in class, Type B) to 2.096% for the fourteenth (C14: teacher's teaching methods, Type A).¹ The internal consistency of all PCs except C14 was at an acceptable level or above (Cronbach alphas from 0.747 to 0.901).

[Table 2 around here]

As students were nested within a classroom/school/city/state/country (Osborne 2010), the study used HLM to examine differences between the cities. For each dependent variable and the 14 PCs, the study built three models—null, means-as-outcomes, intercept/slope-as-outcomes—and HLM equations for each.

The null model (unconditional, no covariate included) checked variability by class in the outcome variable; if the variability were significantly different from zero, HLM was necessary (Woltman *et al.* 2012).

$$\text{Level 1:} \quad Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + r_{ij} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Level 2:} \quad \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \mu_{0j} \quad (2)$$

Mixed model: by substituting (2) into (1)

$$Y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \mu_{0j} + r_{ij} \quad (3)$$

Y_{ij} = score of student i nested within classroom j

β_{0j} = mean score of students nested within classroom j (Level-1 intercept for classroom j)

r_{ij} = residual, difference between the score of student i and the mean score of classroom j

γ_{00} = average of the means across all classrooms

μ_{0j} = random effect which allows β_{0j} to vary randomly across classrooms

r_{ij} = residual, difference between the score of student i and the mean score of classroom j

Intraclass correlation (ICC) varied across all PCs (except C11, with redundant parameter intercept variance) from 0.022 (C13) to 0.240 (C4), and were above 0.1 in 36% of dependent variables.¹ The ICC was greater than 10% of the total variance in the outcome, mandating further analysis using HLM. The residual and intercept variance in the null model provided a comparison baseline when building the following models.

The study built the means-as-outcomes model with a single class-level (Level-2) predictor (City)_{ij}, but no student-level predictor, to evaluate differences between unconditional variance in outcome variables over classes, and variance in outcome variables over classes, after considering the city the class belonged in (for HLM equations and more explanation, see Item [A] in Appendix 1). Compared to the null model, all intercept variances (except C8 and C13) decreased,¹ and less variation existed in the random intercept. The result was reflected in the significance of the parameters' estimation for the Level-2 predictor (City)_{ij}.

The study then used the intercept/slope-as-outcomes model (Level-1 covariate added to the means-as-outcomes model) to separately compare the impacts of two Level-1 covariates—gender and grade—on HK and GZ students' responses (controlling for the effect of (City)_{ij}) and the 14 PCs, and to investigate whether a classroom's geographical location

moderated that impact (see Items [B] and [C] in Appendix 1); adding the Level-1 predictor (Gender)_{ij} or (Grade)_{ij} had little impact on ICC.¹

Thirdly, the study employed multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MG-CFA) to test measurement invariance between groups. Following van de Schoot *et al.* (2012), the study conducted separate single CFAs for the GZ and HK groups, and employed MG-CFA to find configural, metric, and scalar invariants. Different model fit measures provided no conclusive evidence of whether the same constructs were interpreted similarly by HK and GZ students, possibly due to the study's large sample size and numerous observed variables, as 'goodness of fit is inversely related to sample size and the number of variables' (Stat Wiki 2018).

Limitations of the study

This comparative study has five major limitations. First, China is too vast and diverse for GZ to be representative of its CE teaching/learning. Second, the GZ fieldwork was conducted before China's heightened social controls affected schools; post-2014 comparative research might yield different results. Third, the observed lessons were only snapshots of CE teaching/learning and not necessarily reflective of other classroom activities. Fourth, HK and GZ might have different thresholds for or understandings of classroom freedom and openness, thus making comparing self-reported ratings and interview data difficult. Fifth, the intervals between points (e.g., 'agree' and 'strongly agree') on the questionnaire's Likert scale may not represent equal differences in student responses.

Due to financial, human resource, and time constraints, the first three limitations were unavoidable. The remaining limitations were also inevitable, are commonly found in other comparative studies, and PCA and measurement invariance testing could only partly, not completely, resolve them. The study has no intention of generalizing its findings beyond the data collection periods, or to other schools.

Student survey findings: mixed teaching methods in both cities

The study found four interrelated similarities/differences patterns in students' perceptions of CE teaching/learning: coexisting pedagogies (C6 and C14); teaching focus and concerns (C3 and C4); classroom climate (C7, C10 and C13) and teachers' facilitation (C2 and C12); and learning strategies (C11), view-sharing criteria (C8 and C9), and content acceptance (C1 and C5). HK students gave statistically-significant lower ratings in six of the 14 PCs, and higher ratings in only two (Table 2). Thirty-seven survey items had significant ($p < 0.05$) differences in means, with HK having lower means in 34.¹ These unexpected findings challenged the authors' preconceptions.

The first pattern concerns CE teachers' adoption of teaching methods/activities (Pattern 1), and is reflected in two activity-related PCs (C6 and C14). The means-as-outcomes model suggests HK and GZ students did not perceive a statistically significant difference in class activities under C6 and C14 (Table 2). There were no statistically-significant differences in class activity types under C6 and C14, other than individual seatwork (C6), which was used significantly less often by HK teachers

The second pattern involves teachers' concerns about students' content acceptance (Pattern 2), and is supported by two PCs related to teachers' teaching focus and concerns: C3 and C4. At the PC level no statistically-significant difference between HK and GZ was found in C3 (Table 2); however, for C4, GZ students gave statistically-significant higher ratings than their HK counterparts ($\gamma_{01} = -0.785, p < 0.001$). While all teachers stressed values and attitudes, knowledge, and skills (C3), GZ teachers emphasized the latter two more than their HK counterparts, with significance. Second, all students agreed their teachers cared whether they accepted what was taught. GZ teachers cared significantly more about students' acceptance

(C3) than did HK teachers ($\gamma_{01} = -0.144$, $p < 0.05$), and were significantly more eager to use out-of-class activities to promote CE ($\gamma_{01} = -0.783$, $p < 0.001$), encourage students to accept socially-accepted, or government-promoted views/values/attitudes (γ_{01} ranging from -0.296 to -0.515 , $p < 0.001$), and reject those discouraged by society or government) (γ_{01} ranging from -0.368 to -0.565 , $p < 0.001$).

The third pattern concerns classroom climate (C7, C10 and C13) and teachers' in-class facilitation role (C2 and C12) (Pattern 3). Students in both cities agreed teachers did not impose their views, but created an open, interactive classroom learning climate.

C7, C10 and C13 showed HK and GZ students reported open sharing and communication, and collectively and individually experienced others' respect, trust, and acceptance—perhaps because teachers cared about students' feelings and helped students share and communicate, and because students could freely debate or even disagree with their teachers. Although C13 showed no statistically-significant difference between how HK and GZ students felt others' perceived class climate, C7 revealed students saw HK classroom climates as less free, open ($\gamma_{01} = -0.325$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 2), while C10 showed HK students were less willing to participate in class ($\gamma_{01} = -0.313$, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, HK students gave statistically-significant lower ratings for their general impressions about classroom respect, trust, and acceptance (C13) ($\gamma_{01} = -0.272$, $p < 0.001$), and students' initiative to respond to questions (C10) ($\gamma_{01} = -0.302$, $p < 0.001$) and seek clarification (C10) ($\gamma_{01} = -0.269$, $p < 0.001$). HK students were less willing to share in small group discussions; elaborate their reasons/understanding to teachers; share their views; and share in class (C7) (with γ_{01} ranging from -0.375 to -0.191 at $p < 0.05$).

C2 and C12 revealed GZ and HK students viewed their teachers as facilitating and encouraging students to learn CE from multiple perspectives, rather than imposing their or official views (Table 2). GZ and HK teachers engaged students by having them give simple answers, recall learned/discussed information, clarify their understanding, explore pros/cons/alternatives, and explain their choices, using simple feedback to affirm students' responses, and detailed feedback to encourage reflection. Moreover, GZ and HK teachers presented issues pros and cons, offered alternative views, and gave reasons when accepting or rejecting views/values. Teachers also helped students openly share their views with others, and to make decisions, rather than appeal to authority.

HK students gave statistically-significant higher ratings in both C2 ($\gamma_{01} = 0.365$, $p < 0.05$) and C12 ($\gamma_{01} = 0.465$, $p < 0.05$) (Table 2). Specifically, HK teachers were seen as more likely to give students opportunities to explore pros and cons ($\gamma_{01} = 0.215$, $p < 0.05$) and alternatives ($\gamma_{01} = 0.228$, $p < 0.05$), and to let students make decisions ($\gamma_{01} = 0.201$, $p < 0.01$).

The fourth pattern concerns students' personal CE learning experiences/strategies. GZ and HK students considered themselves rational, clear-thinking, and accepting of others' views/values (Pattern 4). No statistically-significant difference between HK and GZ was found in C1 and C8 (Table 2); however, GZ students more strongly perceived themselves as rational learners, giving statistically-significant higher ratings to three (of five) PCs (C5, C9 and C11) and 16 of 23 related items.

GZ and HK students used four similar strategies to evaluate teachers' oral content and other students' offerings – careful listening, analysing reasons, seeking clarification, and comparing others' views with theirs (C11). The last two strategies were more used by GZ students ($\gamma_{01} = -0.187$ and $\gamma_{01} = -0.175$ at $p < 0.01$, respectively). GZ and HK students prioritized views shared in class or small-group discussion based on who offered them (C8 and C9). GZ students' order of preference was classmates, teacher, society, government; HK students' was government, teacher, society, classmates. Although HK students ranked government higher than GZ students, the mean difference was insignificant.

GZ and HK students shared three criteria for accepting CE views/values – having reasons to accept, the views’/values’ usefulness or relevance, and with whom the views/values were associated (C1 and C5). The study found significant differences between GZ and HK students in the second and third criteria, but not in the first. GZ students significantly more often used the second and third criteria (γ_{01} ranging from -0.633 to -0.120, at least $p < 0.05$), and were more accommodative of classmates’ different views ($\gamma_{01} = -0.187$, $p < 0.05$).

The intercept/slope models showed no conclusive gender/grade difference between HK and GZ students.¹ After controlling for the effect of (City)_{ij}, Gender did not explain much outcome variance, because no PCs had an explained variance by Gender greater than 5%. Moreover, only three items had statistically-significant γ_{11} for (Gender)_{ij}. Similarly, only 14 items had statistically-significant γ_{10} for (Grade)_{ij}; however, the 14 were distributed among five different parts, only one of which had a significant γ_{11} value.

Discussion: possible explanations

This section explains the four major interrelated similarities/differences patterns in HK and GZ CE teaching/learning, and suggests they result from globalization’s demands on school curricula, teachers’ pedagogical preferences/roles, and students’ CE learning strategies and involvement. These conditions do not fit Merry’s criteria for indoctrination, and are more conducive to open discussion and expression. Codes identify school (Sch), student (S), and teacher (T); e.g., HKSchD-T1 is the first interviewed teacher of School D in HK. The authors translated all interview quotations from Chinese to English.

Teachers’ low views on indoctrination

In the 2000s, both cities reformed their curricula to equip their students with basic globalization-related competences, including independent/critical thinking; as such, neither curriculum fits Merry’s (2005) first criterion (i.e., discouraging critical thinking). Most interviewed teachers (e.g., GZSchB-T1, HKSchD-T1) supported the pedagogical change from teacher- to learner-centric approaches, and helping students develop basic globalization-related competences.

No interviewed teachers considered indoctrination an effective means of helping students accept values/views; rather, they supported encouraging students to develop independent or critical thinking skills. HKSchD-T3 and GZSchB-T1 noted indoctrination provided ‘little space’ for student thinking and expression, while HKSchE-T2 and GZSchC-T3 felt caring whether students accepted the values/views they taught was ‘natural’ and ‘reasonable,’ not ‘indoctrination.’ HKSchF-T3 and GZSchA-T2 said (and HKSchD-S2 and GZSchC-S4 agreed) it was virtually ‘impossible to indoctrinate students,’ as they had independent thought and judgement, and could online access information that influenced them more than textbooks or lessons:

It is difficult to brainwash students in HK, as information is so open and easily accessed. Forcing students to accept any views taught in class is against the nature of education and the current school curriculum, which encourages us to equip them with independent and critical thinking skills. (HKSchE-T2)

Education is to help students seek truth and reason. Students would notice whether we present a controversial issue in a biased manner, or only one side of a controversy. They would not necessarily challenge us in class, but we would lose credibility. (GZSchC-T2)

Adoption of learner-centric, inquiry-based approaches: classroom evidence

Lesson observation confirmed diverse pedagogies were employed in GZ and HK CE lessons (Pattern 1), and found no evidence of Merry's (2005) second and third criteria – i.e., using easily-disputed or unsupported teaching content, and coercive teaching methods. The sampled schools in both cities promoted multidimensional CE education, with personal-social, local, national, and global components (Table 3). In neither city's CE lessons were the themes and issues covered non-discursive or easily dispelled, nor were CE teachers' tone or phrasing coercive. Analyses of GZ CE textbooks (Law and Xu 2017; see more later) and HK CE worksheets revealed no easily-disputed content.

[Tables 3 and 4 around here]

Moreover, the study found diverse pedagogies (Ho *et al.* 2017; Leming 2010) and inquiry-based learning in both cities' CE lessons, at occurrence frequencies (Table 4) largely consistent with student survey results. Teacher-talk-and-instruction was the most common pedagogy in all sampled schools, used mainly to introduce topics, give activity instructions, and teach partly-known content – e.g., China's ethnic minorities (HKSchE-T1), and Western political systems (GZSchC-T1). Teacher-talk-and-instruction consumed, on average, 40% of class time in HK and 20% in GZ.

In their second- and third-most-commonly-used methods (teacher-question-student-answer (TQSA) and small-group discussion) teachers facilitated students' thinking and view sharing. Teacher questioning and feedback consumed, on average, 12 lesson minutes in HK and 13 in GZ. However, students' average response time greatly differed—five minutes in HK and 10 in GZ. To different extents, CE teachers in both cities used both low- and high-level questions (Bloom *et al.* 1956) and feedback to check students' understanding and expand their views and thinking. HK teachers asked fewer high-order questions and gave more short feedback, and HK students gave more short answers, partly explaining their shorter response times. Small-group discussions took approximately five minutes in both cities (Table 8). In both cities, teachers employed interactive teaching methods.

Teachers as facilitators promoting open CE pedagogies

In open pedagogies, teachers facilitate different views being presented and heard, and empower students to freely express themselves and evaluate what is taught and discussed in class (Hess 2004; Hess and McAvoy 2015; Ho *et al.* 2017). While HK and GZ students reported their CE teachers cared what they taught and whether students accepted it (Pattern 2), this does not prove indoctrination; on the contrary, in both cities, teachers facilitated students' inquiry-based learning and critical thinking, and students were active, rational learners. Teachers' rationale for using diverse CE pedagogies resembled those for inquiry-based learning (Brady 2010); however, HK and GZ teachers differed in the extent to which they used, and had difficulties using, interactive teaching/learning methods.

Teachers' preferences for open pedagogies

All interviewed teachers regarded direct instruction as unavoidable, with many considering it more efficient in large classes and for teaching key issues and concepts (e.g., HKSchE-T3, GZSchC-T2). However, many interviewed teachers felt extended teacher-talk-and-instruction 'bored' students, reduced their understanding, and exceeded their attention span.

Many GZ and HK teachers cherished their facilitator role, and valued inquiry-based teaching (TQSA, feedback, small-group discussion) for interacting with students, checking

their understanding, and pushing them ‘to think wider and deeper.’ Open questions helped students ‘explore different views or perspectives,’ while different levels of questioning and feedback catered to their ‘diverse needs and abilities’ and helped them analyse/judge issues and form conclusions. Teachers had their own strategies for questioning, feedback, and handling students’ different views:

I normally start with simple questions to direct students to what they should pay attention, and then ask questions that let them express different views. If necessary, I ask them further questions to help them clarify their views or invite other students to comment. ... When two opposite views appear, I ask students to put themselves into their opponents’ shoes, and consider and explain whether they would hold the same stance as their opponents. (HKSchF-T1)

I often ask students three types of questions: what, why, and how. The last two are more important. Why-questions require them to explain their views, whereas how-questions help them to see whether their suggestions are feasible. (GZSchB-T3)

Interviewed teachers (e.g., HKSchF-T4, GZSchB-T3) valued small-group activities, while recognizing their constraints—e.g., they required more class/preparation time than TQSA, and their effectiveness ‘depended on the combination and dynamics of students.’ Most (e.g., HKSchD-T1, GZSchC-T2) believed small-group discussion was important for student/peer learning, enhanced student-student interactions, encouraged students to ‘share their views,’ developed their expressive confidence, helped them manage groupmates’ diverse views, facilitated peer coaching, and encouraged self-expression.

Teachers’ facilitation of students’ inquiry-based learning

Lesson analysis revealed observed teachers used various interactive methods to facilitate student learning. First, during small-group discussions, they circulated to ensure students were on-task and asked/answered questions to their understanding. Second, teachers invited students to share their small-group discussion results in class, and other groups to comment on or further analyse the issue or scenario. In both cities, questions most often asked students to discuss and explain issues’ pros and cons.

HK and GZ teachers also facilitated students’ learning by allowing them to freely (and fairly) evaluate and express different, even opposite views, and make decisions on their own. In his lesson on whether China were a strong nation, HKSchF-T3 had grouped students share their views and choose one to represent the group; groups with opposing views presented alternatively, ensuring all received similar attention. Later, HKSchF-T3 asked students to re-examine their views and explain why they had/had not changed.

Similarly, GZSchC-T2 had students do pre-lesson group projects on whether the Internet benefited or harmed people’s lives, and present their findings in class, with pro-Internet groups sharing their views first. GZSchC-T2 invited students to evaluate whether others’ views were reasonable and to explain their Internet use experiences; later, GZSchC-T2 used questioning and feedback to check whether students had changed their views, and to guide them to consider more effective ways to use the Internet and protect their online privacy and safety.

Occasionally, HK and GZ teachers used experiential learning to facilitate students’ learning and help them relate classroom experiences to their daily life. GZSchB-T3 and GZSchB-T5, using Mintz’s (1951) survival simulation game, had students explore strategies by which all groupmates could succeed, and share and reflect on their failures and successes.

HKSchF-T1 used role play, with some students feigning deafness and others helping them, to highlight the problems facing the hearing impaired and the importance of inclusion.

Different challenges to CE teachers in promoting inquiry learning in HK and GZ

GZ teachers spent more time engaging students (Table 4), used more scenarios/issues in class, gave students more opportunities to respond to scenario-/issue-related questions, and offered more feedback. This could reflect differences in the two cities' teaching resources availability and inquiry-based learning focus. HK teachers, having no CE textbooks, could freely choose teaching contents and pedagogies, but had to prepare issues, questions, and worksheets for student discussion:

Lacking textbooks allows us to discuss and create our own teaching materials to cater to students' needs and interests. But it has not been easy to select good issues and scenarios, and prepare worksheets and questions for students (HKSchF-T2).

Some teachers (e.g., HKSchD-T3) admitted spending 'less time' preparing lessons and creating 'well-organized' questions for CE than for their main subjects, and finding it 'very difficult' to provide such materials for every CE lesson. Some teachers (e.g., HKSchF-T1) offered worksheets with both scenario descriptions and low-/high-level questions for students to consider and discuss; others' worksheets mainly feature low-level questions requiring students to recall lesson content or find information in the worksheets (e.g., HKSchE-T1).

GZ teachers had CE textbooks and largely used their pre-made topics and scenarios. One Grade 8 textbook passage on competition and cooperation that was taught in two observed lessons (GZSchB-T3 and GZSchB-T4) provided nine competition scenarios, each with related short questions and key points (Curriculum and Teaching Materials Research Institute 2009). Each presented a situation (e.g., friends competing in an international table-tennis match), and suggested what teachers should ask (e.g., does competition damage people's friendships) and activities (e.g., have students propose ways to compete without hurting one's friendships).

GZSchC-T2 admitted CE textbooks saved labour by providing 'different scenarios and questions' for students; however, GZ teachers often modified textbook scenarios using examples familiar to students – e.g., replacing the international table-tennis competition with a video featuring the competition between two students in their school's sports event (GZSchB-T3).

GZ teachers faced strong pressure to be facilitators, use interactive methods and inquiry-based learning elements, and familiarize students with the questions types found on public examinations. GZSchB-T4 acknowledged CE textbooks were 'important [student] reference materials' for public examinations, and that CE teachers had a 'responsibility' to familiarize students with examinations, including how to 'analyse questions' and provide 'appropriate responses.' The scenarios and short questions in CE examinations resembled those in CE textbooks.

An authorised supplementary exercise book recreated the CE textbook topics, but provided scenarios, issues, and questions like those found in CE examinations (Guangzhou Research Taskforce for Learning and Assessment in Ideology and Moral Character for Junior Secondary Education 2013). As homework, teachers would have students review exercise book scenarios related to the lesson just taught, and answer the questions to prepare for the next lesson.

Students as rational learners in CE lessons

HK and GZ students were not necessarily passive, uncritical learners, and were not required to accept taught content uncritically (Merry's (2005) fourth criterion). Students in both cities used inquiry-based learning approaches, and were active, rational learners, learning in an open environment. They willingly engaged in class activities, voiced critical views, and used inquiry-based or values clarification learning strategies (Ho *et al.* 2017; Leming 2010) to assess received knowledge before making an independent decision.

Learning in a free, open class climate

HK and GZ students felt they learned CE in open classrooms, and were respected and trusted by teachers and classmates (Pattern 3). All interviewed students explicitly expressed they felt neither teacher nor peer pressure when expressing their viewpoints, could have different views, and were not forced to accept what was taught.

We can talk whatever we want if the content is related to the lesson. Because of freedom of speech, we can voice comparatively radical views that are different from the mainstream. (HKSchF-S8)

Of course, it is better to answer the teacher's question and share our views, but we are not forced to do so. Neither are we forced to accept any knowledge and views taught in class. (GZSchC-S2)

Students (e.g., HKSchE-S2, GZSchB-S10) attributed positive classroom climates to teachers' strategies for creating a friendly learning environment, including developing 'good teacher-student relationships,' encouraging student expression, and 'not criticizing' students' minority opinions.

Willingness to participate in class activities

GZ students (e.g., GZSchA-S2) considered TQSA a 'natural and reasonable' form of teacher-student interaction, felt responding showed 'cooperation,' and found teacher's questions/feedback directed their attention and thinking, checked their understanding, and consolidated their knowledge. HK students felt answering questions helped them 'share their views,' learn by 'listening to classmates' views' (HKSchD-S4, HKSchF-S6), and clarify their understanding (HKSchE-S1).

Most HK and GZ students indicated greater willingness to share and discuss in small-group discussions/activities than in TQSA, as they felt 'equal,' had 'more courage,' and were 'less worried' about expressing divergent views (e.g., HKSchD-S5, GZSchB-S2). HKSchD-S1 and HKSchF-S7 explained participation was easier among three or four groupmates, than among 33 or 35 classmates. GZ students also contributed in small-group activities and shared results to 'earn group honour' (GZSchC-S8).

Grasping opportunities for expressing diverse views and voicing critical remarks

HK and GZ students were asked to discuss matters in small in-class groups and in pre-class project preparation, respectively, and to choose a group view and present it in class. Students could freely express different, and even opposite views in their presentations.

In HKSchF-T3's 'China as a Strong Nation?' lesson, two groups considered China was a strong nation because it had the world's second largest economy, aeronautic and aerospace

technologies, an aircraft carrier, hosted international sporting events, etc. Four groups disagreed, citing corruption, partiality in law enforcement and the judiciary, poor food safety standards, and intellectual property rights infringements. Two groups equivocated, finding China had had both achievements and problems in recent decades.

Similarly, in GZSchC-T2's 'Internet: Beneficial or Harmful to People's Lives?' class, four groups found it beneficial, and two considered it harmful. The former called it a 'convenient tool' for finding information not provided by teachers and textbooks; 'a vital platform for communication' and the 'expansion of social circles'; and a 'good place for relaxation' and 'stress reduction.' Criticisms included 'Internet addiction' and related health issues; adverse effects on study; 'cyber fraud' and 'cyberbullying'; the prevalence of 'unhealthy' or 'inaccurate' information; and its potential for facilitating terrorism.

Students in both cities occasionally criticised their government. One of HKSchF-T3's students criticized the Chinese government for its 'bribery and corruption' problems, others noted the judicial system's 'backwardness' and China's failure to protect copyrights. Similarly, in a Grade 9 GZ lesson on China's Constitution (GZSchC-T4), one student criticized the State Council for 'violating the spirit of the Constitution' by imposing an education surtax, and proposed the National People's Congress 'should look into this issue.' Interestingly, the CE teacher then asked students what people could do 'if the government did not observe the law'; one student daringly suggested using 'demonstration (*youxing*)... to negotiate with the government on how to solve the problem concerned.' The teacher then asked what or who students would support 'if the government infringed citizens' rights,' to which one responded, the government needed to 'go back to the Constitution.'

However, despite the friendly learning environment, some students in both cities admitted being reluctant to share, particularly when responding to teachers' questions, for fear of 'losing face' by giving wrong answers or voicing unacceptable views (e.g., HKSchD-S12, GZSchB-S8). Some Grade 9 GZ students (e.g., GZSchC-S8) preferred direct instruction, because it gave them 'correct answers' for public CE examinations.

Using inquiry strategies to process and evaluate information in lessons

Interview data confirmed the survey finding regarding Pattern 4 – i.e., that HK and GZ students did not blindly accept views/values promoted by others, and shared similar strategies/criteria for processing/evaluating received information. For example, in handling in-class differences of opinion HK and GZ students (e.g., HKSchD-S3, GZSchC-S9) explained no viewpoint is perfect and it is important to 'seek truth' (*qiuzhen*); 'different people [having] different viewpoints' is 'normal,' and often contextual.

HK/GF students both reported using inquiry-based learning strategies, including listening to and comparing others' views to theirs, exploring alternatives, evaluating pros and cons, and choosing the most logical/relevant views:

If my view differs from the teacher's or government's, I continue to think about why they hold such view and explore how their views are better or more relevant. I also try to find other views. (HKSchF-S10)

I respect different opinions. I do not use whether people support or reject a viewpoint to decide if it should be accepted. Rather, I evaluate whether I have strong reasons to support it and whether it is related to my daily life. (GZSchB-S3)

HK and GZ students' learning strategies were related to curriculum reforms advocating inquiry-based learning. HKSchD-S5's CE teacher often guided students to 'evaluate [issues]'

pros and cons' from multiple perspectives before choosing a side. Similarly, GZSchC-S6 indicated she and her classmates 'were used to' discussing scenarios, examining issues from different angles, and deciding which were better. Some HK and GZ students (e.g., HKSchF-S3, GZSchA-S4) believed these strategies 'improved their views' and 'broadened their understanding of issues.'

This suggests HK and GZ students felt they learned CE in a free, open classroom climate that facilitated willingly participation in class activities. They did not blindly accept knowledge/views, but used strategies to process, analyse, and evaluate them before accepting or rejecting them.

Conclusions

This study is the first to compare HK and GZ CE teaching/learning. Methodologically, it supplements existing citizenship/values education studies (e.g., Barber *et al.* 2015; Kennedy *et al.* 2010; Leming 2010; Schulz *et al.* 2017) by developing instruments for comparing class activities, teaching concerns, classroom climates, and learning strategies. These instruments aided comparison/evaluation of HK and GZ CE lessons, activities, and classroom climates. The findings challenge stereotypes about CE teaching/learning in HK and mainland China, and have implications for CE policy and practice.

Challenging the stereotypical perceptions of CE teaching/learning in HK and China

CE and its pedagogies in sampled HK and GZ schools were not isolated, but responses to emergent domestic and global demands that informed curricular and pedagogical reforms. Despite different CE contents and emphases, the cities adopted similar multidimensional CE frameworks with personal-social, local, national, and global dimensions, and emphasized critical thinking.

The findings reveal more similarities than differences in CE teaching/learning in the six sampled HK and GZ schools. In both cities, teachers: employed diverse CE pedagogies, from inculcation to values clarification/inquiry-based approaches (Pattern 1); cared whether students accepted their teaching, but acted as facilitators, not indoctrinators (Pattern 2); and created class climates in which students could freely express their views (Pattern 3). Moreover, students willingly participated in CE lessons, and used rational strategies to evaluate content (Pattern 4). These conditions are more conducive to open pedagogies and learning strategies than to indoctrination.

Using empirical classroom evidence, this study partially debunks two stereotypical preconceptions – that Chinese schools indoctrinate their students (Cantoni *et al.* 2014; Xiaojuan Xie and Li 2010; Ying Xie *et al.* 2017), and that HK's CE lessons are freer and more open (HK01 Editorial 2017; Panel on Education 2011; Parents' Concern Group on National Education 2013). However, this study cannot, based on observed CE teaching/learning activities, infer whether or to what extent indoctrination occurred GZ CE lessons, merely that the purposes, contents, pedagogies, and outcomes of the sampled CE lessons did not satisfy Merry's (2005) necessary (but not sufficient) criteria for indoctrination. The study advances Tan's (2012) findings of critical thinking among mainland students by identifying the strategies by which students exercised judgement to reach reasonable conclusions (Pattern 4).

Furthermore, HK's CE lessons were not found to be more open; rather, there were more similarities than differences in the cities' patterns of CE teaching/learning. Schools in both cities showed similar conditions that were more conducive to open pedagogies than to indoctrination. HK and GZ teachers' use of open pedagogies were key in helping students think and learn (Pattern 1). Despite CE being a means of political socialization (Banks 2008), HK

and GZ students did not accept CE content passively or uncritically, but were rational learners who strategically and critically evaluated what they learned (Pattern 4).

Lesson observation revealed that, compared to their HK counterparts, GZ teachers more often questioning and feedback to stimulate students' thinking (Pattern 1; Table 4), and GZ students more often provided explanatory or elaborating answers. Moreover, GZ students deemed their CE classroom climate freer and their views more accepted (Pattern 3), more eagerly participated in class activities, and strategically evaluated lesson content (Pattern 4).

These differences are partly attributable to differences in the availability of CE teaching materials, and in the pressure on HK and GZ teachers to promote inquiry-based learning, despite similar emphases thereon in the cities' curriculum reforms. GZ systematically coordinated curriculum standards, textbooks, supplementary exercise books, and public examinations to promote inquiry-based CE teaching/learning, while HK allowed CE teachers to choose what and how to teach. However, pedagogical freedom did not ensure inquiry-based approaches or greater student engagement; some HK teachers chose other pedagogical approaches – e.g., not providing worksheets. Non-pedagogical incentives found in sampled GZ schools—i.e., students participating to support teachers and win group honour—also played a role.

These findings might not have eased Hongkongers' fears had they been known before the 2012 anti-national-education demonstrations, as the causes thereof were multifaceted. However, they could provide an evidence-based alternative to protesters' fears and preconceptions about CE, and inform policymakers' efforts to promote it.

Theoretical and practical implications of the study

This study has three important theoretical and practical implications for CE policy and practice. First, HK and GZ cases suggest CE teaching/learning is culturally and temporally contextualized in a multileveled world, and subject to changing domestic/external/global demands. Moreover, as HK's greater socioeconomic openness may not ensure more open CE, our perceptions of CE openness should be based on empirical evidence, rather than policy/curriculum analyses or personal impressions. An evidence-based approach to CE policymaking and curriculum (re)making is crucial, as ideology or emotion can overshadow rational thought.

Second, CE teaching/learning is contextual; social changes create new manpower demands (Yates and Young 2010) that societies translate into policy and curricula, requiring teachers and students to make related changes. However, such changes require time, effort and appropriate conditions, and their realization can be facilitated/constrained by various pedagogical and non-pedagogical factors.

Third, although pre-designed CE lessons variously limit students' learning autonomy, students are not necessarily passive learners. Given an open, free class climate and CE teachers acting as learning facilitators, students can be ardent, rational learners with their own content evaluation strategies, freely expressing views and making decisions independently. If students can accept/reject authorities' views without consequence, their teaching cannot be deemed indoctrination.

Areas for future research

Because this study is small and non-representative, its research instruments need further methodological testing in and among schools in HK, GZ, other areas of China, and other countries. Second, the methodological concerns inherent in comparing data from self-reporting interviews/surveys conducted in different contexts merit further research attention. Third, because documentary analysis and empirical studies cannot infer the extent of indoctrination

in CE lessons, more studies are needed to overcome this difficulty, and to provide more direct, empirical evidence about the prevalence thereof. Fourth, how China's increased domestic social/political control and influence on HK's national education might affect HK's CE content selection, pedagogies, and class climates merits research.

Endnote

1. While space limitations prevent the inclusion of several statistical tables, readers can contact the authors for more information.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank their research assistants, the study participants, and The University of Hong Kong's Research Output Prize and Centre for Educational Leadership, without whom this study would have been impossible. We also thank the journal editor and reviewers for their comments and suggestions, which have bolstered this article. Part of the Guangzhou data in this article was previously reported in Law and Xu (2017).

References

- Agence France-Presse. 2018. Wife of detained Chinese rights lawyer says she is under house arrest. *South China Morning Post*, 12 April.
- Banks, J.A. 2008. Diversity, group identity, and citizenship education in a global age. *Educational Researcher* 37, no 3: 129-39.
- Barber, C., S. Sweetwood and M. King. 2015. Creating classroom-level measures of citizenship education climate. *Learning Environments Research* 18, no 2: 197-216.
- Bazeley, P. and K. Jackson. 2013. *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*. London: SAGE.
- Biesta, G. 2009. Good education in an age of measurement: On the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability* 21, no 1: 33-46.
- Bloom, B.S., M.D. Englehart, E.J. Furst, W.H. Hill and D.R. Krathwohl. 1956. *Taxonomy of educational objectives book 1: Cognitive domain*. New York: Longman.
- Brady, L. 2010. Classroom-based practice in values education. In *International research handbook on values education and student wellbeing*, eds Lovat, TJ, Toomey, R and Clement, N, 211-24. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Brown, M., M. Askew, V. Rhodes, H. Denvir, E. Ranson and D. Wiliam. 2001. Magic bullets or chimeras? Searching for factors characterising effective teachers and effective teaching in numeracy. Paper presentat at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, 15 September, in University of Leeds, Leeds.
- Bryk, S.W. and A.S. Raudenbush. 2002. *Hierarchical linear models: Applications and data analysis methods*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cantoni, D., Y. Chen, D.Y. Yang, N. Yuchtman and Y.J. Zhang. 2014. *Curriculum and ideology*. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Chen, T.H.-E. 1969. The new socialist man. *Comparative Education Review* 13, no 1: 88-95.
- Cohen, L., L. Manion and K. Morrison. 2007. *Research methods in education*. 6th ed. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

- Congressional-Executive Commission on China. 2017. *2017 annual report*. Washington, D. C.: Congressional-Executive Commission on China.
- Coulby, D. and E. Zambeta eds. 2005. *World yearbook of education 2005: Globalization and nationalism in education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Curriculum and Teaching Materials Research Institute ed. 2009. *Sixiang pinde banianji, shangce [ideology and moral character, grade 8, book 1]* Beijing: People's Education Press.
- Curriculum Development Council. 1996. *Guidelines on civic education in schools*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Curriculum Development Council. 2001. *Learning to learn: The way forward in curriculum development*. Hong Kong: Printing Department.
- Curriculum Development Council. 2012. *Moral and national education curriculum guide (primary one to secondary six)*. Hong Kong: Logistic Department.
- Curriculum Development Council. 2017. *Secondary education curriculum guide (booklet 1)*. Hong Kong: Education Bureau.
- Curriculum Development Council. 2018. *Revised curriculum framework of Chinese history (secondary 1-3)*. Hong Kong: Curriculum Development Council.
- Education Bureau. 2008. *Xin xiuding deyu ji gongmin jiaoyu kecheng jiagou [newly revised curriculum framework for moral and civic education]*. Hong Kong: Government Logistics Department.
- Education Commission. 2000. *Learning for life, learning through life: Reform proposals for the education system in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Printing Department.
- Education Department. 1985. *Guidelines on civic education in schools*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Evans, D.M. 2006. Educating for citizenship: What teachers say and what teachers do. *Canadian Journal of Education* 29, no 2: 410-35.
- Fabrigar, L.R. and D.T. Wegener. 2011. *Exploratory factor analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fairbrother, G.P. and K.J. Kennedy. 2011. Civic education curriculum reform in Hong Kong: What should be the direction under Chinese sovereignty? *Cambridge Journal of Education* 41, no 4: 425-43.
- Feng, C. 2017. The ngo law in China and its impact on overseas funded ngos. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies* 9, no 3: 95-105.
- Flew, T. 2006. The new middle class meets the creative class: The masters of business administration (mba) and creative innovation in 21st-century China. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, no 3: 419-29.
- Guangzhou Bureau of Education. 2017. *Guangzhou shi zhongchangqi jiaoyu gaige he fazhan guihua gangyao (2010-2020) [outlines of the mid- and long-term educational reform and development plan, 2010-2020]*. Guangzhou: Guangzhou Bureau of Education.
- Guangzhou Research Taskforce for Learning and Assessment in Ideology and Moral Character for Junior Secondary Education. 2013. *Xuexi yu pingjia sixiang pinde banianji shangce [learning and assessment: Ideology and moral character]*. 3rd ed. Guangzhou: Guangzhou Press.
- Hess, D.E. 2004. Controversies about controversial issues in democratic education. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37, no 2: 257-61.
- Hess, D.E. and P. Mcavoy. 2015. *The political classroom: Evidence and ethics in democratic education*. New York: Routledge.
- Hk01 Editorial. 2017. Fan guojiao wunian fansi [reflection on anti-national education after five years]. *HK01 Weekly*, 28 August.

- Ho, L.-C., P. Mcavoy, D. Hess and B. Gibbs. 2017. Teaching and learning about controversial issues and topics in the social studies: A review of the research. In *Wiley handbook of social studies research*, eds Manfra, MM and Bolick, CM, 321-35. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Hong Kong Government. Curriculum guide of moral and national education subject formally shelved. <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201210/08/P201210080622.htm>.
- Hong Kong Journalists Association. 2017. *Two systems under siege (2017 annual report)*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Journalists Association.
- Hu, J.T. 2007. Zai xianggang tebie xingzhengqu huanying wanyan shang de jianghua [speech at the welcoming dinner in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 30 June]. *Renmin Ribao [People's Daily]*, 1 July.
- Huttunen, R. 2003. Habermas and the problem of indoctrination. In *Encyclopaedia of educational philosophy and theory*, eds Peters, M, Besley, T, Gibbons, A, Žarnić, B and Ghiraldelli, P, 1-11. Singapore: Springer Singapore.
- Jones, B.C. 2017. Introduction. In *Law and politics of the taiwan sunflower and Hong Kong umbrella movements*, ed. Jones, BC, 1-12. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Kennedy, K.J., W.O. Lee and D.L. Grossman eds. 2010. *Citizenship pedagogies in Asia and the pacific*. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong.
- Kurfiss, J.G. 1988. *Critical thinking: Theory, research, practice, and possibilities*. Washington, D. C.: Association for the Study of Higher Education.
- Lai, P.-S. and M. Byram. 2012. *Re-shaping education for citizenship: Democratic national citizenship in Hong Kong*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Law, W.-W. 2017. Citizenship education. In *Handbook of education in China*, eds Morgan, WJ, Gu, Q and Li, F, 241-63. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Books.
- Law, W.-W. and S. Xu. 2017. Social change and teaching and learning citizenship education: An empirical study of three schools in Guangzhou, China. *Citizenship Teaching and Learning* 12, no 1: 7-41.
- Lee, W.O. 2008. The development of citizenship education curriculum in Hong Kong after 1997: Tensions between national identity and global citizenship. In *Citizenship curriculum in Asia and the pacific*, eds Grossman, DL, Lee, WO and Kennedy, KJ, 29-42. Netherlands: Springer.
- Lee, W.O. 2010. Multiple modalities of Asia-pacific citizenship pedagogies: Eclectic concepts, hybridised approaches and teachers' preferences. In *Citizenship pedagogies in Asia and the pacific*, eds Kennedy, KJ, Lee, WO and Grossman, DL, 335-56. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong.
- Lee, W.O. and C.H. Ho. 2008. Citizenship education in China: Changing concepts, approaches and policies in the changing political, economic and social context. In *Sage handbook of education for citizenship and democracy*, eds Arthur, J, Davies, I and Hahn, C, 139-58. London: SAGE.
- Lee, W.O. and K.J. Kennedy. 2013. Hong Kong sar. In *ICCS 2009 encyclopedia. Approaches to civic and citizenship education around the world*, eds Ainley, J and Schulz, W, 185-94. Amsterdam: IEA.
- Leming, J.S. 2010. When research meets practice in values education: Lessons from the American experience. In *International research handbook on values education and student wellbeing*, eds Lovat, TJ, Toomey, R and Clement, N, 91-110. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Li, M. 1990. Moral education in the People's Republic of China. *Journal of Moral Education* 19, no 3: 159-71.

- Lu, D. 2001. Guangdong gaige kaifang de sange fazhan jiedual ji zhuyao chengjiu [reforms and opening of Guangdong: Development stages and achievements]. *Tequ Jingji [Special Zone Economy]* 7: 7-10.
- Merry, M.S. 2005. Indoctrination, moral instruction, and nonrational beliefs: A place for autonomy? *Educational Theory* 55, no 4: 399–420.
- Miller, T. and A.B. Kim. 2017. *2017 index of economic freedom*. Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation.
- Ministry of Education. 2001. *Jichu jiaoyu kecheng gaige gangyao shixing [guidelines on the curriculum reform of basic education, pilot]*. Beijing: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. 2011. *Guanyu yinfa yiwu jiaoyu yuwen deng xueke kecheng biao zhun (2011 nian ban) de tongzhi [circular concerning the promulgation of curriculum standards for Chinese language and other subjects in basic education (2011 edition)]*. Beijing: Ministry of Education.
- Mintz, A. 1951. Non-adaptive group behavior. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 46, no 2: 150-59.
- Morris, P. and E. Vickers. 2015. Schooling, politics and the construction of identity in Hong Kong: The 2012 'moral and national education' crisis in historical context. *Comparative Education* 51, no 3: 305-26.
- National People's Congress. 1990. *The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*. Hong Kong: HKSAR Basic Law Advisory Committee.
- Ng, S.W. and Y.W. Leung. 2004. Xianggang chuzhong tuixing gongmin jiaoyu de xiankuang [the current situation of promoting civic education at junior secondary level in Hong Kong]. *Hong Kong Teachers' Centre Journal* 3, no 72-84.
- Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development. 2010. *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: Lessons from PISA for the United States*. Paris: OECD.
- Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development. 2016. *Education in China: A snapshot*. Paris: OECD.
- Ortmann, S. 2015. The umbrella movement and hong kong's protracted democratization process. *Asian Affairs* 46, no 1: 32-50.
- Osborne, J.W. 2010. Correlation and other measures of association. In *The reviewer's guide to quantitative methods in the social sciences*, eds Hancock, GR, Mueller, RO and Stapleton, LM, 55-69. New York: Routledge.
- Panel on Education, Legislative Council. 2011. Minutes of special meeting held on Monday, 27 June 2011. Hong Kong: Legislative Council.
- Parents' Concern Group on National Education ed. 2013. *Baba mama shang zhangchang [moms and dads go to the battlefield]*. Hong Kong: Enrich Publishing.
- Petrovic, J. and A. Kuntz eds. 2014. *Citizenship education around the world: Local contexts and global possibilities*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Scholarism. 2011. *Lianhe shengming [joint statement (submitted to the special meeting of Legislative Council held on Monday, 27 June 2011 (lc paper no. Cb(2)2564/10-11(02))]*. Hong Kong: Legislative Council.
- Schulz, W., J. Ainley, J. Fraillon, D. Kerr and B. Losito. 2010. *ICCS 2009 international report: Civic knowledge, attitudes, and engagement among lower-secondary school students in 38 countries*. Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.
- Schulz, W., J. Ainley, J. Fraillon, B. Losito, G. Agrusic and T. Friedman. 2017. *ICCS 2016 international report: Becoming citizens in a changing world*. Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

- Snook, I.A. ed. 2010. *Concepts of indoctrination: Philosophical essays*. London: Routledge.
- Stat Wiki. Confirmatory factor analysis.
http://statwiki.kolobkreations.com/index.php?title=Confirmatory_Factor_Analysis.
- State Council. 2014. *The practice of the "one country, two systems" policy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.
- Tan, C. 2008. *Teaching without indoctrination: Implications for values education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Tan, C. 2012. *Learning from Shanghai: Lessons on achieving educational success*: Springer.
- Tanner, M.S. 2015. *Chinese government responses to rising social unrest*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Torney-Purta, J., J. Schwille and J.-A. Amadeo. 1999. *Civic education across countries: Twenty-four national case studies from the IEA civic education project*. Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.
- Tse, K.C. 2007. Remaking Chinese identity: Hegemonic struggles over national education in post-colonial Hong Kong. *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 17, no 2: 231-48.
- Van De Schoot, R., P. Lugtig and J. Hox. 2012. A checklist for testing measurement invariance. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* May: 1-7.
- Wen, G. 2018. *2018 nian Guangzhou shi zhengfu gongzuo baogao [Guangzhou city government work report, 2018]*. Guangzhou: Guangzhou City Government.
- Woltman, H., A. Feldstain, J.C. Mackay and M. Rocchi. 2012. An introduction to hierarchical linear modeling. *Tutorials in Quantitative Methods for Psychology* 8, no 1: 52-69.
- Wong, Y.-C. 2004. Introduction. In *"One country, two systems" in crisis: Hong Kong's transformation since the handover*, ed. Wong, Y-C, 1-8. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Xie, X. and W. Li. 2010. Xin zhongguo chengli yilai sixiang zhengzhi jiaoyu de lishi bianqian yu xin de lishi shiming [on the historical changes and new historical mission of ideological and political education since the founding of new China]. *Jiaoxue Yu Yanjiu [Teaching and Research]* 5: 74-80.
- Xie, Y., Y. Tong and F. Yang. 2017. Does ideological education in China suppress trust in religion and foster trust in government? *Religions* 9: 1-11.
- Yam, S.-Y.S. 2016. Education and transnational nationalism: The rhetoric of integration in Chinese national and moral education in Hong Kong. *Howard Journal of Communications* 27, no 1: 38-52.
- Yates, L. and M. Young. 2010. Globalisation, knowledge and the curriculum. *European Journal of Education* 45, no 1: 4-10.
- Young, R. 1997. Comparative methodology and postmodern relativism. *International Review of Education* 43, no 5-6: 497-505.
- Zhao, Z. and G.P. Fairbrother. 2010. Pedagogies of cultural integration in Chinese citizenship education. In *Citizenship pedagogies in Asia and the pacific*, eds Kennedy, KJ, Lee, WO and Grossman, DL, 37-52. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong.
- Zhu, X.M. 2012. Zai jianchizhong fazhan yu wanshan: Sixiang pinde kecheng biao zhun xiuding [to persistently develop and improve: An explanation for revising the curriculum standard for ideology and moral character]. *Jichu Jiaoyu Kecheng [Basic Education Curriculum]* Z1: 10-14.