

Chase Estepp

Professor Eastman

Early Childhood

26 February 2008

The article that I read from Yuen Ling Li dealt with the organization of classrooms and how children are expected to learn. She performed an experiment in 2000 dealing with nine different kindergartens in three different schools in Hong Kong. What she wanted to accomplish was to see how much culturally appropriate practice and effective teaching was apart of the classroom. She took the daily lesson plans and field notes from the teachers and found there was uniformity throughout all of the classes.

The reason why the study took place is because “Kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong appear to have difficulties in coping with reform advocating a child-centred teaching approach and active learning, the idealized vision of early childhood education, when they have to face the Chinese cultural influence and the parental demands for an early academic start”(Li 38). Usually the kindergarten teachers think their teaching is culturally appropriate.

It talks about how in the Hong Kong curriculum it “advocates providing an environment with adequate space for free movement, easy access to toys and learning materials stimulating children to learn”(Li 38). It wants to show the teachers the importance of classroom interaction and how the classroom environment can dictate the learning of children. The main focuses of the study were: classroom organization, the proportion of time that the teacher’s attention was directed to the class, to a group or to an individual pupil; the instructional and curriculum strategy; and the classroom rules.

The classroom organization was pretty much the same throughout all of the classrooms. All of the teachers utilized the space very good and used their shelves, cabinets, and learning corners productively so the children could enhance their learning. They also made sure that the children's desks' were put in the center of the room instead of being scattered throughout the room and easy to be distracted by the many things going on through the room. Most teachers had a lot of sessions or lesson plans that they had planned and they covered a wide range of areas. Instead of allowing the kids to choose what they were interested in like the Emilia Reggio schools, the activities were more structured but I'm sure they fit the children's interests. Some of the environments were difficult for children to learn in because of overcrowding. Since the space was limited there was a set limit on how many children could be at one learning activity so the teacher could keep track of all of the kids.

The curriculum was set up so that there were about on average seven different sessions throughout the day that the children were involved in. It ranged from singing songs to taking roll, and then whole class teaching time. Most of the teachers had very detailed lesson plans with goals for those days and activities for those certain goals. "The content of class teaching focused on general studies such as the Four Seasons, Health and Food, Festivals, Home Safety, and Transport while group activity/class work time was devoted to language, mathematics and craft work"(Li 40). Teachers assigned children to certain activities for that day in the morning, and then would switch throughout the day. Each teacher also had their own way with controlling the time and how long activities went. There was definitely no evidence with closing up activity time or making sure they got the attention of the children. Teacher's definitely had control of their kids with their class management and classroom rules. At the end of the stations the students

knew that they had to clean up their station and any mess that they had created. Usually when the teacher start to speak the children would turn to them and listen without hesitation.

As I become a teacher I will learn there are many different ways to teach a class, and different ways to get the best out of students. The way that the teachers in Hong Kong seemed to work very well with how they managed the classroom and also how they set up the classroom so that it was more convenient for the children to learn and be able to enhance their knowledge. As I start my field experiences I will be curious to see if any of the classrooms that I will visit will be setup the same way and if the teachers will be the same. It will be interesting to see if the classroom organization and management is completely different than that in another country.

Works Cited

Li, Yuen L. Early Childhood Education Journal. August 2006. *Classroom Organization:*

*Understanding the Context in which Children are Expected to Learn.* February 26, 2008.

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