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## Teacher Education

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This chapter examines the history and development of primary and secondary teacher education in Hong Kong and Macao. In Hong Kong, formal in-service and pre-service teacher education was initiated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but in Macao its history dates only from the 1930s. The Macao government has worked hard to catch up with Hong Kong; but the Hong Kong authorities feel that much needs to be done to catch up with other advanced societies.

The chapter begins with broad literature, so that Hong Kong and Macao may be taken as a pair for comparison and contrast with other parts of the world as well as with each other. It notes that various debates have taken place over the structure of teacher education, and on its most appropriate locus. A global trend gives universities rather than specialised training colleges increasing responsibility for the training of teachers; but in some countries training is being devolved to schools in which trainee teachers work closely with experienced mentors in the classroom.

Several parts of the chapter refer to institutions for training teachers as ‘normal’ schools. While this terminology has ceased to be common in both Hong Kong and Macao, it is still part of standard vocabulary in mainland China. The word also remains common in some other parts of the world, particularly French-speaking ones. The term normal education originates from French term *écoles normales* (Collins et al. 1973, p.146).

### The Nature and Functions of Teacher Education: International Perspectives

In almost all parts of the world, teacher training has been a neglected activity until relatively recent times. As noted by Dove (1986, p.177) identified several reasons why teacher training has tended to have a low priority. One reason was that teacher training was (and is) only part of larger systems, responsive and reactive to developments in the schools. Another reason is that until recently, the need for training has not been put forward convincingly. Particularly at the elementary level, where the earliest expansion of school systems began, the notion was widespread that any person who had completed a particular level of education could teach students at lower levels. A further factor concerns budgets. Not only does training itself require finance, but trained teachers generally demand higher salaries than untrained ones.

Because of these factors, almost all countries, whatever their level of development, have at some point in history permitted untrained personnel to take teaching positions. Indeed in some countries it remains the norm rather than the exception. UNESCO (1998, p.45) reported that in the mid-1990s in Uruguay, for example, 70 per cent of teachers in secondary schools had not been trained; and in Togo the corresponding figure for lower secondary education was 84 per cent. Even in the USA, which is a prosperous society with high standards, over 12 per cent of new recruits entered the classroom without any formal training, and another 14 per cent arrived without fully meeting state norms. UNESCO pointed out that although on a global basis teachers are better educated than 30 years ago, so are general populations who are not teachers. UNESCO added (p.46) that:

The fact that society still is willing to accept at all that people can be employed as teachers without having received any specific preparation for the job points to the difficulty for teachers in getting their claims heard. Probably no other aspect of teacher employment policies has done as much to retard progress towards recognition of teaching as a profession.

This observation would apply to Hong Kong and Macao as well as to other parts of the world.

International survey also shows diversity in the emphases between pre-service and in-service training (Gimmetstad & Hall 1995; Villegas-Reimers 2003). While some education authorities insist that teachers must have received training before they can be offered jobs, others are prepared to employ untrained teachers and then encourage or require them to undertake in-service training. Pre-service training is commonly provided either in colleges of education or in universities. Where universities are involved, training may be part of an undergraduate degree or it may be a special postgraduate course. In-service courses may vary in duration from days to years. Refresher courses are typically shorter than ones which seek more fundamental training in techniques and approaches. Again, this diversity in the forms of training has been evident in Hong Kong and Macao as much as in other parts of the world.

UNESCO (1998, p.67) reports a "long-term secular trend worldwide ... towards the consolidation of pre-service teacher-education programmes at the tertiary level of education". This partly reflects the shifting balance of teacher education as secondary school systems, and therefore the demand for secondary teachers, have grown proportionately to primary school systems and therefore the demand for primary teachers. Hong Kong and Macao have followed the trend towards consolidating teacher education in tertiary institutions. Hong Kong used to have a dual system in which some teacher training was conducted by universities while other training was conducted by colleges of education operated by the government's Education Department. The colleges of education were later merged into the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) funded by the University Grants Committee. Likewise in Macao, the expanded work of the University of Macau has greatly shifted the balance between training provided by the tertiary and the non-tertiary sectors. However, in neither Hong Kong nor Macao has an existing college of education been absorbed into a university. Thus the HKIEd was created as a free-standing body, similar in nature to normal universities in mainland China. This contrasted with the model in Australia and the United Kingdom in which many colleges of education were merged with existing multi-faceted universities.