“Examinations and Assessments: Uses and Misuses in 21st Century Education” seminar

「考試與評估：在21世紀教育中的功用與誤用」研討會

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Cam Cheung 0:23

Today, we need to talk about assessments, exams, and standardize tests. We wonder why. What’s happening? Because in the past few months in Hong Kong, we had big debate, TSA debate in Hong Kong, and actually my colleague, Doreen, has been working days and nights over that, all the time. There is another thing, PISA 2018, there will be some controversial changes, I’m sure later on Professor Ho will talk something about that too. Because of all these standardize test going on, assessments issues, that’s why we thought it’s such a lucky time, that somehow we got some international academics, important ones, coming to Hong Kong. So we thought maybe we can grab them here to exchange, just to discuss with us, and tell us, give us more perspectives on the topic. So without further delay, let me introduce you our panelist. Number one: Dr. Stephen Krashen. Dr. Stephen Krashen is from um, an emeritus professor from University of Southern California, and then we are also very happy to have Dr. Stephen Krashen to our first conference at 2014. Next one: Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä. She has been the director of Development for the Education & Cultural Services, Espoo City. And Professor Esther Ho, from the Department of Educational Administration and Policy, of the Faculty of Education, of course from CUHK, and she has also been the Hong Kong PISA exam board for a long time. Also, our moderator, Professor Stephen Chiu. He also brings us Sociology perspective on education which is great. Also in our audience, we have some…we are very very happy to have a lot of member and officials from Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, and including the Secretly General Dr. Chong-sze Tong. Thank you very much for there are many many people coming today, we are so happy and grateful. We have to thank so many thing, the venue, from CUHK…sorry I forgot all the names. And I will have you have the stage. So Professor Chiu, please help me, to moderate this session today. Thank you.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:53

Well I think it’s best to use this mic. The venue is not designed for these kind of grand events and apologize for the slight hiccups in the equipment. But first of all, let me thank everybody here, especially our oversea guests, from US, Finland, Thailand, everywhere, come to this occasion. We are very glad at Chinese U, to have all of you here. On be half of the co-organizer, the Center of International Student Assessment, in which, Esther, has and the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, the Public Policy Research Centre, with myself as the director, we are very very happy to have this opportunity to co-organize this event. So…I’m sure all of us in Hong Kong are aware of the on-going discussions about TSA, the Territory-wide System Assessment, that we have here in which standardized test have been administered to P3, P6 and Form 3. That is Grade 15 students, on their Chinese, English and Mathematics. This is one of the many standardized, public assessments we have in Hong Kong, and I’m sure Esther will give you a bit more details later. And I think that there are, there is no doubt about a certain reaction to these systems of assessments in Hong Kong, voiced out by some parents, I don’t know how many, I don’t know whether they are in the majority, but their voices are loud and clear and has been heard by the government. And, so we, it’s still under review and we are not sure what is the, going to be the final result of that review. But then, I think the discussion has been productive, in a way, the government has heard different opinions and academic are valued behind different position in that debate, and also make their opinions heard. So that is a very very valuable for us to rethink and reflect on the uses and possible misuses on standardize assessment, public standardized assessment, especially in primary schools. I hope it that it will be also be the focus for us today, from Stephen, form Kristiina, from Esther, to tell us a bit more about the experiences in US, Finland, and from Esther, in Hong Kong and other parts of Asia. I hope, after today, we’ll all be adding a very important comparative perspective into our discussions and see how other people are handling or mishandling these kind of larger scale standardized public assessments in other parts of the world, and in Hong Kong. So without further ado, let me, ask Stephen Krashen, on the floor, to talk about the experience in US. He said he is a very low-tech person, with I think very very good reasons…

Dr. Stephen Krashen 7:20

Ok my message today is not a very happy one. I have to give you the bad news on what is happening in the United States. It is my obligation, as a patriotic citizen, to tell you about our government is all wrong. It is doing things that are harming children, torturing children, all for the sake of corporate profits. Shall I continue? Ok, good. I’m going to give you a brief history lesson on the past 15 years or so, in two parts. The first is from the beginning of all, NCLB: No Corporation Left Behind. That’s what we called it, ok? And we will take that to raise to the top and the common core state standard, and notice how I spell “state standards” on your handout because it’s all about money. And I will conclude that…this history goes up to last month, with good news, when we are all happy and we thought we have won. But then, the Empire struck back, and the last month has been a nightmare, it looks worse than ever. You sure you want me to continue? It all started in year 2001, when No Child Left Behind started. The reason why we started, was because of the widespread belief that our schools are failing. This is no longer hypothesis, this is considered as a vaccine, everyone believes it in the United States. “Oh yea the schools are so bad, they are so bad.” Civilians tell you this, your neighbors tell you this. Why do people think schools in the United States are so bad? There is one reason: test scores. International test scores. The ideas that our test scores are terrible and the successful countries, I use the word “countries”, are way ahead of us. You know the countries are? Shanghai. In the United States, people thinks Shanghai is a country. Ok? The number 2 country? Hong Kong. I tell people that Hong Kong has not decided whether it is a country: Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday is a part of China; Monday, Wednesday, Friday is not. Absolutely no depression I get that. And after that, the third biggest country is Singapore. No, Singapore is a city, where the working class goes home toneighboring countries at night. So these are the countries that are mostly they worship.

Dr. Stephen Krashen10:03

When you look at the test scores, I think I’m one of five people on the planet who’s actually looked at the test scores, not many people have done that. It doesn’t take too long, it just takes an hour or so. You see that the United States’ test scores are not so bad, they are about average. You know, 500 is the mean and little bit over and little bit under. Here’s the crucial thing: If you control for poverty, test scores are much better. And just to overwhelm you with statistics and numbers, if you will look at my…the bottom of page 2, I have all the equivalent evidence…graph and stuff, I deliberately make it small and hard to read. Study after study have shown us, when you use multivariance analysis and you control for poverty, American test scores are not too bad. They are pretty much up there, they are close to the top of the world. Now no one in the United States seems to know this, I’ve been trying to break the world record, Genesis Book of World Records, for letters that are published. I broken the record for the letters to the editors submitted, but not published. When I got off the airplane, someone will confirm this, I had to finish writing my letter to the South China Morning Post, ‘cus I read it on the airplane, they kept say that it’s all about statistics. Tests are good, I will get to that. Anyway, why does poverty had this influence, why should this be? As you know it, if you look into research, study after study over the last three, four decades shows that high poverty means low test scores again and again. Several reasons: it means food deprivation, it means not having enough food, not having nutritious food, it means lack of health care in countries like the United States, which refuses to have a national health programme. It means less access to books. Fewer books at home and at school libraries, all these things, are closely related to school success. The reaction to that in the United States is we need more testing. You should guess the astonishment and disgust. This is the solution: more testing, it’s what these kids need; we need to know exactly where they are. No, we don’t need more testing, we need better food programmes, we need basic medical care, and we need better libraries. You can have the best teaching in the world and it’s not going to help if the child is hungry, the child is ill… and has nothing to read.

Dr. Stephen Krashen 12:52

My college Susan (inaudible), who is very noble in my opinion, she commented on this No Child Left Behind, here’s what she said: “When Congress passed No Child Left on Fedom, No Child Without Health Care, and No Child Left Homeless, then we can talk about No Child Left Behind. And this is exactly right. Well, what has happened since then? Race to the top. The United States’ Department of Education has an obsession with competition. “We got to win.” “We got to be number one in everything we do.” I made an analogy between the point of view of the Department of Education and Hunger Games. It is exactly Hunger Games: pick people against each other, and they will forget what the real problem is. The real problem is Federal Government policy and the undo influence of paid business. Instead, we gonna compete. And then they went on to the Common Core State Standard, it’s just doing the wrong thing harder than we did before. …opinion again, her comment on the Common Core State Standard: a radical, untired curriculum overhaul, combined with non-stop national testing. Race to the top increases testing, my estimate, about 20 times of what we had before. More testing than what we ever had on Earth. The main point of the Common Core State Standards, I decided there is one thing: online testing. That was the goal. Let me help you understand this by telling you an old joke: It was popular during the days of Soviet Union, a worker was working in a factory and everyday he will come out with a wheel barrel full of sand. The guard thinks he must be smuggling something in the sand. So he inspected it and wouldn’t find anything. Turns out, he was smuggling wheel barrels. This is the point: online testing is the biggest (inaudible), it means rip-off. Cheat. Fraud. It’s the biggest fraud, I think, in the history of civilization. The public is gonna like because it’s “high-tech”. The public pays for it. If we have online testing, here’s what it means: it means that every child in every school must be connected to the internet; it means you must have an up-to-date computer, an up-to-date system, are you with me? I’ve done my surveys, we need a new computer for all of us every three years, because we can no longer upgrade, because they made sure it’s planned…so we need a new computer for 50 million children every three years, that’s a lot of money. And every time a person from Microsoft or someone from Apple gets a new idea, they throw it into the system and everybody has to change. So this is guarantee profits. We call it the Testing Industrial Complex. This is from Eisenhower’s The Military Industry Complex. This guaranteed income for the computer companies, the testing companies, forever. And if it fails, which it will, if there is no improvement or things get worse, who gets blamed? Teachers. Right? Say yes. It’s teacher’s fault. “The teachers just don’t understand technology, we need to give them more professional development.”

Dr. Stephen Krashen 16:39

Is there any evidence shows any of this is true? No. There is not only no evidence that this will help, but there are no plans to do studies. It is assumed, the United States Department of Education came out of a paper, every year they do technology report. The one they did a few years ago, say we must push technology into the schools, even though there is no evidence for it, because the situation is so serious we can make and repair it as we go. In other words let’s give people second hand crap that doesn’t work, make some money out of it and not worry about it because we won’t be blamed if it fails. I am not exaggerating, I think the situation is worse than I said. Well, we have some reactions to this. There is evidence, I think I would call it suggestive evidence, I’ve included it in the letter to the South China Moring Post, that the teachers’ grades, are actually a better measure than any standardized test. This is suggestive. This was done two studies down the two difference universities, with high school students, they looked at grades in classes that students got in their college prepare class, and they predicted university success. They added to the formula, multiple regression, the effect of taking a standardized test to predict the college achievement, the SAT. The SAT added nothing to the prediction. Teacher’s evaluation of students is the best measurement we have. Think about it, everybody says we should have multiple measures. Teacher’s grades have multiple measures and we have multiple teachers. You want to take it into consideration for improvement? Yea, teachers do that all the time. Not only that, it’s all subjects and it’s close to the syllabus, it’s close to the requirements. It fulfills every requirement the testing professionals give us. Common sense says, we would rather have an evaluation of experience professional, who’s with the student everyday, than a distance stranger, who creates the test and the student only see it once and doesn’t understand the student, etc.

Dr. Stephen Krashen 19:07

Well, we reacted towards this policy. I wrote a paper, one person has read it, it seems, it’s call NUT, No Unnecessary Testing. Thank you so much, made my day. I was hoping someone would read it someday. Anyway. It says we should have a principle that says we should not test, no test is valid and should be given unless we know it helps teachers and students. That’s obvious. And I think that is a clever thing to say. That means we should not give test to all students all the time. Also, which have a bigger influence, a heroic movement called Opt-Out. Opt-Out was began by parents, public school teachers, and a few university professors on zero budget. They had no money. I’m going to their conference for the third time, I go there by frequent flyer mileage. I stayed in cheap motel and I eat at Subway. And so did everybody else. They started a national campaign, national Opt-Out, I will tell you some of it later. This has had effects, it spread by word of mouth. In New York State last year, 20% of the public school students eligible to take the test did not take the test. Now the students Opt-Out, big business loses money. But we thought we have won. President Obama, Obama really owes me. I have a bumper sticker on my car that says “Barack Obama 2008” written in Hebrew. I devoted the Jewish voters in California, okay? And I generally like him, it’s hard to dislike Barack Obama. He’s really (inaudible), very exciteful, careful, and he is our first president in many years that can speak in complete sentences. But his education policy, is worse than Bush’s. It’s that bad. Suddenly, in October, this is all very recent, that we shouldn’t have too much standardized testing. There should be a limit on the amount of standardize test. And the Secretary of Education, Andy Duncan, who was a fanatic for testing said maybe there is too much. These are born-again protesters of too much testing. This is wonderful, maybe we should declare victory here. And the new law has passed on education, and there is no increasing testing. So at least we could stop it, that’s amazing. I wrote a letter to the editor of USA Today, fortunately they did not post it, in which I said “Congratulation Mr. President. Let’s give credits for people who made this happened, the Opt-Out movement, Alfie Cone, Susan…, who were the real champions of this movement.” Then my friends told me I have spoken too soon. Morgen McDerman, Eggy Roberson scolded me, they said take another look, look at our blog post. They were absolutely right. And now we come to the Empire striking back.

Dr. Stephen Krashen 22:30

There was a good reason they stopped all the standardize testing, to calm it down. They want to put the testing, more testing, testing everyday, if possible. It’s called Competency State Testing. I looked hard, Eggy Roberson showed me this…(inaudible), it’s all on the paper, which is very helpful. This is all last couple of months,…(inaudible). The National Governor Association who has been always the wrong side of everything, this is the group who supported the Common Core, heavily influenced by the Gates Foundation, Person Publisher, the usual people who is responsible for these kind of things, came out a position paper, it’s quite new, you can find it on their website, which talks about Competency Based Education, they are reviving an old idea. Here’s what it is on the bottom of page one: “Your course audience classes will be based on the Common Core. It is abertery invalid of standards. Provided by and designed by commercial publishers, they are now in-charged the curriculum in the United States. Delivered online, students work individually on computers. You move module to module…” you know, doing the exercises, “and you can move to the next module only when you have mastered current module.” And you get a little badge to show you mastered it. So you have pass a test. This only works, if the goals, if what you learnt has to be very clear, very discrete, measureable, which means schools will only cover things that are easy to test. By the way, the United States have been moving from fiction in the schools to non-fiction. Obviously because non-fiction is easier to test, that’s all that’s behind it. Students take test when they feel ready, and passing test will determine student’s success, teacher rating and school ranking. Now, moving on to the next page, only the fourth quarters. They say the test are personalized, if you are going to …(inaudible). No they are not. First of all, you’re gonna be evaluated on the test, your teachers will be evaluated on your test, the schools are gonna be evaluated, the pressure is on students to move through quickly, how fast you move through the test will determine your teachers holding their jobs. Also you can use different strategies. No you can’t. You can only use strategies that are inside the domin of the computer that someone in the computer company decides a possible way to answer questions. So now we have a perpetual cycle of working through package programs and being tested. The…several organizations are supporting this. You only see good things about them in the internet. All of them are directly or indirectly supported by the Gates Foundation, in other words, Microsoft. Okay? This is their in and new educational world. They announce grants for innovative assessments; they talk about Competency Based Education; they want computer adaptable assessment that emphasize the mastery of standards of Competency Based Educational model.

Dr. Stephen Krashen 26:02

The Common Core is not the common core, it’s the whole thing. It’s the entire apple, not just the core of the apple. Everything on school will be determined by the performance of these tests. No more. Nothing else counts. That’s how they are setting it up. Is there any evidence for it? Astonishingly, the National Governor Association admits that there are no hard evidence. I quote you here from their manuscript: “Although emerging research suggested that Competency Based Education is a promising model, it includes only a few rigorous examinations and analyses of current and ongoing pilot of similar programs.” They say that, in their commercial message. They say that…nothing a lot of evidence for this. Nevertheless, we’re gonna do it. This is astonishing. This is a petrological and intellectual crime of the first story of a million people. The timing is very interesting. October 25th, President Obama suggested a limit on standardize testing. Also in the October, the National Governor Association paper came out. Also in December, the President signed the new educational law which included a big boost for this program. The impact, now we get really depressing. If this is true, we are gonna see a huge drop in responsibility of teachers. Teachers are now the assistants of these kids to get through computer programs. The United Space spent 6 billion dollars a year on education, kindergarten to grade 12. Most of this is teacher salary, teacher benefits, teacher retirement. If you eliminate teaching as a full time profession, and you reduce the number of teachers, this freeze up more money for technology. That’s the whole point, for unproven technology. The companies are responsible for all of these. They are going to supply the software, the hardware, the content of module and the test. Of course, Pearson can’t wait for this to happen, and Pearson has become the leader in preparing these modules for everybody.

Dr. Stephen Krashen 28:19

Here is the sinister plan, as I see it: there is this American comedian, Lily Tomlin, who said once: “My sinisterism is having a hard time keeping up with times.” That’s how I feel. This is the strategies: First thing you do, which is the thing that they do for the past decades, you tell the public that teachers are terrible. You disrespect teachers. I’ve seen this is center media, whatever there is anything that happens that’s scandalize a teacher, it’s on the newspaper. The sex scandals are the most interesting, I think, because usually with high school teachers with their students. When they discovered a high school teacher had an affair with the student, page one. I decided…I did an informal study on this, to compare that to police and priest, who are also accused of sexual misconduct. My conclusion, looking at the data, with all three, it’s extremely rare. And in teaching, it’s the least. Of course it happens, but it’s not very frequent. They never tell you how often it is. The others scandals like to talk about is administrators embezzling money from the school system. Again, how often is this happened? It’s very hard to do, there is not much money to embezzle, as you know. So whenever they discovered something bad about education they do. Once the public is, um, convinced the teachers are no good, everybody thinks it’s true in the United States, blaming everything on teachers. Water shortage, it’s the teachers’. Um. This opens the door. In the Unite States now, there is a great deal of enthusiasm for hiring temporary teachers. This is called “TFA”, Teach for America. We call it Teach for Awhile. Teacher get…college grads get five weeks of training. The person who cuts your hair, got far more training than this. The person who washes your hair, if you go to a fancy place, they got more training than this. Okay? And the college grads, they go work in tough areas, they go back to law school or grad school, they say they are wonderful, younger people…No. Researches say it’s not very good.

Dr. Stephen Krashen 30:44

15 minutes? I love it, very good. In state after state, 10 years have been eliminated for teachers, what we call do process. No complains. Similarity pay has been eliminated. The train you kill for to made for living, that are after awhile, where we put dropout. And now we have Competency State Education. We preliminary think that is the “flip classroom”, where’s half computer, half this, you know. The problem of all these stuff, the technology, going in, is that it has been pushed for the magic solution for everything. Whenever the new Apple…comes out, the new 6.396s comes out, people line up for it as if it’s gonna be a new life for them. So people believe that computers are the magic solution for everything. But technology as we know, has been good. It’s more so very helpful, my college Frank Smith said computer is one of the best thing that has happened to the human race, it’s one of the worse thing that has happened to schools. That’s been the problem. Take for example, flip classroom, taking computers to every class. If you leave it for the teachers, 100% on how they use technology, they know how to do it. They figure out. Let me tell you about my son, who’s a professor of Mathematics. He, as a professor of Mathematics, he has to teach calculus again, and again, and again, and again. He is the breaded butter of Mathematics Departments. He has figured out from experience that there are some problems in calculus that students have always have problem with. So he has been recording himself, for alternative solutions to difficult problems. They are available to students to watch, whenever they feel like it. That’s it. It’s not dictated by Pearson on how to teach calculus. Similarly, it’s much better and wonderful for Science if you have a computer to show people things. It’s always the simple stuff, it’s never the complicated stuff that works.

Dr. Stephen Krashen 33:10

General bracing, there is a growing technology of testing. They are permitted to do now within nanoseconds, things we shouldn’t be doing, at all. This is just because we can do it on the computer, doesn’t mean we should do it. This is the major problem. I have a lot more to say, but I will probably include it in, no matter what questions you ask, I will distort them, so I can say what I want to say. I will leave it for later. Thank you.

Professor Stephen Chiu 34:15

Ok. Thank you Stephen. I think Stephen delivered a strong message, loud and clear, again in very strong languages. I think a couple of points he raised is very important, as one of those fans sitting intellectuals, I would try to balance it out a little bit. He mentioned that, the population has been behind the testing movement in the US, and I have to that since Dr. Tong, the director of our examination authorities, we have to say that this is, it is non-profit making public organization. It is not there for the profit, and I’m sure that his job will be much easier if his job is not to administrated the TSA. There are of course, a lot of profits to be made there, publishers, especially, you know in the annual book fair, in Hong Kong. The only book that would be queued by the buyers are those TSA supplementary exercises. Each year, I think, on the average, primary student family will have to pay for, well I did, about 600, 700 dollars for the supplementary exercises, you like it or not. The other issue he raised, I think, well as a Sociologist, it’s very important, the effect of…the interaction effect of, with the inequality in the society, and how it affects disadvantage students. Of course, again, I would say that Hong Kong may not have the same kind of extend of inequality or poverty in some of the urban areas in the US, but we don’t have the, that kind of extend of race issue in the US, but we do have a large group, also, some schools are high concentration of high disadvantage students, new arrivals from the Mainland, minorities student, SES students, all sorts of background that may have a special implication for the, administration of the standardized test, and its effect on teaching and learning. So, there is some of the issues. And another point that Stephen raised is very important, is the effect on teachers, what does it reflect on our believe about how poor our schools and teachers are doing. I think that is one thing that is very important for us when we are talking about standardized test in Hong Kong. And, I, that’s why we are having our second speaker, Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä, on the Finnish experience, we all know that, when we talk about standardized test, we are saying that we have meet everywhere. It’s a global trend. But people do it differently in different places, with different reactions. We now know that in the US, citizens and parents and schools are having some discussions and rethinking about the necessity for it. And Finland also has a certain kind of standardized assessment during their primary education years, but from what we know, very superficially, it doesn’t meet to the dewing and the testing regime that we saw in Hong Kong, and perhaps also in the US. So that’s why we have Kristiina here, who introduces us to the Finnish experience that they might have done it right, or at least done it differently.

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä 38:00

Good morning everyone, and greetings from Finland. I think I need the help of the, technology. Share you something with the video.

38:18-45:19 Video shown by Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä 45:20

Well, I want to show you think video because I found it on the Ministry of Education, so you can go there and watch it if you want. I think it sums up very much more than what I’m gonna said in this time, given time. But it’s clearly made for foreign audience, in the sense where it says about accomplishments the Finnish students have done, or have achieved in this international tests. We don’t concentrate on that so much inside Finland, inside the education sector. I have a presentation, I’m gonna highlight some of the same things that you have heard on the video, because we all know that reputation is the main thing in education, so I will come up with same, similar things again in this presentation, which was made after the PISA 2009 success. So there are many things in the presentation and this video we don’t think about in real life education. Activities in Finland, because it’s obvious for us. We have grown up in that society that respects education, and that things that education is our way for better life. It is an investment in our future. But because, to our own amazement, we are doing quite well in PISA 9, people started to pay attention to Finland and asked us all these questions: What is your success? How did you do it? What are you doing in Finland? What do you put in your tap water to make your students do so well. Well, my general answer tends to be: you all know how difficult the language, Finnish is, it’s only 5 million of us in the world who speak it. So that’s why we are so talented. But I’m not going to talk about PISA results or PISA success, but in this presentation, somebody has put along the main things, that we emphasize in our education system. So let’s see what I have here. Let’s skip the PISA result, and go to the background information in this context.

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä 47:56

So one essential thing in our education system, is equal opportunity. It is, education is, available for everybody. Um, irrespective of your background, where you come from. Basic education is for all between 7 and 16 years, so 9 years of comprehensive school. And usually you go to the nearest school, that is assigned to you. There is little school shopping in Finland, it has just recently come to us in the big cities. But, basically and then some students, and some families, op to choose differently base on some special program they have. The school network is regionally extensive, of course, in Finland we have some monitoring issues, that have force to close down some schools in remote areas. But, usually people go to their nearest school, decided by where they live. Even though going to school, school, going to school got covered, in terms of finances, so um. So basic education is completely free of charge, included instructions, school materials, school meals, health care, dental care, commuting, special needs education and remedial teaching. This means we take care of the child as at home. And like, the previous presenter was mentioning, if you’re hungry or you have to go to bathroom, you can’t concentrate on what you’re learning. Then, of course, the best medicine, how to do good education is to have competent teachers. On all school levels, our teachers have Master’s degrees, at least. They are very committed. But not only, because they have a university degree, but during um, their study time, they also have training within a real school. Um, teaching profession is quite popular, it’s very hard to get in. We use to have um, it was easier for males to come in, we have a quota, but not anymore because of equal opportunity. And teachers are very well-trusted, we trust their professionalism, we trust once they gone through this teaching education, and since they got into the program, they are very committed. They have the efforts of doing something that is best for the young people, and to prepare them for their future. So they have very strong autonomy, in the schools and as teachers, in their professions. Then, of course we have also, student counselling, and support system within the schools. So we take care of the welfare of the students in many many ways. Special needs education is mainly integrated into regular education as far as possible, which enable supports as much as possible, so anybody can go in a regular school. We have guidance counsellors to help upper grade students in their choice. And um, in education practice, the students are in the center of the operation. The learning is the main thing we do in schools. It has changed since my own academic, professional time. When I used to, when I went to school, teaching was in the center, but now it’s all about learning. The whole point of evaluation in Finnish education is that it helps the professionals to support the learning in schools, how are the students learning. And the aim is to produce information that helps the development. And there are no national testing of learning outcomes or school ranking lists are not acceptable. We have a TV network that does high school ranking list, that is rather new, and we are not too happy about it. It’s not an official list and we can find why the list looks like or what it does. So that’s not acceptable or commonly accepted in our country.

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä 53:50

We think that every school is a great school. So we have a rather flexible system, based on empowerment. The administration from all levels, we feel that we have a common goal, so from the Ministry of Education, from the National Board of Education, that is the operative office responsible for the development of education, and municipalities that actually takes care of organizing educations and the schools, we all worked in the same direction. I’m sure the homogeneity of our country have something to do with this, and the whole culture, being so homogeneous, it’s been easier for us to direct to the same direction. Um, yea. This is actually about the co-operation. So, we, spent a lot of time on building partnerships. And it starts from, from the class root. We encourage the students to work together, in teams, or with their pairs. We also encourage teachers, nowadays, to work together, in small teams, or at least in pairs. And within the school, usually, we have this notion, that takes village to a child, so children, they are everybody’s duties. That’s at least what we tried to push as a mindset in schools. Um, also, in national levels, the educational authorities and the unions try to work together for the improvement of education. So we always have to negotiates with the unions, so we have to run strong in Finland. And that has brought strong commitment in the society, as well. So that brings back to the issue, where my fellow panelist, started, where actually, education has to be the core of the society. That it does in Finland. The Finnish society are very strongly favorite education. Everybody respect and have trust our educational system. And there is also a political consensus to back up our education. If I summarize the function of evaluation in Finland, is to support the development of education, and on their other hands to improve the condition of learning. Thank you.

Professor Stephen Chiu 57:21

Thank you Kristiina, I think the value of learning from other experience, is that even if it’s a society is completely different from ours, that there is something we can learn, or at least to dream of, what is possible. We may not have it in two, three, four decades or century, that is something we have to work on it, but still, we now know that Finland has no national regime of testing. The best attitude that they have now perhaps is that, no we have PISA, we do it but we don’t care about it. Is that something we can do here? I think that is something, and a high level of trust and respect they have for teachers, a lot of us are teachers ourselves, do we feel the same in Hong Kong? Do we feel the same attitude towards teachers and schools in Hong Kong, under the current system? That’s something we have to work on. That’s something we have to think about. And our next panelist will give us more insight, I’m sure someone who is in the business, of administrating a, one of the largest scale standardized test in Hong Kong, the PISA project, since the 2000. So she has been in this business for so long, and now she has enough experience to rethink what the whole business is like and should be like. So we invite Professor Esther Ho to come to the panel and share with us.

Professor Esther Ho 59:21

Thank you Stephen, for the introduction of my business or my thesis but PISA is not a business for me, it is a really serious profession research, but an international competition. That's why I want to protect this international project - the PISA, as a very low state assessment and hope that wouldn't ruin our student like the like the TSA. So I think that the main point I always want to raise the issues that we should not misuse international or national assessment because they are system level assessment... system level, but if we shift, if we abused the unit of analysis from system level to school level, that will hurt the schools like chasing the dog, make PISA a, um, race horse competition, and then, in fact Chinese society always have these gene, always for so many years that, we are crazy about tests, we are crazy about assessment, we are crazy about public examination, so every kind of assessment, tests, can become so high stake that will ruin the life of our students, make their anxiety too high, and really make the parents life more difficult. And at the end of the day I will show you so evidence that high stick? testing will...hurt... not only the teaching and learning process, but really hurt the kind of key competencies that will really need for our students, for the 21st century. So I would really like to have the first two guest speaker to have this very insightful background that that is a good, very important warning from Steve, and then, and that's a very insightful picture that we really want to have that...good scenario of Finland, although everyone of you may a lot curious about why the 2012 Finland get into a rank that is not so good. One of my guess is that they are too busy to entertain all of us visitors, they are distracted by us.

Professor Esther Ho 1:02:17

So I would like to start from two articles written in Chinese that I want to general public that, what is the real meaning of PISA, international study PISA that is really about learning and that is really about nurturing about young people.So this paper, this article written to response to some of the general public wanting, not is not general public, some particular scholar want to attribute PISA score of particular policy or particular polity maker that doesn't make sense, cause any kind of result like PISA, is a combination effort of all the stakeholders in the basic education system...so I would like to emphasize that PISA have their own values because they emphasis nurturing key competencies in many aspect for learning and nurturing young people.But, PISA's score can also be abuse like the TSA score. Both PISA and TSA are actually system level assessment as I said before, but during the process, we will use these score to identify individual school. So for TSA, the government have individual school id, so they can abuse it, not just misuse it, to make school accountable for the percentage correct, report every year to the individual school, but that is not fair, particular for TSA, because, in the primary level, all students are entering their school by residential criteria, so all school will have very different family background, all school will have students from very different family background like what Steve just said, if you have students that can from poverty, it is not likely to have the percentage correct the like to average school. So, but, once the government have this school ID, this give them the incentive to use it in many different way you never know. So that is the problem if we release the school id in this way. The PISA crisis is the same, as I talked in this article, that in 2018, the government tenor ask for these bit for this tenor to collect school ID and submit to the government. So it's another risk that the government can misuse the PISA's data as TSA. So that why I think, if the case like that, that will make that system level assessment very high stake, and then you will see the consequence of high \_ testing in these Chinese society like Hong Kong.

Professor Esther Ho 1:05:01

 In 2012, United Kingdom have an educational ad. make PISA mandatory. In 2014, a group of international scholar include Steven Ball, Henry Bore talked about write an open letter to Andrews , the leader of PISA since 2000, I know him for long time cause I conduct this thesis study in Hong Kong for six cycles. They said PISA test are damaging education worldwide, they have a lot of different points, summarize some of the major ones. They said, standardized testing have been used in nation for decade, PISA has contribute the escalation in such testing and a dramatically increased reliance on quantitative measures. So it become a very important, not the only one, the most important measures of the ranking in average score in Maths, reading, science, every three years.And it emphasizing a narrow range of measurable aspects of education, make the attention, take their attention away from the less measurable or more immeasurable perspectives like physical, moral, civil, artistic development, our students’ self-concept and... whatever, all non-cognitive are less emphasize anymore, because every three years, when they report this international result, the media always focus on the ranking.Educational policy in PISA becomes, in this three years assessment cycle it has caused a shift of attention to short-term fixes. You know in Australia in 2013, they have another educational ad. saying that they are raising to the top, they say raise to top five in Australia, it becomes a kind of educational policy in Australia. So this kind of new PISA regime is controversial if it is a continuous cycle of global testing, actually really harm our children and impoverished our classroom, and even deskill teachers like what Steve say, and then...also endanger well-being of students and teachers.So, when we talked about PISA it seems talking about the TSA we are happening right now in Hong Kong when you heard the voice of the teachers and the voice of the parents, but why? We have so many examinations, and assessment. So international we are two system level assessment, international like PISA, national like TSA. And we have one very high stake examination in Hong Kong examination. In order to make the public examination more valid in measuring something, cannot be the access, by pen and pencil, we will need some other like school based assessment. So I will give you a comprehensive view of what happening in Hong Kong.

Professor Esther Ho 1:09:24

So this is the whole assessment system in Hong Kong. On this side, you can see tertiary wide, that means locally we have this system level analysis start from primary 3, primary 6, secondary 3, we have this system level assessment of reading...Chinese, English and Mathematics. And then, what our parents really want to stop is this part, the primary 3 TSA. And the high stake examinations are here, and secondary 6 we will have a public examination, the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education. And then on this side we will launch the international bench-making assessment like...you can see the TIMMS, ICCS, PISA. So actually we have a very comprehensive assessment system, if we stop the TSA in this little area, they will ruin? the whole assessment system, but we still have a lot of different kinds of service to understand the school, like here to say, the school level performance address, student affective survey, stakeholder survey, all these can provide information for school and the government to understand the school. So the TSA primary 3 is not necessary, so I agree with Steve saying that no unnecessary tests is very important, particular for the young stage like primary education.So this is the kind of information we already collected from school, we have the input information among management, and organization, learning and teaching, student support, and school ethos, and the student performance actually is measure by boarded aspect, nonacademic assessment, affective development and attitude, social development and the academic performance is only a little part of the 23 measures. So I don't see why banding the TSA in primary 3 will be so difficult, in order to what time that we can really review and discuss together.

Professor Esther Ho 1:11:52

So, in terms of national assessment, Hong Kong start from grade 3, but a lot of the developed countries wouldn't start in such a low grade like Japan, Korea they will start the national assessment in grade 6. And the, for the public examination, we say it is the necessary evil, we are changing it, actually we are changing it from two public examinations to one in 2012. So this test is really high stake, for students and also for school. So for school, it is a kind of certification and selection for higher-education. For school, we also have a very, more objective assessment on value information that will compare schools of similar backgrounds and they will control for the students of academic intake before they compare the school. But for TSA, it does not have any control for comparison, so it is not fair to school, particular for those disadvantage school they have a lot of student from single parenthood, from low SES, from, immigrant background.And then this way of analysis have another limitation. It does not provide reason behind the value added, so we have to go back to the system level to understand more factors relate to performance. And then, it still only academic. What about other key competencies that we want to nurture the students? So we want to nurture the students the real competencies, not the competent-based assessment in USA. The real competencies for successful life and well functioning and sustainable societies as emphasis by OECD in 2012. That's not only academic achievement, we are cognitive part, but using those knowledge to solve daily life problem, like language, Maths, science, technology, problem-solving all these are tools. And then we have a lot of assessment about non-cognitive part like how does students can act autonomously and take responsibility, how they can interact with people from different background.So for all these key competencies can the standardized test assess all these qualities? Of course not. And then in the even more new version, OECD say about character. Can we measure character, can we measure empathy, resilience, mindfulness, inclusiveness, curiosity, ethics, courage, leadership? So, there is a huge limitation for standardized testing. But we are saying these people are more important for students to survive to success in the society.

Professor Esther Ho 1:15:02

So let me tell you some observation of high stake testing, it is based on the previous several cycles of PISA that I want to know, what is the consequences of high stake testing on curriculum and pedagogy, that is happening in Hong Kong, US may foresee what will happen later on like...in the first visit by OECDIN 1982, they already describe Hong Kong this Chinese society, the school having obsessive concern in testing, and then, Biggs in 1996 said, at all stage the curriculum, teaching method and the student study method and even life are focus on the next major assessment. For example, if you have the TSA in primary 3, from primary 1 you start to prepare, likely and then moving forward. This is the scenario in 1996. And then based on some qualitative research, scholar also find out some examination system in Hong Kong have become a heavy burden to both students and teachers, you already experienced it right? And both students and teachers focus on get to the main point and get hurt our language teacher. Getting the main point rather than enjoying the text as good to get good answer, rather than answer carefully structured argument in the examination. In Chinese new year, my cousin visited me, a very little girl, I asked her, do you like TSA? She say yes, you don't need to read the whole text, you just need to identify answer that is very efficient. She says yes, because she de-learn, what she is really learning is terrible. That become the new norm...that is kind of new norm we don't to have in Hong Kong, there is so many good norms that we want to keep in Hong Kong, not this norm, not this kind of de-learning norm.

Professor Esther Ho 1:17:23

And then, the curriculum become examination-orientated, of course, and induced adverse competition among students. So, here I am going to show you some consequence, some possible consequences of standardized testing, like making PISA or TSA so high-stake. In addition to the high-stake public examination, the school will even more segregated academically and socially, the student’s life will be ruin because they have a lot of homework and private tutoring. Who benefits? Of course the publisher of the TSA exercise, or the private tutor agency.And the learning environment become competitive, but the most important is that we are going to have our children, our next generation that have high score but no competency (高分低能), why they have very low self-concept? They have very high anxiety to get good score, and they are not engage in our school, if they are not engage in our school, they are not engage in our society. They don't think this society belong to them. So this is the information about 2003 in PISA, that you can see this...there is a index about the percentage of segregation between schools, Hong Kong is always higher than the ODCE average in Mathematics, science, reading and problem-solving, all about 40%. But things can improve like in 2006, you can see here in Hong Kong, the academic segregation is about 36, it is improving a little better, but the best is always Finland.

Professor Esther Ho 1:19:24

Academic index it means, if you get into a school, you wouldn't find the school particular good in academic score then the other ones. So parents is good, parents feel very good, you don't need to search...or for prestige school from kindergarten, so every school is soso. This is the academic segregation, US is around here, Hong Kong is here. So Hong Kong is, even worse than US, even worse than US, in terms of evidence segregation because we still have the academic segregation in secondary 1. Right, we still have 5 banding, move to 3 bandings. 3 banding is still detrimental and that why I really admire Finland, they started to have this comprehensive school movement, not trading at all since 1970. And then according to the record, when they started this movement, it is really controversial not everybody accept it, even like for the Hong Kong school teachers, they found it very difficult when they move from 5 banding to 3 bandings, right, but the teachers still accept it and try their very best to cater the learning diversity. That's why very important we have this parent group add diversity, please respect the learning diversity of student. Don't track them in the basic education because we have enough space to accommodate all students until the high education then we can have the more high-stake one, the public examination, the necessary evil when we still have to face it.So Finland is a very example that they are the best because they have the lowest academic segregation, and also the lowest social segregation. That means school A and school B have similar social background, that you found particular school in Tin Shui Wai that is really low SES, that really make the departmental effect on the students because they don't have the family resources and support, and then accumulate in particular school and then they don't have double teachers to teach them. Finland has their very steady comprehensive school movement, but they also have a particular program like what Kristiina say, they have this special education for all students. I once heard from the Finland scholar say special education...special education is not special in Finland cause almost every kid can have this chance and above...over 50% of the kids during their learning progress you take this service. They are not segregate into particular school, they are not segregate in particular class in the school, they are only invite by the teachers to particular time to deal with this particular subject and then let them to get back to the normal standard and then they will go back to their own class. So that make a difference.

Professor Esther Ho 1:22:47

So no segregation, very low academic segregation and for United States, the social segregation is more serious than Hong Kong. That is very interesting, that is really tell, very consistent with what Stephen say about the poverty. So, wow...another 15 minutes. So I will finish this slide quickly. Show you the afterschool homework and tutoring is really a lot. Korea is worse than us, and then our non-cognitive outcomes, self-concept in reading we are the bottom, together with Korea. We have this very low self-concept \_ as well although we are always the top three in the international assessment. We have very high anxiety, the circle I take is the East-Asian countries, so we have high scores, but very low competency. We are very competitive, we are the top, but we are very, the cooperation index is still, we are highly competitive but not cooperation. So student engagement, so this is the East-Asian countries, so, the index is here, school, it is the school...sense of belonging. This side is very positive sense of belonging, this side is very low sense of belonging, that is the indicator whether we can engage the heart of our students. So for the y axis, it is the...whether we can engage them physically, just like you are sitting here, our students seldom absent or seldom skip class. We have engage the body very high, but engage not their heart.So to conclude, the international assessment or national assessment will become high-stake if you shift the system level analysis into school level. And then it is particularly unfair for primary school because you compare school without the ground, without the common ground. And then this kind of testing actually is, for the whole comprehensive assessment picture, it is only a small part, but people will focus too much on this one and neglect the other key competencies, so we are letting the tail wag the dog. This tail, not just the assessment, but also...also Steve just remind us about the technology, do we make good use of technology assessment to feedback, to support the teaching, or do we use the assessment and technology impose the, on the curriculum pedagogy.

Professor Esther Ho 1:25:57

And then how can we change it? So I think...how can we change it? First, keep the international assessment and national assessment low stake. Keep the unit of analysis at system level. No need to identify individual school for PISA, for TSA, so that there is no incentive for the government to compare. And then, I think the Hong Kong should join the US movement, No Unnecessary Testing, the NUT movement from Steve, and then really create the space for nurture the competencies, the soft skills, the passion, and the compassion of our students. And then really review the roles of all kind of exams and tests on student learning, particularly when the learning is hurting the children at the very young age, what should we do as a responsive adult? This adult, is not just the parents, it includes the teacher, school administrators, principal, policy makers, and scholars. And the last slide....so, I really appreciate Finland that they really respect the teaching professions, the parents and the children. And then I think they should have the freedom to choose what to do, how to live, who to be and parents in this particular group add diversity really want to understand why...why there is non-stop testing and drilling and they want to be understood, their suffer, their children's suffer. And then is it possible to opt-out of all unnecessary test so that work together and discuss the policy interactively and let schools and parents act autonomously. Thank you.

Professor Stephen Chiu 1:28:12

Now we can invite the three panelists to be on the stage. And, to start our discussion. One thing that we have to be very clear is that we are not starting the Finland worship here. It’s not a conspiracy to establish a cult on the Finnish model. They must have done something right. They also have their own fair share of problems. The thing is that we learn from each other, and start to think about our own problem. The three cases here are very interesting, you line them up according to their PISA score, we are definitely on top. Finland has been on up and down, but close to the top. US is middle-ish, ok? But if you think about the amount of time, that our students put into their work, if you weighted it, you imagine it, we don’t want to compare schools to factories. But if you have three factories, one has a good output with a standard working hour, another one has a better output but with a lot of overtime work. Which one is the better factory? Which one is more productive? That’s something that we have to put into the context, and that Stephen also reminded us, you know, US is in the middle, but they have a very different society. I’m sure they may not have the kind of after school tutoring and exercises that we have to the extend we have in Hong Kong. So, again, weighted by the amount of work the students put in, they probably did it pretty well. So that’s the kind of thing we have to put in context when we think about our Hong Kong issues. Now there is not disguise that diversity has not, has their own position standardize testing, TSA, all that. So our panelists are speaking in one, a little bit more or less similar voice. That’s why we have invited people from the community from the profession that might have opinions on the matter. So I would like to invite people who might want to say something differently first, before I reword to some of the before speakers who might have other things to say. We have people from other parts of the world as well, and also other guests from Finalnd. Yes? K.T. I’m sure, I will be calling you pull yourself up. Professor K.T Hau from CUHK.

Professor K.T 1:31:13

Let me stick my hand out. First to Stephen, you advocated, attributed partly US work international performance to poverty. So apply the same logic, will China will even look much better, if poverty is taken in the consideration? Question 2…

Dr. Stephen Kreshen 1:31:32

Will China look much better if…(controlled with poverty?) Oh yea. Of course, everybody is gonna look much better if we control poverty. Everybody is gonna look even better if we get rid of poverty.

Professor K.T 1:31:46

(inaudible)…Question 2. We understand that, like, even Guangdong, which is doing very poorly in China, is participating 2015 PISA. So will you speculate, the result has not been out yet, speculate China like Guangdong, some of the weakest province in China, will be doing worse than US? Question 3. You and Esther…

Dr. Stephen Kreshen 1:32:15

I gotta keep track of these questions. (Ok.) How many do you have?

Professor K.T 1:32:25

No. No. No. Because a lot of people challenge that Shanghai is not representative. So China has 4 quarters participating. So will all those people who challenged China, Shanghai is not representative, will they speculate like Guangdong, some of the weakest part in China, will be…will be doing very poorly? Number 3. You and Esther…you and Esther actually quoted a lot PISA questionnaire, suggesting top achieving countries have low interest confidence. But a lot of researcher, OCED itself included, a recent research argued that .3 on a 4-point scale mean different things in different countries. So they are not comfortable. The recent study showed that poor reading performing countries, actually, lower, lower interest after adjusting the use of scale. Do you think, interest self (inaudible) across countries, can really be compared? That’s for Stephen. For Kristiina, Finland is doing quite well, and we heard, formally or informally, even from Finland government, that there is a good resistance from teachers and unions, in Finland, who resist educational reform. How do you comment on that?

Dr. Stephen Kreshen 1:33:54

Ok let me start on your point 33…(disrupted by Professor K.T)

Professor K.T 1:34:03

I have a few questions for Esther. (inaudible)… participant, from grade 8, 10 to 11, so it’s not a good tool to compare. It’s not presentative to take sample from group. You can never use PISA data as compare tool. PISA is a weak tool. There is no point to speculate the government the government can use that kind of data to compare. My knowledge from the (inaudible) director is that collecting student identifier is common in many developing countries. Because we can link their PISA performance to (inaudible), like their grade 6 or future, that’s a bonus, their university entrance exams for quality research. So the Hong Kong government is just doing what other developing countries are doing. Are we over entrance? Thank you.

Dr. Stephen Kreshen 1:35:02

Ok, I will start on point 87. Um. I’m very well aware the definition of poverty vary, even within country. Here in Hong Kong, for example, it’s a controversy whether you define poverty as anything beneath the median, versus what people can do outside of their schools, and you get different results. What you have to do in research, I think, is to look at the big picture. When you see the results that are the same, no matter how it’s defined, then you have something. The relationship between poverty and school performance, it varies, of course, depending on the measure, and the test, but it’s always there. People can say it’s small it’s large, but it’s always there. Not only that, the components of poverty, the consequences of poverty, hunger, lack of health care, lack of access to books, lead poisoning, those things are consistent everywhere. So yes, poverty is the big issue no matter where. Another piece of evidence that we can’t trust individual test scores, like PISA, let’s look at PIRLS. I have permission to talk about PIRLS, right? Let’s straight that out. You take a look at your handout. One more time. At the very end. I’m supporting your point, you can’t really trust individual test scores, individual definitions, but you have to look at the big pictures. Here’s an analysis of PIRLS, that questions my results. Ok? This is um, the result of virtual relationship I had with Kai-lo, who is in the first role, who brought me here this time. When we were looking at PIRLS scores, we found something very interesting. These are all countries: Hong Kong, Taiwan, Italy, Singapore that did very well on PIRLS. They did spectacularly well. In fact, Hong Kong was number 1 in the world. And these are all countries where poverty seems to be low, this is using the Human Development Index. And we found something very interesting. We compare these four countries, to other high scoring, low poverty countries. And we found that despite the high test scores, people didn’t like to read. The children didn’t like to read. Even worse, the parents didn’t like to read. Wow. What’s going on here? Well here is our conjecture. I love the word conjecture. I learnt this, again, from my son the Mathematician. Conjecture is when you have a hypothesis but you’re not sure it’s true. When people found counter evidence you can always say oh it’s a conjecture. Less responsible. So I call this conjecture. But it consists with the data that Esther put before us, absolutely. Our conjecture is this: you get a high pro score, the normal way, is by reading a lot. Pleasure reading. And this is what our research says everywhere. People read for pleasure do well on these tests, they can’t help it. They acquire the vocabularies. They acquire the grammatical structures, etc. But in these countries, they are taking alternative ways. They are not doing by self-selected reading, they are doing it through require reading, and through test preparation. Testing preparation is like putting a match of fire under the thermometer, and claiming you raised the temperature of the room. By giving students strategies for doing well on these tests. By tell them to look out for tricky questions. Telling them don’t turn two pages at once, back in the days when we use pages, etc. This is a problem. This is a very serious problem. We get high scores without real comprehends, which is dangerous cus’ it means the kids don’t like to read. When they become parents, they don’t like to read. And that means their real literacy level is not very high. So I am confirming your suspicious with this. This is something we really have to watch out for. In fact, despite low poverty, or high poverty, we can still get high scores: we cheat. And the push for high scores, as Esther pointed out, is going to lead this kind of false kind of achievement, which is going to be a disaster. That’s the result of taking these test scores too seriously. My college from the United States, Alfy Cone, has commented on this. He said the test scores should be reported by the media in the sports section. So yes, this should be taken in the consideration.

Professor Stephen Chiu 1:39:58

Ok. Kristiina?

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä 1:40:00

Oh. Well I’m trying to understand the question 97. You are commenting, or asking, if there is resistance for the educational reform by unions in Finland? Are you talking about the reform to come when we are getting a new curriculum in 2016? I didn’t quite get the point.

Professor K.T1:40:31

I think I informally heard that the Finland government are complaining that because of your good performance, outstanding performance, so teachers and unions are resisting to change.

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä1:40:43

Because we are so good?

Professor K.T1:40:45

It’s my impression for it.

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä1:40:51

Well. Maybe someone has got that opinion because he’s got the depression. But I think that…No. We recognize the need to um, do a reform. We are going to have a curriculum reform, to change, to concentrate more on, what do we call it? We have a reform on, that emphasize board base competencies and challenge of digitalization. So, somehow, we’d like to deal with digitalization. We are not saying that everything should be online but how do we live with the change in the world? And what does the school take account of what’s happening in your home of education? We can’t limit education anymore within the school buildings. Education is happening all the time. Already it’s happening all the time, everywhere. How come we deal with that within the Finnish system? So we are trying to incorporate that in our school program, and also, we are talking about board base competence. It’s not about separate subjects, anymore that much. We’d like to make more real life relevance to what’s taught in schools. And I think pretty much everybody is in favour of these changes, to my understanding.

Professor Esther Ho1:42:23

Which number is my question?

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä1:42:25

Um. I think something between 50 and 100.

Professor Esther Ho1:42:31

So, I think I get one important question about the identify individual school. So the rationale you tell me is that, given that other developing countries, developed country, do the same, we do it. So something like, when we make a decision on policy, the grantis 大勢所趨，人有我有。Just…it’s not a solid evidence. It’s not a good rationale to do it. So given the very successful PISA study, to keep it as a research, so keeping school identity confidential to individual school is very important. And um, as you said individual school, score, can’t be aggregated because it cut across so many different grade level, what does it use, for the government, to identify individual school? Giving the evidence of the experience of TSA, is even give us a mis-observation that if we move to this direction, it’s likely that PISA will become another high-stake testing. So I think as researcher, we would really want to keep our integrity, our promise to our secondary school, and we really want to keep it as a research, rather than a competition. That, the scenario of our student is worse enough. I don’t want to make it even worse.

Professor Stephen Chiu 1:44:16

Ok. We have one, two, three, four. I see. And um, Dr. Tong, are you going to…speak on how actually the,probablyTSA actually feedback to the learning process? How it’s been used productively, suppose? Ok. Um. Ok.

Audience #1 1:44:38

One question. In terms of... Hello? In terms of parent-child reading habit during early childhood within Hong Kong, what can we do, as researchers, educators, to promote an interest in pleasure reading within the home, given the short timespan the most working parents within Hong Kong, to promote consistent routines of parents-child reading out loud during early childhood? Thank you.

Professor Esther Ho1:45:13

But I have one data, I want to add. According to our PISA research, everyday you have 30 minutes of reading to the child, the kind of um, reading, word, science, problem solving will increase substantially and most significant. So how to make it happen?

Dr. Stephen Kreshen 1:45:37

Ok. Let me give two answers. First of all, with the research says, over and over again is thatfor the children who read more do better in everything. Just about, they get excited for books, they do larger vocabularies, etc. And it doesn’t matter where it happens. It can happen in school, as well as at home. In terms of at home, I want to tell you about one exciting project. It’s a group called Reach Out and Read. And they are just, you heard of them? They are absolutely wonderful. What they do is that they go to hospitals in high poverty areas, and they find children, families and they bring their children in for well child visits. It’s gotta be well child visit, if the child is sick it’s not gonna work, ok? In the emergency room, it’s not gonna work. When the parents and the children are in the waiting room, a member of Reach Out and Read comes and reads to the children, and talks a little to the parents about it. And pediatrician then gives the family one free book. They have published study, after study, after study. If you go to my web page, sdkrashen.com, I have a paper review of their research. Just a one book, once a year, closes the gap between reach and poor anywhere from 25% to 50%. If we gonna do it a little, it’s going to help. So I have two answers: do it a little, if you don’t have a lot. Parents and poverty. I’m so glad you said that, they are overwhelmed with responsibility. Some of them work two jobs, they just don’t have time. And life is tough. But even a little bit is going to help. And if you do it at school, it’s going to help even more. And if we make sure it happens in school and we are not doing test preps but we are reading stories, that would be fabulous. The work I done on read a loud, I look on all the literature on what happens if you pump it up and make it more effective. Like, let’s look and see how this word is spelled. Let’s look at this pronunciation. Do you know what this means? No. Stick to the stories. The most effective is when the parents and children get excited about the story, which means it has to be a story the parent likes. So that’s my answer. Hope it’s little helpful.

Professor Stephen Chiu 1:48:05

I think one of the PISA title is “Let’s read them a story”, right? There is one, um, PISA, OECD, issued by OECD, a PISA report, with the title “Let’s read them a story”. That highly emphasize the effect of early reading on child learning. Ok. So we have a couple of Finnish guests here. Who might want to…We want to finish off the Finnish discussion, perhaps before coming back from Hong Kong. Dr. Mika Tirronen, a diplomatic posted in Beijing by the Finnish government, who might want to tell us how is the Finland, the Finnish model is being perceived in China or some of his own experience being there.

Dr. Mika Tirronen 1:48:47

Thank you so much. Can you hear me? I just have to tell you at once that I love to be in Asia, In China, cus’ everywhere they come to us and say oh you are from Finland, Finland have PISA. Anyone can hear me? I was just telling um…Can you hear me now? I was just telling how much I love being here in Asia, and in China, in Hong Kong. That’s the thing, because PISA and this testing issue is so hot here. I really love this discussion; it is so important here. I remember when this PISA theory has started, even in Finland, I knew nothing about it actually. And I been to my son’s, my (inaudible) son’s, and I asked them that what is this PISA, can you tell me about it? Cus’ everyone is talking about it. Because in school we know nothing about it. And I asked them did you participated in this test, and they said no. I asked, I repeated this question a few years ago when I came to China, did you really make the test? Do you really, did you really make the test? No, they did not really. I think it tells us about the culture because it’s not really about (inaudible) to make any, any (inaudible) test. So we started to ask each other in Finland, why are we so successful in Finland? And we tried really hard to look for the answer. I think the answer is not within the classrooms, outside the classroom, (inaudible), it’s culture thing. It’s just education. Education does nothing so spectacular about education. It’s just um, you go to school and you make your scores and you come back home and then you have some cookies, and that’s it. I mean, it’s nothing. And Stephen was saying in here, you have welfare society, there is no poverty, you have equality, it’s a basic thing, you don’t about these thing. And it’s very interesting now that PISA, Finland, is calling down this PISA test. I also think that this is very natural because our system is so badly built up to, to this kind of competencies, competitions, I think. It’s not built up for competitions so it’s very natural to not call to do it, be so high anymore, because many other countries are doing better in this competitions. But I would to emphasize that, really um, those things that are not, cannot be tested. And as was said here, I think the example of the parents are giving in the family is very important. So if the parents love reading, love music, love things, the kids also learn to love those things. Otherwise, it’s no use. So this is um, basically what I’m having to say.

Professor Stephen Chiu 1:5155

Ok. Stuart first. Member of the Finncham Education Committee in Hong Kong. And then the gentleman at the back.

Stuart Patton 1:52:02 *(fragments of the audio were distorted by the sound of camera shutter)*

Ok. Thank you um. It is ok that I sit down? (Yes, sure.) I think one thing that we are pointing out is that, I think I’m that in 2016 curriculum (inaudible) in Finland, is that they are going to increase the hour of teachers spend on teaching art and craft. So things that children do, are going to be increased in (inaudible). (inaudible) in education, (inaudible) and computer, (inaudible), etc. (inaudible) is still very important for developing individual. And that is great. So I imagine, as Mikka said, eventually, Finland might come down in the small stem measurement test, but as a nation you will find (inaudible) innovation. And that is a true measure.

Professor Stephen Chiu 1:52:54

Ok. Gentleman at the back.

Audience #2 1:53:02

Hi. Thank you. I have a couple questions and a little comment. First the comment. I will be quick. About the US, um, can’t remember you name, fellow American friend, Stephen yea, kept speaking a certain crisis in education under pressure that destroying the quality of education, in a future tense. In Hong Kong is very much present tense, it’s already happening, it’s been happening for years. Really, we’re seeing kids jumping from buildings killing themselves, literally. Because they cannot stand the pressure. So (inaudible) speaking in present tense. The two questions, one is for Professor Ho, um, you listed a number of criticism of um, Hong Kong education. From something like 1985, 1996, 2002. I was interested to see that you didn’t mention the Education Bureau itself in 2000-ish very exciting and progressive educational reform plan. Um. Which, as far as I can see, has not been active, except maybe TSA which is introduced as a result of that plan. That plan stressed that we should not have quantitative test, we should not have pressure, and trilling, and cramming for students. What I see is that most of that test has been abandoned. We see that in (inaudible), from the EDP, and from the, the, Testing Authority now. In fact we don’t see that in the reality, in fact we see this continued high pressure, high stake, intensive testing and cramming, drilling that doesn’t give students anytime for what I would consider as real education. So I wonder, would you say that the 2000 educational reform plan has failed, and who should be blamed for that failure? Speaking of blaming for failure, sorry for bringing it up, we have some friends from the Testing Authority, sitting in the front roll. And I really have a burning question, because I watched the press conference a few weeks ago, in which, Mr. Tong, said that the TSA is actually research. That they are doing research. I want to know, be half of my daughter sitting next to me, do you get our consent to use my child as a research subject? Thank you.

Professor Stephen Chiu 1:55:33

The panel first? And then I guess C.S. will respond? Let’s give it…ah yes, C.S. first then. The mic is closer to you.

Dr. CS Tong 1:55:44

Thank you very much, Stephen. Can I just respond to that last bit first? Maybe, I should say that, I used to be a professor, in Mathematics. And I used to teach a course called “The misuse of statistics”. The book I used is Damn Lies in Statistics. Of course, last I look, they have not banned statistics from our curriculum. So there are always ways to misuse things. But I don’t think that’s the reason for um, um, um, not using certain useful tools. But I just heard about this suicide thing. I talked about this with scholars, and a professor in Cambridge sent me this article from World Psychiatry 2006 Global Suicide Rate Among Young People aged 15 to 19, in Finland, has 9.5 suicide out of 100,000, rank no. 22 in the world, much much higher than Japan, Hong Kong, or even Singapore, not Singapore, but Japan and Hong Kong. So I think when you talk about suicide, don’t jump to conclusion. It’s like Stephen’s comment earlier, when we read about sensational news story on newspaper, sometimes they exaggerate things, so when a teacher commit something wrong, it goes into the front page as if all teachers are morally corrupted. But when a politician does the same, maybe it’s in the sports page perhaps. So I think sometimes we have to change statistics and stories with a pitch of salt, we have to look at the big picture. And I totally agree with Professor Kreshen, that there are ways for misusing certain things. As policy makers, as educators, we have to be very careful. We have to avoid, unintended outcomes for policy or changes. But I was hoping that today, we will also try to understand, instead of avoiding the misuse of assessments and testing, are there any possible interests for assessments and testing? And I pretty sure there are, but unfortunately we have not been able to, um, spend too much time on that. But at least one thing we have done is the model of Finland. Now obviously, we are looking at the model because Finland has been considered a success in education, and what is that evidence of success? So far I’ve heard it’s doing very well in PISA. But again, if you think about it, an education policy takes time to have an impact. So the fact that Finland has done so well, in fact in ranked no. 1 in the first PISA in 2000 is presevered of the policies made in the 1980s. But everyone is now rushing to Finland asking the government of Finland what are you doing now, which will not only have an effect 15 years later. So if we look at the Finland model and say because of they are doing so well in PISA, we should learn from it. And by the same token, we have to learn from Hong Kong, because as we just saw from all those government video, Hong Kong runs above Finland. Sometimes we should understand we don’t cherry pick our statistics, we have to look at the big picture and try to identify things that work for students. And assessment testing can only play a certain part, a certain role. It is not the panacea for everything. If assessment has its role, then we as educators need to identify that role and try to make as effective use of it as we can but avoid unintended outcomes. That part I fully agree and we have to be very careful.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:00:16

C.S., while you have the mic, may be you can elaborate a little bit on how TSA information has been used productively, to feeback to school teaching and learning?

Audience #2 2:00:35

(inaudible), excuse me, you distorted the statistics, why don’t you ask your Finnish friend, is the overall suicide rates higher for adults? What’s the suicide rate for 12s and 13s year old, and please answer my question about the research subject. You accuse me of distorting statistics, you just massively distorted statistics and you need to be honest. Speak honestly, don’t lie and sneak around like the government always does here, please.

Professor C.S Tong 2:01:04

You asked me about research. I don’t know where that quote come from (it’s from you) I never said that TSA is a research. But what people said was, this year in the year 2016, there’ll be a chance to use the 50 schools try-out to do some research. It was never quoted for saying that TSA is the purpose for research. I don’t know who quoted it, or who reported it, or who misreported it. But that’s not important. What important is, TSA, just like any government or national testing is only a part of a monitoring of student performance. 20151 and that’s all there is to it. The more feedback we can provide with this statistic to the schools, to teachers, to educators, for example like what Prof. Ho has been doing to PISA, although PISA is not tie to schools, but she has been working very hard to try to extract information and learn from it and feedback to schools, feedback to educators, in the same way, we hope to do of course, to do the same TSA data. Of course we the HKEAA, as an organization to implement the TSA, we have not been asked to do any research of the TSA data, ok? That’s so much we can do.But I do agree that if we can make better use of data, that of course, we’ll be able to help teaching even more. But sometimes we have to make a balance. How do we make better use of data? One use is, to have data available to parents. To make data available to students, which is what people do elsewhere. But we have shied away from that, for the fear of another misuse of data. Because if you put data in the hands of parents, who knows what evil that could lead to? We don’t know. And we are not try to do that. So there are lots of things that we could do, we may not be doing at the moment. And I think there is always room for discussion and dialogue. So that’s what I’m saying.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:03:36

Kristiina? That’s for Kristiina? For Stephen.

Professor Stephen Kreshen 2:03:44

Let me try to aggregate the the size of your argument. I think this should be an empirical question: is it worth giving the TSA. This was my letter to the South China Morning Post, so it doesn’t get publish, I will tell you about it. we do know that grades, we have suggestive evidence that grades are pretty good predictor of future performance. So I recommend this requirement: anytime we want to give a test to all students, we must show that it is more valuable than grades. That’s not been done. That’s my recommendation for the next project. The problem is that do we need to give the test to everybody? In the United States to test everybody on all subjects all the time, so they’ll make more money. And I had pointed out when you go to the doctor, they don’t take all your blood, they take a sample and from the sample they can extrapolate the health of the patient. And I recommend the same policy on testing. Just look at the PISA and the PIRLS, they don’t give it to all students, the name...they don’t give it to all students, they give samples. And they are very good statistical for extrapolating from the sample for the population. I would recommend that as a research program, is it worth to give the TSA to all kids? Is it better than test? Are we better off, if we want to get a sample of how our kids are doing, are we better off giving it to a small sample, or simply, is it better than the PISA or the PIRLS? So how about that as settling some of these issues and possibly saving some money, time and stress.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:05:33

C.S. will tell you that we are exploring the possibility of um, sample test, version of the TSA.

Professor Stephen Kreshen 2:05:40

Actually you can take a sample that you have now. See it’s just, as good as the whole thing. You know you can do it again.

Professor Esther Ho 2:05:49

Just a very brief respond to gentleman’s question about educational reform. Actually the educational reform is like a storm, it’s very complicated. But the ultimate goal as stated in the original document is to raising our students, that they can learn to learn how to be a life-long learner. And the PISA data can really provide some tiny data to talk about whether this is a success or not. But we can’t say that success or fail, because in certain aspect, the kind of, the academic segregation is to reducing but not reduce enough. The um, the anxiety is still very high, but um, it reduced a little bit. So it’s, it’s really, we need a really comprehensive research to do it. And PISA do have the consent from parents and students to conduct the research. So let’s keep it as research.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:06:57

Kristiina, do you want to say anything about the suicide issue?

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä 2:07:04

Well. We are not perfect. I’m not an expert on that but I know we have some problems being a remote country with a lot of darkness and harsh weather. Life is very hard in Finland too, but maybe in different respect. So may I said we try to keep our school a pleasant place and not add to that pressure in schools. I’m not sure if um, I know we have a very high suicide rate but I’m not sure if it’s particular among young people. Perhaps it can’t be traced to schools, at least.

Professor Esther Ho 2:07:47

(Disrupted Professor Stephen Chiu’s inaudible speech) One point about Dr. Tong’s respond. Actually, our Hong Kong EAA never use, or abuse the data. They just collected the data, scientifically. And they never earn money from this assessment. So it’s very clear. But in addition to this TSA, to make it for further analysis, we must have the consent of parents and students, so, for sure.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:08:21

Um. Yes. Lady at the back. And then K.T., and Ip Kin Yuen. Do you need to shout?

Audience - Natalie 2:08:39

Hi. My name is Natalie. Nice to meet you all. Thank you so much for the sharing. I just have a few questions about the assessment kind of stuff. The PISA, the testing for competencies, which is very important to know whether a child will succeed in the future. But I think, you know, within each competency, isn’t there a huge spectrum of, say what creative means, what being innovated means, because, I grew up without knowing what I’m really good at, and I always imagine, day dream a lot all that kind of stuff. But, I know I’m creative but I’m not necessary good at drawing, no necessary good at design, but now that I worked in a real world, I realize that actually my creative comes from being able to connect different things, and being to see how synergies are related to each other. But then, how, but then, when I was a kid I felt I failed a lot of things because that was not the competency that was tested because when they said oh you have to be very good at English to be successful in life or be very good at reading to be successful in life, and actually I was very bad at linguistics, I was very bad at reading. And I feel like a lot of these assessments and, I mean these tests really demotivate these children because it pushes you into these silo of what you expected to be good at. And at the same time, in terms of these PISA tests, like who are the ones, I’m curious to know who are the one who created these tests because I feel that sometime adults think all of these are very good for children, but then, the children grew up in a age where the adults were grew up in, so then is it fair to use the adults’ assessment on what they think the children should be good at, when are, ultimately we want our kids to be successful, right? We want our kids to be happy in life. And for successful example is um, when asking about these leaders on what these competency leaders are, yes I know it’s very general, being creative, being communicative and all that stuff. But what exactly does that mean in a real world terms. And I’m just curious to find out is there a better way to assess, you know, competency without doing like PISA test? Is there something more quality? Is there something that we can put them in an environment and have them kinda go through more real world kind of examples etc?

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:11:01

I think the larger question is that what we have now today, perhaps we could have a few hours to talk to them. Yes. In the interest of economy of the time, we let our guests speak, and let the panelists round up a bit later. She is the founder of, rather an alternative entrepreneur school in Malaysia, maybe have some experience to share with us?

Anne Tham 2:11:35

Thank you very much. Actually for the platform for me to speak as well. Um. Yes. I just want to put a monkey ranch here. Because um, people are talking about um, in standardized assessments. My question is, why are we even spending so much time talking about it? If you really really look at what is going on in the university all over the world. I mean, universities don’t have standardized testing. Do we say that the university degrees do not have any worth? So that why we place standardized test as of such high value at primary or secondary level. Now I come from a country, if you’re talking, if Professor Stephen are talking about the United States, then we in Malaysia is doomed. You know. We started the same platform like Hong Kong or Singapore, you know, British colonial at the time. Our educational systems are on path. Over the past 50 years, we have dropped out into the 52 in the PISA rating. And you know what, honestly, my sister and I opened our own school and we don’t care. We don’t care what the PISA rating says. At the end of the day, um, I was teaching in the Canadian (inaudible) program, in the collage in (inaudible), in Malaysia. And the things were I love the program because it doesn’t have standardized testing. All the way from primary to university. And I know for a fact is that some of our students transferred to study, and migrated to Canada to study, they thriffe there. You know. So, why then we are so focus on it? Cus’ after all the universities there is no focus of standardize testing there, so we can entry to do it. In our school, we had to, we chose, we started the entrepreneur school, yes, we are doing the IGCSE curriculum. But that’s because if we don’t do it, the parents would not send their kids to us. But what we did is, yes, you have an exam, but why are we teaching tests and exams to get to be examined? You don’t have to. So we flipped everything around. We have so much fun with the kids, by the end of the day they do well in the exams. You know. So people ask, they wonder why, they have checkpoint in year 6, in year 9. We chose not to do it, as a school. Even though other international schools chosen it and that’s the point they are using it to sell the school. And we chose not to do it, we sell fun by it. You know. Parents are asking why are you not doing more on this subject, we make hip-hop compulsory now in primary school. You know. We make drama compulsory in primary school. So I absolutely love everything, all three on the panelists are talking about. And if you are talking about taking 15 years to actually get to see the result, no, it takes two years. That’s all it takes, 2 years, for you to actually see, whether you know, you switch out the exam based system, to actually see the results. There is knowing for it, that quantitative test to actually find out whether it works or not. You know, we are talking about quality, so talking about feelings, all you have to do is look at the children. That’s all. So yes. I love what you said. Thank you very much.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:15:00

K.T.?

Professor K.T 2:15:06

I have two brief points. First is that I think we have a wrong focus because if we want to change the system, we have to work on high-stake ones. So in Hong Kong in particular, we have to work on the high-stake secondary school placement system, which TSA does not serve this purpose. TSA is low stake or no stake system by design. Secondly, we talk about sampling. Around the world, start in around 1960s, US started with Nay project, which is a system level assessment. But now around the world, there is system level as well as lower level school feedback information system, like the Australian (inaudible)everywhere I think you can quote always that school system (inaudible) country level system, the other level is the school feedback that you monitor the kind of transmittable disease in the country as well as in every hospital as well as a school system. So separate what help to decrease the whatever pressure on the students if we just do the one level because there are always two level of monitoring.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:16:16

Ok. Kin-yuen? 好大聲啊你講嘢。

Ip Kin-yuen 2:16:23

Thank you. (largely inaudible due to the chitchat in the background) Dr. Tong of the testing authority, is here. And um, among us. So we can have open effect um, I think this is very important. On the contrary, I think I am quite disappointed that the Education Bureau, I think, is absent here? Oh. Very, very good. (inaudible) is very important, and we often wanted that kind of (inaudible). The second is, KT just said TSA is a low stake testing according to design. But just according to design. We all know that it has become a very high-stake assessment in reality. So that is the problem if we do not face this reality, we miss the point. The most important is to get things back to normal. That professionals are going to make use of the assessment as not professional teaching according or being dictated by the assessment. I think that is the most crucial thing. Two questions. One is for Stephen. Um. Stephen? The question is, um, I was told that um the United States are now so obsessed with testing because it has learnt from top scorer countries. For example, Hong Kong. I would like to confirm whether that is true, so we can be proud of ourselves. The second question is that, for Kristiina, that is the most important question, I would like to ask is that, when we are doing TSA in Hong Kong, one of the reason that the government people told us is that they need to accomplish the notion of accountability. Accountability. So do you have some of the needs, in your government, I know the Kristiina is an administrator with a profound educational background, so I think you are in a very important position to be asked whether you are statstify the system, the performance of the system. You are using the public money, you know, to finance the whole system. If the system is not going well. How are you going to do that? And how do you know that the national testing is for that purpose? So you just told us that you will have no national testing in your country. So how are you going to know, if (inaudible) is a way we might be able to some (inaudible). Thank you.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:19:45

Before I give the floor back to the panelists. Since we have a presentative from the EDB, I wonder if you want to…(From the background: No. No. I think it’s from the relevant department.) Ok. Ok. Then I will let the panelist round up a little bit. I know it’s a very very hot topic and we are not going to end the debate here.

Professor Stephen Kreshen 2:20:07

Now that I have the microphone…as to your question, I recommend a book, by Yong Zhao, it’s called Catching Up or Leading the Way. And his thesis is the United States, China is looking to do what United States used to do. United States is now wanting to do what China is used to do. So they are going the opposite direction. China is now looking at more entrepreneurship, creativity; and the United States are looking at more standardized testing. In terms of Americans going out to stay at other countries, they are only looking to find things that support their own position that will make more money. They are cherry picking. I want to go back to Natalie’s point, very important. A couple of things that take the rug out of all of us, the testing madness, the testing fever that we have. People are different. I don’t know if you noticed that. We are all very different. We have different talents. The goal of our life, as some people have said, is to discover your talents. School should help you do that. And as Natalie pointed out, what is valuable today will not be valuable five years from now, ten years from now. We don’t know the future. These people think they know. They don’t. All we can, all you can do, this is Yong Zhao again, is to help students to discover their talents or what they want to do in life, help them develop it and the world will find a use for it. School is a place to help you to discover who you are, and what you’re good at. And all these testing are categorizing people much too soon. Which is why I’m so impressed by the Finnish idea of giving kids time, to find out what the kids really are.

Dr. Kristiina Erkkilä 2:22:00

I think posted a tough question to capture, in a way, but I think the Finnish system sort of answers that. My friend here sort of captured that already. So we have to remember that the function of evaluation in Finland is to support, to development of education, and on the other hand the conditions of learning. So the whole purpose of evaluation is to support learning of a student. And I think who does best is the teachers who are very close by, and the other adults and themselves. We have a strong emphasis on self evaluation, and also evaluation by their peers and by their community, in a way, because we also engage the families and the parents participating the support of growing of the child. So we communicate with the parents. We have opened up all the results that the kid is getting in the school online. Shared on Blackboard, so even the child can reach him or herself, not all the information, of course. But the parents can reach all the results on time, real life time. And also all the teachers put all the information there, on the student portfolio. Everything thing is at available. So it’s not a big surprise when you get your report card at the end of that school year, what you are getting, because you are already be a part of that evaluation yourself. We do have national test, also. But they are not, they are sort of samples. Because some year we take um, all 6 graders will take a Mathematics test, nationally. And it gives back information on how the nation is doing, how our education is doing. We have that kind of things in grade of Maths, every now and then, it’s not always the same. The only thing that sort of, remains, is in the end of comprehensive education, and high school education, a (inaudible) exam before the university. That’s the only thing after the academic studies. And that’s what everybody know of, that sort publish. But we don’t publish, for example, PISA results by schools. We give it back to the school, as for them to work on it. They don’t publish it, anyway. It’s only the PISA result of Finland is published. But not the (inaudible). So, um, we have trust our educators and for our education system, unless we heard something different. I mean we don’t need to, we don’t need to get more accountability than that. If there is problem and we found out in them, we will make a way to support, or correct the thing. But of course, we are a small nation, and we share a lot of similar backgrounds. But we do everyday morning turing, in a way. That’s my answer. We are happy. We trust it.

Professor Stephen Kreshen 2:25:28

Just like we trust the Fire Department.

Professor Esther Ho 2:25:41

A brief respond to um, to the young lady, I’m really happy that you talk about competency as part of your life, that you have to survived. You are right. Not everything can be measureable, just like you mentioned that so many things that we cannot measure. So um, for the matter of measuring, it’s about a team of experts, like our Hong Kong EAA, that they really have good scholars to do it, and to do the trials and to do the main studies. If you are interested, we can talk about it later. And for the Malaysia lady, I totally agree. I write a book chapter about this area’s performance. Malaysia is taking it very easy. It’s part of your culture that you are so relaxed, that you won’t take…So that’s one scientific paper written by Margaret Grue, she also talked about the effort, when we face the examination, Chinese have the fever for so many years. So when we sit for the examination, we are doing it very seriously. We count the percentage of non-read items. Australia has a lot. I think it’s the same for Malaysia. So it’s like, they take it very relax. So don’t, just don’t rely on the single data to talk about the whole system. And then if, like um, if TSA is low stake or no stake, then how about take this unnecessary test no more, and then if you need to use that to do further research, let the parents have the consent, let them have the right to opt out. So we are going to join your NUT and Opt-Out movement.

Professor Stephen Chiu 2:27:37

Well, I’m sure that we can continue the discussion on and on. But time is short that we can not cover all the issues here. But I would let Cam to do a little bit of round up before we finish the event today.

Cam Cheung 2:27:53

Alright. Um. Sorry if you can just bare with me one moment, because there a bit of information that has not been able to tell you all. We have a member from the audience who is from the Asia Society actually have been doing something, their Centre of Global Education, they are doing something about global competence. Something measure something that we were talking about. It’s on an international level, which can be done in Hong Kong, maybe in the later stage. And they have actually kindly produced 50 copies of this. If you would like to see what this is about, pick one up. Thank you very much. It’s become a little bit of a heated debate. But the good thing about diversity is we respect different views. And we want these views to all come out in one platform and we respect each other’s views and come together as a solution maybe one day, but at least we know at other standpoint and I think it’s very important. So keep the respect, and keep the discussion going on and we hope we have some more discussion like this in the future. Thank you very much.