

18.1.2025

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Title

The general education initiative in Hong Kong : organized contradictions and emerging tensions

Publication year

2012

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education. - 64 (2012) 2, S. 193 - 206

Inventory number

32719

Keywords

Ausland : Hongkong : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Ausland : Hongkong : Studentenschaft, Studium, Lehre

Abstract

In 2012 all Hong Kong universities will be extending the length of the undergraduate degree from 3 to 4 years and adding General Education as a degree requirement. This reform initiative represents a unique case of comprehensive organizational change of higher education on an unprecedented scale. This paper examines several of the most significant contradictions and tensions facing this initiative?the current structure of higher education based on the British system and the prevailing culture of teaching and learning in Hong Kong. The nature of these pre-existing conditions, and their contradictory relationship to the substance and purpose of general and liberal education, are outlined. The contradictions and tensions generated by the general education initiative are situated within the larger organizational tension between theory and practice, and structure and action. The paper delineates some of the strategies developed to address the existing and emerging tensions. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Jaffee, David, E-Mail: djaffee@unf.edu