



Exploring Educational Psychology: **A Study Tour and Career Exploration**

In December 2016, 25 psychology students from City University of Hong Kong kicked off the semester break with a five-day study tour to Tokyo, Japan, exploring the field of Educational Psychology and childcare services. The study tour from 18 December to 22 December, aimed at enhancing students' understanding of the

development and job features of Educational Psychology in Japan. The study tour was supported by the Career and Leadership Fund of the Student Development Services (SDS), the Department of Applied Social Sciences, Dr Anna Hui and Dr Vivien Chan.



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SS² on-line : <http://www.cityu.edu.hk/ss/newsletter>

Students

The study tour consisted of three parts: pre-trip activities, Tokyo study tour and job shadowing. Job shadowing in non-government organisations was held in late May and June 2017.

Pre-trip Activities:

Students attended a seminar on Educational Psychology and a Japanese Workshop before the departure. The seminar was delivered by two Educational Psychologists: Mr William Ma and Ms Eva Chan and gave students an idea of what it is like to be an Educational Psychologist in Hong Kong. It introduced some existing support offered to Special Education Needs students. The Japanese Workshop was run by a CityU student minoring in Japanese Studies. It equipped participants for the study tour, with students learning basic Japanese for daily communication and the Japanese culture. To maximise students' learning experience, they were also asked to do some research on early childhood education and the educational institutions we would visit.

Tokyo Study Tour:

During the study tour, students visited four educational institutions providing early childhood education and special education. In order to understand the overall situation of early education in Japan, the students first visited the Center for Early Childhood Development, Education and Policy Research,



a project-based center at Tokyo University. Both the staff at the center and the students gave presentations on early education policy in Japan and Hong Kong respectively. Throughout the discussion section of this visit, the staff and the students inspired each other. During the other two days, students visited different schools, including Aikyo Yogo SEN School, the School for the Mentally Challenged at Otsuka under the University of Tsukuba and the Fuji Kindergarten. The former two schools provide education to early and primary students with special education needs, while the third provides early childhood education. By visiting different educational institutions, CityU students gained hands-on experience in implementing theories and research findings in an educational setting and had a chance to interact with both the staff and local students.



LIM Hanna Suchanya, a Year 3 Psychology major student

As one of the presenters, I gained a greater insight into Hong Kong's kindergarten situation. I was not aware of how competitive and controversial a discussion topic it is. I benefited a great deal from talking to other students on the tour as well as the debriefing session on the last night. I was able to explore Educational Psychology in a more practical and engaging way. I got to witness how various psychological theories like Erikson's Stages of Development Theory was applied to the Aiiiku Yogo Special Needs School and how the teaching system at the School for the Mentally Challenged at Otsuka, University of Tsukuba incorporated Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development. It was eye-opening to see how these psychological theories were applied to real-life situations. Thus, I have obtained an appreciation for Educational Psychology, which I would not have acquired any other way.



Law Yuen Sun, a Year 3 Psychology major student

During our visit at Tokyo University, we engaged in an informational and interactive discussion session about the current situation of the education systems in Hong Kong and Japan. Through the discussion, I was able to see the similarities and differences between the two systems. Schools in Japan seem to be one step ahead in terms of the progress of inclusive education and people's attitudes towards it. However, professional help from psychologists is obviously in short supply. Teachers who do not receive extra professional training in Educational Psychology are under great pressure dealing with students with special needs. As a result, while students with special needs are apparently 'included' in the normal education, they are facing a lot of difficulties due to insufficient support.



CityU students had a campus tour of the Aiiiku Yogo Special Needs School (picture on the top), and attended a presentation by the school principal (picture at the bottom)



CityU students are presenting about early education policy in Hong Kong at the Center for Early Childhood Development, Education, and Policy Research, a project-based center at the Tokyo University.



CityU Psychology major students, Dr. Vivien Chan, Ms. Eva Chan (Educational Psychologist), and the School Principal of the Fuji Kindergarten, Mr. Kato

CHEN Yanyu, a Year 2 Psychology major student

After visiting three education agencies, we found that there were many teaching methods in Japan for kids with special education needs that we can bring back to Hong Kong. It's hard to say that the coping system for special education needs in Japan is much better than Hong Kong, though. As we only visited three agencies and it was impossible for us to see all the advantages and disadvantages of the system in Japan. This study tour not only helped me learn more about Educational Psychology, it also helped me clarify my career plans. I also realised that different areas of Psychology can be integrated through many connections, which is great for my further studies in Psychology.

Pang Kin Jerry, a Year 3 Psychology major student

On the third day, we visited another kindergarten which has a really beautiful environment and designed by a famous architect who designed the logos of 7-11 and Uniqlo. Basically it looks like a UFO with a rounded shape and classrooms are not separated by walls. Their idea of childhood education is very similar to Aiiiku Yogo SEN School in that the school environment is filled with elements that allow children to engage in free play, exploration, and interacting with others and the environment. The Principal has unique ideas on the design of the school environment and childhood education. For instance, he decided not to make the ground flat so that when children run on the lawn it wobbles, so that they could learn that life is about keeping a balance. I, as a Psychology student, was always thinking about evidence and science. Although he possesses fantastic ideas and interprets those ideas well, I would hope to see empirical evidence that supports his ideas.



Animals in our Society

By Dr. Rebecca W.Y. Wong, Assistant Professor in the SS department. Her primary research interests are in the fields of green criminology with a specific focus on illegal endangered wildlife trade in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Perhaps the majority of us have seen guide dogs in training, they are trained 'to be seen and not to be heard'. It is difficult (at least I personally find it so) not to stare at the adorable and obedient Labrador (or Golden Retrievers or sometimes German Shepherds) in their little red training vests walking along the MTR platform. The history of using dogs as service dogs originated in World War I, when blinded soldiers were returning home from war as a result of poison gas. The first training school for dogs opened in 1916 in Germany. Guide dogs do not only serve as a pair of eyes for the sight-impaired users, but also as their friend and loyal companion, as pet owners can easily imagine. A pet is more than an animal, it is our partner, our support and most importantly, a family member.

Clearly, not everyone shares these sentiments for animals, as is reflected in the statistics on animal abuse. The latest statistics published by the Society of the Prevention of Cruelty Animals (SPCA) recorded 1,006 complaints of cruelty, with 29 prosecutions in 2012-2013. This is tip of an iceberg, since many incidents of animal abuse are never reported or discovered. Abuse of stray animals is difficult to detect for a number of reasons: (1) they happened in the private homes of pet owners and (2) stray animals are the most vulnerable, since no one will discover these crimes unless a responsible adult is present and (3) there is inadequate knowledge of animal welfare in Hong Kong.

So, what is animal abuse? Under Section 3 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Chapter 169), cruelty against animals is broadly defined as actions (including but not limited to acts of violence, neglect, abandonment and aggression) which causes unnecessary suffering to the animal. Some real-life examples of animal abuses in Hong Kong include a small kitten that was found to have had masking tape wrapped around

its abdomen, which led to blood and fur loss in October 2015 (the case is still being investigated) and a man was sentenced to three months imprisonment for raising 102 dogs and 34 cats in an 800-square feet flat filled with animal urine and faeces in May 2015.

One of the most common forms of overlook acts of cruelty against animals in Hong Kong is abandonment. In 2014-2015, over 4,400 companion animals were collected by the SPCA.

Many of these animals were given new homes by the SPCA via their adoption programme. Abandoning your pet may not necessarily bring physical harm to the animal but it will certainly have a negative impact on the animals' mental wellbeing. The matter is not simply resolved by 'giving' it to an animal shelter, not all animals are fitted for adoption and some have to be put down. Furthermore, Hong Kong still lacks a general awareness on the importance of adopting animals and some people may still choose to purchase an animal from a pet shop instead of giving an abandoned animal a second chance.

The message which this short piece aims to send is simple: we all want to live in a safe environment and so do (domesticated or stray) animals in Hong Kong. For me, the bottom line is: even if you do not like them, you do not have to harm them.



This is Dr. Rebecca Wong's cat. He was a stray cat until Rebecca found him in North Point and took him in. Ever since he is Rebecca's best buddy.

Introducing CYEP at the CityU Employers' Luncheon 2017



(From the right Dr Tim WONG (Director of SDS), VA of CYEP: Tabia LUI, Julianne Nicole DIONISIO, Kristy CHAN, Daphne HO; Dr Allen Zeman (Chairman of Lan Kwai Fong Group), Dr Elaine AU (Convenor of CYEP), Prof. Horace IP (Vice-President of Student Affairs)

The CityU Employers' Luncheon was held on 16 March. More than 500 participants attended, including over 300 senior management representatives from reputable employers from a wide spectrum of industries and fields. Now in its third year, the luncheon also featured an exhibition displaying students' excellent achievements.

As a service-Learning project under SS serving the whole university, City-Youth Empowerment Project (CYEP) represented our department and college to showcase the achievements

and growing numbers of student volunteers in the luncheon exhibition. It was a golden opportunity to let the key stakeholders of CityU appreciate how the students are developing themselves through the processes of serving and learning, and transforming those experiences into vital qualities, not only to become an ideal graduate and a responsible employee, but also a complete human being.

CYEP's exhibition showcased the project's characteristics, such as the key statistics, the diversity of the people serving,

personal reflections by volunteers, service recipients and the like. The Volunteer Ambassadors (VA) took the initiative to greet the guests and shared what they had learned from the experience of volunteering .

According to four of the Volunteer Ambassadors, talking about their CYEP and their genuine stories of volunteering in front of the employers and academics was a very new experience for them. In the role of VA, they always made an effort to promote the project, but this was the first time for them to promote it beyond the university. They took pride in representing the projects and let the guests see the potential of CityU students.

Words from Daphne Ho (Volunteer Ambassador of CYEP, 2016-17)

“As one of the students who is responsible for presenting the service-learning project, City-Youth Empowerment Project, I am thankful for being given the opportunity of interacting with Dr Allan Zeman, other employers and academics. Not only have I learnt more about the key to success in job interviews from employers, but I also gained an insight in the importance of upholding the ‘can-do’ spirit in making the ‘impossible’ possible.”

Words from Kristy Chan (Volunteer Ambassador of CYEP, 2016-17)

“As a Volunteer Ambassador, from time to time I look for opportunities to introduce the City-Youth Empowerment Project (CYEP) to others. It is my honour to get this valuable chance to show employers our efforts in serving the community. In this luncheon, I am delighted to talk about my positive changes to the employers and benefit from the feedback they gave me in return. Lastly, I am glad to meet some employers who are passionate about volunteering too.”



Kristy Chan and Daphne Ho, Volunteer Ambassadors of CYEP, 2016-17, introduced the project to our honourable guest, Dr. Allan Zeman, Chairman of Lan Kwai Fong Group and a holder of an honorary doctorate from CityU. He showed great interest in the project and was impressed by what they had to say.

Message from Head

We are very pleased to be able to tell you that Dr Oliver Chan has been selected as the recipient of the CLASS New Research Award 2017 in recognition of his research accomplishments and contributions to the professional community. Our department will continue to strive for research excellence and contributions to society.

Also, we congratulate our social work alumna, Ms Leung Yan Hong, for receiving the 2016 China's Top Ten Social Workers Award. After graduating from SS in Social Work, she continued her career supervising social workers serving the elderly in Wuxi, China. In 2012, she set up the Wuxi Liang Yan Hong Social Work Service Studio, which was the first social service studio registered under a personal name in China. Ms Leung also received the 2014 China's Most Beautiful Social Worker Award, and the 2015 China Top 100 Social Workers Award in recognition of her achievements.

The SS department is concerned about international issues. We will organise an international symposium to discuss the problems of transnational organised crime and corruption in the context of 'One Belt – One Road' (OBOR) on 22-24 June 2017. The symposium will focus on whether the launch of OBOR will be accompanied by the rise of a new 'Silk Road' of organised crime.

The SS department also co-organized an international joint conference, entitled Professional Counsellors Add Values to Educational, Social, Medical and Commercial Sectors, with the Hong Kong Professional Counselling Association (HKPCA) and the Hong Kong Association for School Discipline and Counselling Teachers (HKDCA) on 2 June. Our colleague Dr Annis Fung, the President of HKPCA, ran the conference. The conference has around 250 participants. The conference aims to raise the awareness of the public and prospective employers about the

growing importance of professional counselling across a great variety of sectors in society.

The SS department also held a conference on Innovations in Social Work Practice with Columbia University on 6-7 June 2017 at CityU. Four international guest speakers from Columbia University and faculty from SS will present their work in the open seminar addressing social issues related to aging, mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence. This conference created a new opportunity for local professionals to share their experience from the local Hong Kong context with international scholars and to foster the integration of research and clinical practice into professional practice.

Prof Wing Lo
Head
Department of Applied Social Sciences

