



The same ... or different?

'Comparing Early Years Practice in China and England'

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The same or different: A comparative study of preschool provision in England and China

25 visits to 18 different settings in PRC

What?

Ongoing research over 5 years:
using an ethnomethodological to
include a small Case Study
Approach using Thematic
Analysis

Why? -

Globalisation - greater
understanding of China

Opportunity to engage in shared
dialogue

Greater awareness of
different EY perspectives



Significant points to be considered

- Between 2000 - 2006 - China's GDP increased by 100+%, resulting in
- Similar increase in people's disposable income - a new emerging middle class
- Developing need for early years provision with an increase of 60+% in growth in private early years provision (WGM 2006)

Early Years:

Some of the emerging issues

- National focus on preschool provision; developmentally and culturally appropriate - Human Capital influence (2-5 years - kindergarten - non statutory)
- Need for **massive** growth in kindergarten provision (decrease in public/increase in private provision - marketisation)
- New 'middle' class - value placed on Western styles of education
- The recognition in 2010 of English as the official 2nd language and the desire for bilingual kindergartens
- The importance placed on Academic Achievement (how does this fit in with EY pedagogical approaches?)
- One child policy and impact on
 - behaviour: 4-2-1 syndrome (Little emperors syndrome);
 - Future employability - 'no single children' to apply (Cameron et al 2013)
Seen as more self-centred, less co-operative, risk-averse

General Comparisons (MoE; NBSC; DfE):

CHINA (MOE; NBSC)

- **64,000,000** children aged 0-4 yrs
- Preschool/kindergarten starts from 3yrs; fee-paying
- 9 years of compulsory education:
- School starting age 6 years
- **341,600** primary schools

UK (DFE, 2014)

- **3,914.000** children aged 0-4 yrs (**700,000** preschool children aged 3-5 yrs)
- Nursery/Preschool starts from birth; 5 sessions funded per week from 2-3y (DfE)
- 12 years (..13) years of compulsory education
- School starting age 5 years
- **16,971** primary schools

Significant difference between cities (megalopolis-es) and rural areas

...to north?" asked Wang...
...Garden residential...
...about 5 km away...
...planned site...
...as those living in Pa...

The agreement will be...
made public later this month...
according to Xu Shou, an expert...
involved in the environmental...
assessment.

"The garbage treatment...
project is very sensitive. We...
cannot between government...
authorities, environmental...
experts and the public," said...
Tan Yinghua, Party secretary...
of Panyu district.

"From now on, we will start...
from the beginning for garbage...
but the project aroused a...
huge protest from the public...
with hundreds of local residents...
protesting at Guangzhou govern-...
ment office buildings last...
month, demanding suspension...
of the plant due to environmen-...
tal and health concerns.

"Following the public protest...
we have realized the handling...
of garbage is of crucial impor-...
tance to people's life and envi-...
ronment," Tan said.

A debate about the project...
among the public that will last...
six months was launched last...
Thursday, Tan said.

Students often'

...and a dozen other...
carry the homemade...
braziers to class and place them...
under their legs for heating...
If the braziers are...
empty food or paint...
cans, holding pieces of...
charcoal that burn slowly...
to blow air into the braziers...
to keep the coal...
burning between classes, elder...
teachers blowing the braziers in...
to keep the fires from...
going out.

...in the classroom...
cold at all, and I'm...
of cold weather,"...
said a first-grade student...
at a primary school, though...
his fingers are notice-

...temperature in the vil-...
lage is lower than -10...
degrees Celsius, locals said...
...the freezing air...
...children, aged 6 to 14...
...their difficulties...
...the scarcity of...
...trees and poor...
...furnaces stam out...
...electricity.

...classroom sits...
...students from...
...two, four and six...
...grades must...
...travel to another...
...facilities and...
...which is 30...
...km from Yunfeng...
...township school.

...just two planks of wood on top...
of four sticks.

The classroom has no light...
fixtures in the classroom that...
smells of burning charcoal.

"On average, I can teach...
each one of the four grades no...
more than one hour per day...
When several of them are lis-

...take exams," Chen said.

A one-hour lecture is by no...
means enough, Chen said.

"I can't provide proper les-...
sons and a systematic education...
to them all by myself," he said.

He once suggested to the...
headmaster of the Nongba...
township school, which sits at

...schools, to mobilize other full-...
time teachers to assist him.

But he was turned down...
possibly because the students...
from the remote village...
rarely rank admission to the...
higher key middle schools...
Chen said.

"Forgotten by local educa-

...where telecommunication is...
shut down, and the living stan-...
dard plummets - not to mention...
no entertainment activities,"...
Chen said.

Chen, who is from neighbor-...
ing Jiangkou township, has...
been teaching for two and a...
half years at the school. He

...in a bedroom upstairs.

"It is the pupils' eagerness...
and resolve to learn against all...
hardships that keeps me stay-...
ing here," Chen said.

His docile students know...
very well that retaining a...
teacher is not easy, Chen said.

"Aspirations for a better life...
through education make them



A group of children from a mountain village of Chongqing municipality carry makeshift braziers to fight the cold last month.

The cultural impact - some observations



Chinese and English preschool curricula compared:

No statutory curriculum.
Chinese kindergarten curriculum guidance (non statutory) was introduced in 2001 by the ministry of education (MOE) suggesting 5 curriculum areas

China

- Health
- Social
- Art
- Language
- Science



... Compared to the 7 areas of the English 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) preschool curriculum introduced in 2012 (DfE).

England

- Personal, Social and Emotional
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Primary data collected through:

- **Observations** of - ' a day in the life' at each setting (ethnographic)
- **Photographs**
- **Videos** and
- **Interviews** with range of staff - thematic analysis (3 themes arose)
 - Training and status
 - Parental expectations and impact on the curriculum
 - Planning

Ethical considerations

This included :

- Informed consent
- Openness and honesty
- Right to withdraw
- Protection from harm
- Debriefing
- Confidentiality

■ But I also had to be aware of the impact of:

- Language (interpretation)
- Culture
- Politics

Listening to the child

是



Wěi Yes

没有



Bù No

Initial observations of kindergarten provision:

- Size of the preschools/kindergartens - 250 is small - visited 1000+ place setting; Mix of government and private
 - Boarding facilities in a number of government settings
 - The curriculum includes many opportunities that encourage children to develop a pride in their country and their culture (Social based on Confucian philosophy);
 - Concept of creativity; provision is significantly adult-led rather than child-directed with a focus on traditional arts such as dancing and painting - very much reflected in wonderful displays in most settings
 - The daily routine includes 2 hours outdoor exercise and 2 hours sleep
 - Focus on professional development - (quality of this?)
 - The influence of western pedagogical approaches observed: such as Gardner and Montessori in a number of the settings visited
 - Similar issues to those in the UK regarding the status, and pay, of staff working within the early years.
- '9 in 10 kindergarten teachers unqualified' (China Daily 2011)



Key themes arising

- Implementation of appropriate curriculum (impact of parental/family expectations on this)
- Developing a professional workforce, with 1,570,756 staff employed in the EY sector - 75% of whom have not achieved a basic education (UNICEF 2011): Diversity in staff training.
- The impact of marketisation and neo-liberal policy
 - decrease in public provision/increase in private
 - quality dependent on ability to pay?

Areas for further investigation ...

- The emerging early years professional
- Exploring the effectiveness of early bilingual experiences
- What can be learned from the Confucian approach
- Emerging findings into the impact of the 'one child' policy as the first generation enter the workforce

Some of the kindergartens visited



Montessori influence (Public)



Reggio influence (Private)





English Everyday

启明幼儿园周活动安排
Venus Kindergarten Weekly Plan

日期: 12月 星期: 星期二 主题: My Christmas Present 教师: Belle
日期: 12月11-13日 教师: 沈丽心 教师: 王少文

课程名称 Workforce	课程名称 My Christmas Present 我的圣诞礼物
课程目标 Health, Life, Discipline	课程目标 (I) you to what, 提高英语听说能力
学习内容 Learning Activities	学习内容 Vocabulary: eat, drink, Christmas card Sentence: 'Who will help me?' Song: Chant: 'Mix a Parakeet' 混色动物
家园互动 Parental Support and Co-operation	家园互动 Please help your kids to become familiar with the roles and the plot in the story of My Christmas Present. Thanks for your support and cooperation! 请帮助您的孩子熟悉故事的角色和基本的故事情节。感谢您的支持与配合!

English Teaching Plan

(供英文教师参考)

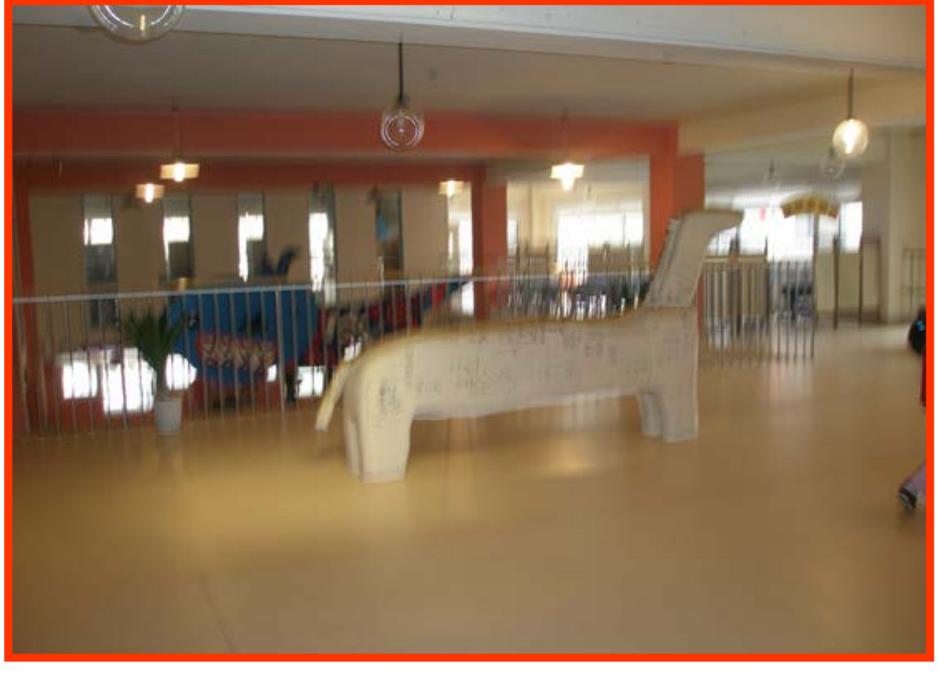
Date: Dec. 11~Dec. 13 日期: 12月11-13日	Class: Sun-C 班级: 太阳C	Teacher: Lucy 教师: 王少文
Review (复习串起及重点)	My Christmas Present 我的圣诞礼物	
Vocabulary (词汇)	Sent: Little and lion pig duck cat 圣诞老人、小企鹅、小猫、小鸭子、小猪	
Sentence (句型)	I'll make a parakeet for the party. 我要为圣诞节做一个小鸟。	
Song/Chant (歌曲/歌)	Mix a Parakeet	
Dialogue (日常生活用语)	It's a raining day. What do you need? I need an umbrella. 下雨天, 你需要什么? 我需要雨伞。	
Game (游戏)	Role Play 角色扮演	
Parents' support and cooperation (家园共育)	We need to do more work this week. Please help your kids to get used to the roles and the plot in the story of My Christmas Present at the same time. Thanks for your support and cooperation! 本周我们需要做更多的工作。请帮助您的孩子熟悉故事的角色和基本的故事情节。感谢您的支持与配合!	

家园互动

宝宝秀场

and Tell

Little Star





The Robot Story:

Once upon a time, there was a people and a robot. Giraffe and robots fighting with a dog. The dog said "woof, woof." to the robot. The lamb chased the dog, and the dog chased the giraffe, and the giraffe chased the robot. The robot chased the leopard. The dog threw the robot. So the mommy robot said "No throwing robots!" So the dog threw the lamb, and the lamb said "woof woof!" for the dog. The robot say "Don't chase the lamb."

The End.

Collaborative story narrated by: Ruth Ripley, Jason, Hugh, Hilda, Lucy, Marcus, Lillian, Mila, Manon, Angelina, Iris and Fei Fei.

Case Study Setting



Impact on Teaching and Learning:

"I hear I forget, I see I remember, I do I understand" (Confucius)

The opportunity to spend time travelling and observing children in such a different country to my own has been stimulating whilst the importance of research for my students has been reinforced. In addition to developing my own knowledge and understanding of early years provision in China, my observations on cultural differences has permeated many aspects of my teaching and learning, not least discussions on diversity and the implication of globalisation for early years workers.

The chance to become immersed in another culture, visiting, observing and discussing shared issues around/concerning different aspects of early years provision in China cannot be over-emphasised. Tina Bruce (1991) talks about giving children the opportunity and time to 'wallow' in ideas and feelings in order to make sense of what they are experiencing; this has given me the opportunity and time to 'wallow' in another culture and reflect upon what I have seen, making links with what I already know and begin to expand and develop my ideas, feelings and relationships.

A resulting residential to Beijing in 2012 was 'life changing' for the students



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