

Senior secondary curriculum reform: The human costs of Liberal Studies in Hong Kong

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Liberal Studies, a new compulsory subject, is probably the most important initiative of the senior secondary curriculum reform implemented in Hong Kong in 2009. This paper reports the findings of a qualitative study which reveals the human costs involved in the preparation and implementation of the subject by schools and teachers from 2006 to 2009. It is found that the implementation of this compulsory subject was very costly, in particular the task cost, social cost and psychological cost. Teachers found putting this new subject into practice is a very difficult task as it demanded much effort and time. The new subject also led to changes in the structure of staffing in schools. Many teachers has to teach a new subject, hence affected their self-confidence and created subject identity crisis. At present stage, it is not sure whether this curriculum change will achieve the ambitious goals. But it definitely demands huge cost. To teachers and schools, this is a huge challenge and the sustainability of the change is questionable.

Keywords: senior secondary curriculum, curriculum reform, liberal studies, human cost

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