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Cover Story

Private Tutoring: Out of the Shadows, Into the Limelight

Students

Summer Placements



Faculty of **Education**
The University of Hong Kong



Faculty of Education, HKU



Private Tutoring: Out of the Shadows, Into the Limelight

Private supplementary tutoring, widely known as shadow education, has become a global phenomenon – and The University of Hong Kong (HKU) is the world leader in research on the subject. That status chiefly reflects the work of Professor Mark Bray and his team. Professor Bray is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Chair Professor in Comparative Education, and Director of the Faculty's Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC).

"Shadow education has that label because it mimics regular schooling," explains Professor Bray. "When the curriculum changes in the schools, so it changes in the shadow." He adds that, historically, shadow education was mainly an East Asian phenomenon but that it is becoming universal. "Supplementary tutoring has become a fact of daily life for huge numbers of children in both rich and poor countries."

The trend began in South Korea, which still leads the way with over 80 per cent of elementary school children receiving some kind of shadow education. Other parts of Asia are not far behind. In Hong Kong, where the faces of "star tutors" are a familiar sight emblazoned on the sides of buses, the market value of the secondary school tutoring industry in 2014-15 was estimated at HK\$2.7 billion according to market research group Ipsos, up from HK\$1.9 billion in 2009-10.

The research team led by Professor Bray found that 70 per cent of senior secondary students receive tutoring. "And that's across the board," he says. "Our research shows that there is as much tutoring for students in international schools as in local schools."

Patterns are similar in lower-income countries. In India's West Bengal state, 73 per cent of primary school children receive shadow education; and among grade 10 students in Sri Lanka, the figure is 92 per cent. Cambodian research

led by Professor Bray showed 90 per cent of sampled Grade 12 students receiving tutoring.

Initial Investigation

Professor Bray developed an interest in the topic during the 1990s when he was asked by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to review household costs on education in nine Southeast Asian countries and noticed the large amounts spent on tutoring. Further investigations led to his 1999 book, *The Shadow Education System: Private Tutoring and its Implications for Planners*. He recalls that the book "sparked interest within Asia; but elsewhere the response was 'Well that's very interesting; but that's Asia, it's not us'."

Ten years later, his sequel *Confronting the Shadow Education System: What Government Policies for What Private Tutoring?* (2009) gained the response "Now this is us." Professor Bray was in Paris at the time, having taken four years leave (2006-2010) from HKU to work as Director of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). The book has now been published in 20 languages: Arabic, Armenian, Azeri, Bangla, Chinese, English, Farsi, French, Georgian, Hindi, Kannada, Korean, Mongolian, Nepali, Polish, Portuguese, Sinhala, Spanish, Urdu and Uzbek. The translations in so many languages reflect not just the quality of the book but also the spread of countries where extra tutoring has become an issue.

In 2011 the European Commission, having seen the global book, asked Professor Bray to prepare a European study. His report was entitled *The Challenge of Shadow Education: Private Tutoring and its Implications for Policy Makers in Europe*. "Part of the message was 'Wake up: shadow education is on its way!'" says Professor Bray. "We wanted policy makers to know what was about to hit them, and how deeply it would penetrate society."



More books followed, namely a 2012 regional overview for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) co-published by CERC and now translated into Chinese, Vietnamese and Russian (see page 13); a 2013 edited book on countries bordering the Mediterranean published by Sense; a 2014 comparative study of regulations for shadow education in Asia co-published by CERC and UNESCO now translated into Chinese and Korean (see page 13); and a 2015 volume about methods for researching shadow education co-published by CERC and Springer (see page 13).

At the time of the 1999 book, Professor Bray had one PhD student working on the theme, Percy Kwok, who graduated with a Hong Kong study in 2001. Since then, Zhang Wei has graduated with a PhD about shadow education in Chongqing (China), and William Brehm has graduated with a thesis about Cambodia.

Now the CERC shadow education team has seven PhD students, focusing on Bangladesh, China (three students), Eritrea, Georgia and Hong Kong; and later this year they will be joined by a student focusing on India. Several have direct experience not just as consumers but also as suppliers of shadow education. Li Wenjian has been running tutoring companies in China; and Kevin Yung has been a star tutor in Hong Kong. Zhang Wei moved on to a postdoctoral fellowship, expanding her focus to Shanghai and then to Cambodia and Japan; and she has joined Professor Bray in supervising Master of Education (MEd) dissertations on the topic.

The HKU team also regularly welcomes visitors. One recent guest was Vít Štastný from Charles University in Prague. Vít was in his fourth year of PhD studies, and among only a handful of researchers in the Czech Republic working on this theme. Another visitor was Christina Ho from the University of Technology Sydney, who is looking at shadow education in Chinese-Australian cultures.

Changes to Policy

The logical next question is whether, in addition to the academic interest, this research is influencing government policy. Professor Bray replies affirmatively, highlighting his links with UNESCO. Shadow education now features regularly in UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Reports, and was highlighted in a 2015 UNESCO sequel to the 1996 Delors Report, entitled *Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?* Through UNESCO channels the research and associated policy guidelines reach Ministers of Education and their educational planners.

Another international body with which Professor Bray has links is the Commonwealth, which has 54 member states. This body organizes triennial Conferences of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CEMs). Professor Bray was commissioned to write the lead documents for the 2012 CCEM in Mauritius and the 2015 CCEM in The Bahamas. Another PhD student in CERC, Trey Menefee,

collaborated in this work. Shadow education was given prominence in both reports, and the texts were followed up with discussion in plenary sessions and side meetings.

Professor Bray also receives direct enquiries from government channels. "I recently received a call from an official in Rajasthan, India, who had read our 2014 CERC-UNESCO book about regulations for shadow education," remarked Professor Bray. The official wanted to know about lessons from comparative experience for his State government. "We are very glad to know that our work does not stop at the academic level, and can have an impact on the real world," he adds.

An Impact on Schooling

Other questions include how shadow education affects regular teaching. Some Hong Kong teachers are offended by the tutoring industry, saying that it overburdens students, who then sleep during regular lessons. Teachers may also provide less support than they would do in the absence of the shadow education system, because they assume that students receive supplementary help.

Even more problematic are patterns in Cambodia, where many teachers themselves offer private tutoring alongside their regular work. The General Research Fund (GRF)-funded work led by Professor Bray shows that some teachers tutor the same students in the same classrooms at the end of the official school day. This raises many issues, not least the possibility of teachers deliberately cutting the content of regular lessons so that students have to stay for private tutoring. In April 2016 Professor Bray took the findings to meetings in Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth & Sport (MoEYS) and the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) chaired by UNICEF that brings together the international agencies and

non-governmental partners in Cambodia. In addition to this dissemination at the national level, partners are taking the work to schools to advise how principals and other stakeholders can address the themes.

Concerning regulations, Professor Bray highlights great diversity. "In many countries the industry is not regulated at all," he reports. "However, smart people within the industry self-regulate – and again our research is helping." The 2014 CERC-UNESCO book about regulations was translated first into Korean and then into Chinese and co-published with the major professional associations of tutoring providers in those countries. Through such measures, the HKU team is able to reach the business providers and encourage them to think about the wider educational and social implications of their work.

The UNESCO Chair

The value that UNESCO puts on Professor Bray's work is demonstrated by the renewal in 2015 of the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education, which has a particular focus on shadow education. The Chair was created for four years in 2011 and launched in 2012. It has now been renewed for another four years.

The creation of the Chair was framed by the Education for All (EFA) agenda launched in 1990 and renewed in 2000 and 2015. This agenda stresses equitable access to quality education for all. "But how does shadow education fit in?" asks Professor Bray. "It is clearly inequitable in access, and the quality of tutoring may be highly variable." Moreover, he adds, although in many countries education is officially free of charge, when the majority of students receive private tutoring, many families feel pressured to join them for fear of being left behind.

The HKU team has made this point strongly and convincingly, and is proud to be leading both academic and policy-oriented work on this important theme.

Details of the UNESCO Chair can be found at <http://web.edu.hku.hk/community/unesco-chair>. Details on shadow education around the world can be found at <http://cerc.edu.hku.hk/special-interest-groups/shadow-education/about-shadow-education/>



Sixth Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) National Research Coordinators Meeting



The 6th PIRLS National Research Coordinators (NRC) meeting under the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) & PIRLS International Study Center was a huge success. Participating countries and benchmarking participants gathered in Hong Kong from February 28 to March 4, 2016.

More than 130 reading and assessment experts from 50 regions and countries around the world participated in the event. It is a major meeting of IEA study delegates, which takes place once or twice each year for the duration of the project. At the study meeting, the NRC discussed the assessment instruments and procedures, received training, and participated in individual consultations on the specifics of study implementation in their countries. The IEA, TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center thanked our generous host from CACLER.

PIRLS is a global five-yearly research concerning students' reading literacy covering 50 countries and regions. CACLER has participated in PIRLS since its inception in 2001 (PIRLS 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016). CACLER has won the EDB tender with a grant of HK\$9.9 million to conduct the fourth round of PIRLS in Hong Kong, which will provide internationally comparative data about how well children read after four years of primary schooling.

It will also examine the national policies and practices relating to literacy and will investigate the experiences that young children have at home and at school when learning to read.

The findings of the PIRLS studies provide important information for the Education Bureau, educators, school principals and teachers. In the past studies, the PIRLS findings were widely publicized in the local media and press. Reliable knowledge and information was relayed to the community and to international audiences through newspaper articles, media reports and interviews within and outside Hong Kong. In addition, the research findings were highly accepted as highly authoritative and gave food for thought about children's literacy locally and internationally. //



Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) in Vancouver, Canada

The CIES, based in the United States, is the oldest and largest of the world's professional bodies of its type. As President-Elect, Professor Mark Bray led the organization of the 60th anniversary conference (<http://cies2016.org/>) in Vancouver, Canada. The conference was held from March 6 to 10, 2016, and attracted 2,800 people, including 30 from the Faculty together with many alumni.

The Faculty and its Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC) (<http://cerc.edu.hku.hk/>) was very visible. The Dean joined Professor Bray at the opening ceremony, emphasizing HKU's history and global outlook, and the University and CERC logos were prominent on the conference bags, signs for the Faculty-sponsored opening reception, on the CERC book table and elsewhere.

The Vancouver conference was a historic occasion for the Faculty. The event and

Professor Bray's continued leadership of the CIES reflect the Faculty's decades of leadership in the domain of comparative and international education. //



New Books

Comparative Education Research: Approaches and Method (2nd Edition)



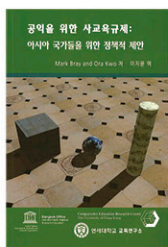
Original English; translated into Portuguese

Editors
Mark Bray; Bob Adamson; Mark Mason

Publishers

Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Regulating Private Tutoring for Public Good: Policy Options for Supplementary Education in Asia

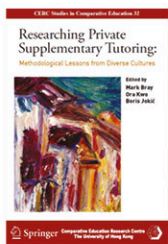


Original English; translated into Korean

Authors
Mark Bray; Ora Kwo

Publishers
CERC; UNESCO; Yonsei University

Researching Private Supplementary Tutoring: Methodological Lessons from Diverse Cultures



Editors
Mark Bray; Ora Kwo; Boris Jokić

Publishers
CERC; Springer

Shadow Education: Private Supplementary Tutoring and Its Implications for Policy Makers in Asia



Original English; translated into Russian

Authors
Mark Bray; Chad Lykins

Publishers
CERC; Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Educational Technologies in Medical and Health Sciences Education



Editors
Susan Bridges; Chan Lap Ki; Cindy Hmelo-Silver

Publisher
Springer

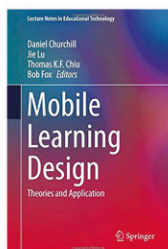
Media Literacy Education in China



Author
Cheung Chi Kim

Publisher
Springer

Mobile Learning Design: Theories and Application



Editors
Daniel Churchill; Jie Lu; Thomas Chiu; Bob Fox

Publisher
Springer

Trends and Challenges in Science and Higher Education: Building Capacity in Latin America



Editors
Hugo Horta; Manuel Heitor; Jamil Salmi

Publisher
Springer

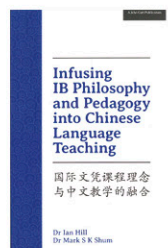
Infusing IB Philosophy and Pedagogy into Chinese Language Teaching



Authors
Ian Hill; Mark Shum

Publisher
A John Catt Publication

Educational Technology Program and Project Evaluation



Authors
Michael Spector; Allan Yuen

Publisher
Routledge

幼兒綜合高效識字：中文讀寫的理論及實踐

Early Childhood Literacy: Effective Chinese Language Acquisition and Teaching



編者
謝錫金、李黛娜、陳聲琨

出版
香港大學出版社

滿足不同學習需要的語文課程設計
Chinese language curriculum design for students with special needs (Text in Chinese)



編者
謝錫金、張慧儀、許守仁、呂慧蓮

出版
北京師範大學出版集團