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## **Contributors** (By the order of last name)

Jason C. Chan 詹志禹

Professor, Department of Education, National Chengchi University

Tsao-Lin Fong 馮朝霖

Professor, Department of Education, National Chengchi University

Huang-Yao Hong 洪煌堯

Professor, Department of Education, National Chengchi University

Yung-Kang Hsu 徐永康

Post-doctoral fellow, Department of Education, National Chengchi University

Hsin-Yi Huang 黃心怡

Graduate student, Graduate Institute of Early Childhood Education, National Chengchi University

Guo-Tsai Hung 洪國財

Assistant professor, Department of Japanese Studies, National Taichung University of Science and Technology

Rainer Kokemohr

Adjunct Chair Professor, College of Education, National Chengchi University

Ming-Shiang Ni 倪鳴香

Associate professor and Chair, Graduate Institute of Early Childhood Education, National Chengchi University

Shing-Shiang Ting 丁興祥

Professor, Department of Psychology, Fu Jen Catholic University

Hui-Ping Wu 吳惠萍

Assistant professor, Department of Chinese Language and Literature,  
National United University

Pichun Wu 吳璧純

Professor, Center for Teacher Education, National Taipei University

# Introduction

Education is aimed at preparing upcoming generations to participate in the social world. Consequently, pedagogical, psychological, sociological, and political discussions regarding the norms and features of useful and harmonious participation in the social world are prevalent within modern societies. A key question concerns how a society's harmonious status and future development can be balanced.

This balancing task raises questions at different levels. Within the field of pedagogy, the normative level is frequently prioritized. It is often assumed that all other aspects of a good education depend on a clear set of goals. This notion is accompanied by the more or less tacit presupposition that the right approaches to education can simply be derived from educational goals.

However, goals are pertinent only to the extent that they materialize in students' lives, behavior, and actions. However, within their social interactions and real life performances, for example, in classroom interactions and educational systems, different actors interpret norms or goals differently in light of their diverse interests. Consequently, social interactions within educational and teaching-learning processes are becoming an increasingly important concern. They impact on and subsequently modify norms and goals. Goals sometimes lose their persuasive power because they are not easily translatable or applicable to students, and may not be relevant to particular sociocultural environments and to the actual conditions of social interaction and sociocultural environments. Consequently, an abstract discussion of norms and goals may not be related to the real conditions of social life. Pedagogical discussions are increasingly focusing on teaching-learning interactional structures and their impacts on the quality of concretely realized values, norms, and goals. Classroom interactions—from kindergarten to university—constitute the field in which goals can either be attained or not.

The present volume takes up this shift in the discussion. **Section I** presents discussions on norms and goals. The authors identify some general orientations and methodological and epistemological features in relation to this topic. However, they do not take norms or goals as simply given or asserted. Rather, they are sensitive to the difficulties of formulating relevant goals in terms of achieving social cohesion and development.

**Section II** brings together articles that discuss educational goals in relation to concrete social interactions or special, pedagogically significant phenomena and structures that determine teaching-learning processes within educational institutions. The authors present more empirical discussions of selected educational issues relating to classroom interactions that are, however, oriented in different ways to basic topics, issues and aspects of social interaction of an educational system that is expected to better respond to challenges faced by upcoming generations within modern societies.

The final set of articles in **Section III** presents some interesting perspectives. The authors discuss the challenge of modern education in view of historical or life-historical educational conditions. They focus on challenges that arise in certain areas such as vocational training or individual life processes as a result of the complex relationship that exists between norms, goals, and social interactions.

## ***Section I*** **General Remarks, Observations and Reflections**

The opening article in this section by Fong titled “Symbiosophy and the Aesthetics of Improvisation: Inspiration on Boundary-Crossing from Zen Master Hui-Neng” makes a plea for a radical reorientation of educational systems. The text can be read as a critique of educational self-alienation influenced by Western civilization. The author is skeptical about attempting to explain the world by analytically separating its aspects and functions, thereby losing sight of the holistic nature of the human world and also of the self. He refers to the French author, Edgar Morin, who proposed the idea of a symbiosophy as the core virtue of any future earth citizenship. This author believed that his notion of holistic thought would be better understood by Chinese readers than by those from the West. Fong interprets Morin’s idea by tracing it back to the original Zen Buddhism system of thought such as that developed by the Zen master, Hui-Neng, during the Tang dynasty. This master articulated the three concepts of non-attachment, non-identity, and non-dichotomy and explained their implicit meanings in light of aesthetic improvisation, viewed as the momentum for creating a symbiosophical world.

Fong presents a highly normative notion that covers education as well as the broader theme of future earth citizenship. It may appear that his approach derives from his being seduced by the idea that concrete decisions can be derived from ideal norms. However, another reading is possible. The article can be seen to reflect the melancholy outlook resulting from facing a world that is losing its original

wealth. Thus, the article may inspire readers to turn a melancholy-induced critique into a search for a holistic life centered education that simultaneously considers the problems of modern societies. Thus, the concept of a holistic education would become a regulative principle that would enable individuals to avoid making wrong decisions.

In the second article “The Embodied Cognition as the Foundation of Imagination: The Clues Based on Kant’s Philosophy,” Hsu makes an ambitious attempt to rehabilitate the functions of imagination to foster an individual’s holistic relationship to the world and to himself or herself. He develops the argument that imagination is more than playful creativity and what it is commonly considered to be. As a first step, his aim is to critically reconstruct historical theories of the imagination entailing the flawed presupposition of the mind being separate from the body that continues to impact on public notions of the imagination. In a subsequent step, he refers to Immanuel Kant arguing that his philosophy offers the basic concept required to develop an adequate understanding of the imagination. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant asks the crucial question of how we can acquire knowledge about an unknowable external object. He views sensibility and reason as being separate but interdependent sources of knowledge. While the senses are directed to sensations, the mind operates with categories as concepts for developing understanding. Because pure conceptions of this understanding do not in themselves contain any intuitive component, Kant argues that a transcendental synthesis is necessary. He notes that such a connection is never formed by itself or forged externally. There must be an act of “transcendental schematism” that is the outcome of the imagination, enabling human beings to comprehend manifold impressions as knowledge. Thus, imagination can be broadly viewed as a general method of bridging sensibility and reason.

Hsu refers to Kant’s philosophy, highlighting four major stages in its development that ultimately lead him to state that sensuality and thought are connected by what he refers to as schematism as the form whereby pure concepts are associated with sense perceptions. Thus, he attempts to connect the pedagogical perspective to its epistemological background. In school settings, this background is often forgotten, although it is the background of forgotten or “dead” knowledge. As a simple example that illustrates this argument, if a child is only shown trees and animals from a forest, he or she cannot understand what a forest actually is. An imaginative concept of a forest that is biologically relevant would entail a scheme representing a living organism that includes all of the enumerable details that comprise a forest.

Hsu's article offers an interesting reading of a holistic perspective on education by referring to the Kantian transcendental epistemology. He attempts to reconcile a holistic Eastern view with a highly analytical Western approach. While this approach cannot adequately be covered in a short article, an encouraging momentum of growing interest in epistemology is evident that may turn pedagogical melancholy into a serious search for a holistic education.

The third article by Chan and Wu titled "Competency-Based Education: Do the Ends Justify the Means?" focuses on a methodological problem that, over a period of about two decades, has influenced the development of educational theory, institutions, and practice on a global scale. At first glance, the term competence appears to promise a solution for all educational problems. The implication is that if future generations develop skills that adequately respond to the challenges of the present and future worlds, then the relationship between a society's needs and people's capacities and expectations will be balanced.

However, competence is a theoretically empty concept. It is empty in the sense that it can be attached to heterogeneous perspectives that essentially conflict with each other. It can imply a philosophy of innateness as well as a philosophy of behaviorism. If it became a political movement, it risks becoming intimately associated with an educational strategy of promoting utilitarian performance management, for example, based on economic demands. Thus, under considerable pressure resulting from policy regulation, sacrosanct ends may justify immoral means. The authors formulate three statements aimed at warding off this danger. The first is that learning can be associated with but not determined by preparation for participation in the workplace. Second, they view learning as a constructive process that should be self-regulated through information feedback rather than being tightly controlled by external contingencies. Third, both formative and summative assessments can only be helpful for learning when they are diagnostic rather than instrumental for performance management. In view of these proposals, the authors reflect on a concept of education that is pedagogically appropriate, as indicated by the German concept of "Bildung." The problem of the concept "competence" will be echoed by the sixth article titled "Some Basic Issues of Teaching and Learning History" of Kokemohr.



## ***Section II***

### **Topics, Issues and Aspects of Social Interaction in Educational Institutions**

This section contains several articles that originate in a series of lectures held for an audience of specialists and laymen. Only slightly modified, the original character of the lectures has been preserved to make the articles, which address methodological and epistemological issues, more readable. However, the emphasis is on providing concrete support for arguments.

The articles critically examine different aspects of educational processes as they are actually performed in schools. They are thus practically oriented. They discuss cultural, administrative, economic, sociological, or psychological issues, focusing on educational interactions and seeking to foster a better-justified education in different contexts. One of the motivations underlying this orientation stems from studies conducted within different cultures demonstrating that a pedagogical reform has to initially focus on pedagogical interactions as the stage during which teachers and students can genuinely communicate with each other, co-constructing responses to future challenges that will be faced by upcoming generations.

Measured against this intention, any educational reform that entails a purely administrative approach and attempts to organize educational processes by simply applying a curriculum or any other administrative framework will fail. It will fail because it does not address the need for cooperation, flexible interaction, and exchange that enable actors to co-construct knowledge, norms, and behavior. The administrative approach is a relic of an earlier time when leaders believed that desirable social conduct could be secured by imposing administrative rules. In reality, such attempts are accompanied by social control and repression that destroy the kind of creativity that is needed for societal development. Nevertheless, in some situations and countries, this approach continues to be favored because of the temptation offered by the appearance of a direct connection between a controlled playing field and educational goals.

All of the articles in this section, apart from the second, are by Kokemohr. He spent a period of more than 15 years as a professor at the College of Education of the National Chengchi University in Taipei, Taiwan. During his period, he had the opportunity to visit different schools in the country and to study structural aspects of the educational system. However, his experience and research background, which are grounded in Germany and other countries, especially Cameroon, come

into play. Because cross-cultural differences are conducive to the identification of both opportunities, and undesirable developments, conducting a comparison can help to distinguish rational from unreasonable or irrational concepts.

Kokemohr's articles cover a small and revised selection of the lectures that he delivered during his years spent at the College of Education at the National Chengchi University. Because this book is designed to appeal to both specialists and laymen alike, the original presentational style of the lectures has been preserved. Thus, several arguments are repeated across different articles and perspectives.

The first article in this section is titled "Does Linear Education Meet the Requirements of Complex Societies?" In this article, Kokemohr discusses the mono-logical appearance of linear education that reflects the educational orientation of so-called traditional societies. He argues that to improve their stability, these societies unconsciously seek to reduce the objectively given complexity of their referential frameworks to just one framework. The reality created by this pragmatically realized idealization is only seemingly a truth. Accordingly, by avoiding "aberrant" utterances, classroom interactions develop as a linear process that is intended to equip future workers with the "right" skills and competences.

This strategy, based on tradition, is associated with the economic demands of companies (e.g. those of the US-based company IBM). The price to be paid is the sacrifice of cognitive and affective development that extends beyond the boundaries of an economic orientation. The broad field to be opened up by creative potential required in modern societies is lost, or at least not encouraged.

In the second article in this section "Teaching as Production of Assembly-Line: Classroom Interaction Analysis in a Junior High School," Ting and Ni combine Chinese and Western perspectives in a microanalysis of exemplary snapshots of teaching-learning interactional processes in a junior high school. They point out that similar to Western approaches, the ancient Chinese method of learning entails a process of interactions or encounters. Learning within a conventional classroom environment involves interactions between teachers and students. Accordingly, education is a special social phenomenon, and processes that unfold within the classroom are complex. They bring into play the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and socio-cultural systems of the interacting individuals. The study primarily focuses on socio-genetic aspects of micro processes of teaching and learning that are embedded within a socially and culturally dynamic system. However, because the Western model of classes grouped by age has been established in almost all countries, the structuring of classroom activities is constrained by the arrangement

of desks and chairs, class credit hours, the content of textbooks, the habits of teachers and students, and the compulsion to obtain higher grades.

This structure appears to be almost identical to the structure of an industrial production assembly line. Considering the restrictions imposed by strict scheduling, the authors compare the entire interaction with the foot-binding tradition in ancient China. They suggest that what occurs physically to the bound feet is paralleled by what occurs mentally to the students' development, their interest in learning, the stimulating potential of the interaction, and the possibility of co-constructing knowledge.

Ting and Ni cast serious doubt on the efficacy of this kind of teaching and learning. Their paradigmatic analysis of a teaching sequence supports their view. They raise the pertinent question of what happens to "learning" and what the purpose of education is within this strange type of "classroom interaction." The essential purpose of learning is to enlighten students and foster co-construction of knowledge by students and teachers through their interactions and dialogues with each other. However, this goal appears to be distant within classroom interactions that occur in contemporary junior high schools. The analysis reveals the structural moments that constrain teaching and learning. They should become the object of reflection and the entry points for school-based reforms aimed at offering learners the possibility to address the real-life issues that they will have to face. If we truly want to reform education, we should start with basic and concrete classroom interactions. Teachers and students exist inter-subjectively. There is no teacher without students, and no student without a teacher (sometimes students may also be their own teachers in some way). By constructing knowledge to resolve real life issues and explore possible approaches to education and learning together, teachers and students are closely connected with each other. The article makes the argument that conscious co-construction and cooperation in the teaching-learning processes is required.

In the third article in this section titled "Learning as Problem Solving: Foundations of a Humanist Pedagogy," Kokemohr discusses learning in terms of problem solving. Problem solving is a didactical key concept of modern pedagogy aimed at fostering creativity. Reform schools that focus on problem solving are grounded in a long tradition of "enlightenment."

The linguistic approach to educational thinking developed by the Prussian scholar, writer, and statesman, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), offers an interesting perspective on this tradition. As an educational reformer, Humboldt initiated the reorganization of education in the spirit of humanism. He is known as

the founder of Berlin's Humboldt University which has been emulated in a number of countries. His micro-view of linguistic processes lets us understand specific linguistic and cognitive processes of problem-solving oriented learning.

Humboldt's view that all teaching and learning processes are linguistic processes is reflected in his well-known statement that all understanding is simultaneously and inevitably a misunderstanding. This seemingly odd statement highlights the basis of human problem solving processes within and outside of schools. Its explanation lies in the fact that each word that we use refers to a number of accompanying words that not only shape its meaning but also open up a number of possible and competing meanings that empower our imagination to find solutions to a problem.

Our understanding of the educational importance of this point is facilitated by modern linguistic science, which illustrates how intersection points in a field of competing meanings can serve as entry points for new interpretations that may lead to a problem's solution. Different ways of conducting problem solving at school are illustrated in the article.

Following this discussion are two articles focusing on didactics. The first (which is the fourth article in this section) shows how didactics emerged out of a restrictive politics entailing its misuse as a training tool that educates learners to political obedience. The second article (the fifth in this section) reveals how, when politics and pedagogy are balanced, didactics can mobilize the constructive potential of future generations and prepare them for an open and democratic society.

In the fourth article titled "Didactics as Dealing with Contingency in Teaching-Learning Interaction," Kokemohr provides an introduction to didactics. Despite their importance, didactics have not been widely applied in Taiwanese educational thinking and studies. The first part of the article explores various aspects of didactics such as the difference between information and knowledge, frame of reference, social or cultural contingency, and the role of human narcissism. Political leaders have interpreted contingency as being a threat to the political order. This is why the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV established a rigid system of education. This led to a restrictive approach to didactics operating under the illusion that students' minds are empty vessels that readily imbibe statements about the world. Evidently, this approach was shaped by the political conditions of a pre-democratic society. Nevertheless, it remains the educational paradigm within many societies, even when the term "didactics" is not specifically mentioned. The article ends with an example from a class conducted in Cameroon that illustrates

how the elimination of contingency and diverse thinking constrains students' open awareness, reflective thinking, and understanding.

In the fifth article titled "Didactics: How to Plan a Good Lesson?" Kokemohr examines the modern concept of didactics, which he illustrates using the example of a lesson on a topic from Chinese history. The article begins with a critique of conventional curricula and classroom interaction according to five normative aspects that are at the core of a democratically oriented didactic approach. This is practically demonstrated through a step-by-step process whereby given knowledge on an important topic in the Taiwanese history curriculum—the Song Dynasty—is transmitted. Transmitted knowledge is not always doubtless knowledge. The famous "Qing Ming roll" and its reception during different historical periods provides a good example of how historical knowledge is conceived and of how adolescent students can readily reconstruct methods and competing interests of historical interpretation. This kind of didactically well-prepared lesson sheds light on interpretations of the past, while simultaneously helping to clarify the present.

In the sixth article titled "Some Basic Issues in the Teaching and Learning History," Kokemohr discusses the cognitive and moral development of children and adolescents in relation to teaching and learning history. He argues that history comprises a series of narratives and interpretations rather than objective data that are perceived in the same way by everybody. Narratives compete with each other according to the perspectives of the narrators (or the historical documents written by narrators). Therefore, this raises a question regarding the kind of reading and understanding required for historical narratives. Here, Piaget's study of the stages of mental development may be helpful. Accordingly, historical thinking may be viewed in the strong sense of the term as presupposing what Piaget described as the formal operational stage. At this stage, students will have developed symbolically operational thinking of change that is not necessarily bound to concrete perceptions. This enables students to consider more deeply the perspectives of others in a comprehensive way, respecting their orientations within a complex and often strange socio-cultural environment that differs from their own.

The next three articles originate in talks on early childhood held at different conferences (held as a collaborative initiative of the Taiwanese Caterpillar Institute and the Chengchi University College of Education). Although the articles focus on early childhood, the educational themes that are discussed are not confined to early childhood. Even if their potential is innate, children need to develop basic structures of perception, orientation, and interpretation of the world and the self during their early years. These structures that develop within individuals

are later manifested as talents and abilities that work throughout their lifespans. Therefore, explicit or implicit statements about the early stages of development are commonly made within the disciplines of psychology, anthropology, sociology, and educational science. In the early childhood, the situation is less complex. We may more easily perceive structural functions given our strong interest in individual development and our perception of greater curiosity among children than among adults. Sometimes understanding of early childhood phenomena can provide a general key to human understanding and we understand, at one stroke, what is going on with adolescents or adults.

In the seventh article titled "A Localized and Meaningful Curriculum: Some Observations on Its Practical Meaning," Kokemohr addresses the topic of fundamental mental development during early childhood. A distinction is made between primary and secondary experience, and knowledge is interpreted as a synthesis of sensory, physical, mental, and linguistic activities. During classroom interactions, the synthetic character of knowledge is often not appreciated, with knowledge being treated as something "dead" that is only to be memorized. However, living secondary knowledge requires primary knowledge. What, then, does this mean? Kant has demonstrated that all knowledge is irreducibly embedded within basic categories of thought such as time and space, causality, quality, quantity and others. If individuals and cultures refer to basic categories in different ways, for example, time conceived as a circle or a line, then they will construct the world and their selves differently too. Categories are anthropologically innate but culturally performed. They cannot simply be taught. An individual must develop and activate these categories from the very beginning of his or her life by virtue of both, that is innate anthropological potential and social interactions. As an example, we may tell a child that the mother will come back soon, but the baby cannot understand the meaning of soon without having constructed a space-time scheme that may later be divided into distinct categories of space and time. Photos from a short video show how a child constructs a space-time scheme as a practical everyday orientation to feel secure.

In the eighth article titled "Sociogenesis: The Impact of Culture on Children's Development in Modern Societies," Kokemohr presents the argument that human development is bound to social interactions within the culture to which children are exposed. This argument is developed in five steps. First, a simple model of a child's development is presented. The next step entails showing a video of a boy playing to foster a concrete understanding of the famous mirror stage such as originally interpreted by Jacques Lacan. This is explained in the third step as the paradigmatic

way in which culture shapes the child's relationship to the world, to others, and to himself. Subsequently, the story of the playing boy is re-interpreted within the framework of the mirror stage. In the last step, a more complex example from Sub-Saharan Africa is used to highlight the crucial relationship between cultural development and social relationships.

In the ninth contribution, "Reading Children: Exploring the World between Phantasy and Reality," Kokemohr focuses on the process of reading books. The conventional distinction between fiction and non-fiction is made in view of knowledge acquisition. However, this distinction proves to be too simplistic when we turn to the basic cycle of any kind of knowledge acquisition entailing a two-sided adjustment process of assimilation and accommodation. Any type of adjustment requires imagination to "reconcile" accommodation and assimilation. Because the double-sided adjustment occurs during each reading, it is evident that imagination plays an important role in relation to all types of literature, and that there is no other way to gain knowledge about the world.

This argument is concretely developed with reference to the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" that is well-known across many different cultures and societies. In this tale, a little girl (Little Red Riding Hood) meets a wolf on her way to visit her grandmother. The perspectives of the little girl and the child reader differ considerably from those of an adult reader. From the child's perspective, the wolf in the story is a cunning animal that eats the grandmother and the girl before the wise hunter can free them from the wolf's belly. However, the story has a second level of meaning. From an adult perspective, there can be a number of different interpretations, including sexual seduction. A child reader would not grasp these interpretations. However, the text contains ambiguities that may persist in the unconscious mind of the child reader and may be realized in later life. Thus, the words become more than the words read by the child. Their impact on the child's consciousness can later become a condition for developing a better understanding of the world.

### ***Section III***

## **The Challenge of Modern Education in View of Some Institutional, Historical or Life-Historical Conditions**

This section contains three interesting articles that complement those in the two previous sections given their focus on some aspects of the conditioning

framework of institutional education.

In her article titled "The Transformation of Childhood: A Study of Preschool Teachers' Professional Role-Formation from a Biographical Perspective," Ni reconstructs four types of educational perspectives of kindergarten teachers. Based on her biographical analysis, she shows how in the tension that exists between individual and social conditions, teachers design their approaches by extending beyond what is given. Because these four types are clearly distinguished, readers who are familiar with kindergarten teachers can assess their relevance.

Qualitative biographical researchers develop their statements from individual examples before generalizing them through comparisons entailing a number of examples. It is, therefore, difficult to present and clarify such a complex situation in just a few pages.

Having analyzed and interpreted the narrative interviews, as a knowledgeable author, Ni chooses to examine individuals and their life stories from the perspective of an experienced author. She develops images that will be particularly interesting for readers engaged in the socialization processes of teachers, as well as the breaks and constraints entailed in this life path. Her article reveals the importance of considering biographies structurally, and observing the risks of characterization to be taken as well.

However, given the brevity of the article, the methods applied in the analysis can only be indicated in general terms. Readers are requested to place their trust in the knowledge of an author who has examined many biographies. A more precise reconstruction of an exemplary section of a narrative, which makes the methods comprehensible, will be published in a different context.

In her article titled "The Transformation of a Teenager: A Biographical Perspective of a Transcendent Journey from Inner Conflict," Huang presents an analysis, interpretation, and reflection that is based on a single example. She clarifies several points addressed in the preceding articles in different contexts. Examining individually experienced challenges, she offers a holistic glimpse into an inner world that in some sense mirrors the struggle against the outer world as well as the undeniable reference to it.

No modern society can escape from economic and cultural globalization and their impacts on social life. As far as the pedagogical realm is concerned, values and orientations of preceding generations that conditioned or even secured social identity are losing their formative power. Faced by countless challenges, it may become increasingly difficult for an individual to develop self-assurance and self-confidence. Moreover, if schools intensify pressurized learning in order to respond



to the demands of the labor market without simultaneously respecting the needs of developing personalities, this issue will be exacerbated. For those who fail, ethical nihilism, aggression, depression, and even suicide may be the final outcome.

In this context, Huang presents a young man's biography that represents a typical but fortunate case within the framework that she has outlined. This student's narrative indicates his successfully coping with the challenge of selfhood after leaving the rigid public school that he attended and enrolling in an experimental educational reform school. At this second school, new experiences, especially those relating to aesthetics and philosophy—often considered useless topics from an economic perspective—help him to acquire a better understanding of himself in a complicated world.

The article applies short brush strokes to trace an individual's development. However, real processes are normally more complex than they appear in the student's idealized narrative. Nevertheless, by relating them to the history of public education in China and Taiwan, and to some basic lines of thought in psychology, sociology, and anthropology, the author succeeds in reconstructing the social framework of the student's conflict. Applying the methods of discursive and biographical analysis, she helps the reader to understand the student's turning points in developing his self in the world after entering an alternative school. Here, there is the possibility for another life perspective to arise out of the tension between the uniformity of exam-based determinants of human value and an inspiring learning environment that incorporates the diversity of life.

Thus, the article makes a plea for a reform in pedagogical approaches that simultaneously considers the demands of society and the individual's needs. Examining the case more deeply, the author argues that the student could overcome his conflict thanks to aesthetic experiences that constitute a field in which he could develop an interest in topics that inspire creativity. The final point made by the author relates to the injustice induced by pressurized learning, given that this impoverished artificial world scarcely responds to students' hunger for self-creation and to their substantial interest in the topics and things of the world in which they actually live.

In his article titled "The Design Orientation of Academic Courses Taught at Alternative Community Colleges in Taiwan," Hong, Hung and Wu explore the design orientation of academic courses offered by a set of non-mainstream, alternative community colleges in Taiwan. Specifically, his study examines the extent to which the academic courses designed by these community colleges facilitate knowledge interaction, construction, and creation (as opposed to mere

knowledge reproduction or acquisition) as proclaimed in their mission statements. Two hundred and eighty academic courses were conveniently sampled from 38 community colleges in northern Taiwan, and the syllabus of each course was examined based on three instructional dimensions: course objectives/structure, teaching methods and content, and course evaluation/assessment. The result showed that the academic courses designed in these alternative Taiwanese community colleges were intended to foster knowledge acquisition rather than knowledge construction. Such a design orientation needs to be reconsidered and restructured for community colleges in order to further advance their overarching educational aim to democratize knowledge and foster civic participation. The article discusses some implications and suggestions for improving the design of academic courses in Taiwan's community colleges.

In conclusion, *Intercultural Pedagogical Reflections on Taiwan's Education* brings together contributions from various authors. It does not claim to be a systematic presentation of education. In light of the need for open discussions within modern societies, all of the authors are committed to the development of modern education. However, they examine selective aspects or phenomena within the broad field of education in relation to different traditions and scientific paradigms, thus adopting different approaches to educational issues in a modern society. Because there is no formula that can be uniformly applied to institutional education, the book's intention is to open up a forum for discussion. In order to provide a broad field of discussion, the authors have endeavored to write in a style that invites the engagement of different readers—teachers, parents, scientists, and administrative officials—who are professionally involved with educational institutions. Their hope is that readers will be motivated to participate in these reflections on the complexity of an education that aims to address the mental and physical potential of young generations to the challenges they will face.

Taipei, October 24, 2017

The Editors