In line with the global trend, ‘child-centered, play-based learning’ has been strongly recommended in Hong Kong since 1982 as an alternative to the formal and teacher directed mode of learning which is commented as developmentally inappropriate to early childhood education (ECE) in the Llewellyn Report. Nevertheless, ECE quality inspection reports and local studies repeatedly document the perpetuation of teacher–centered approach which focuses on academic drilling. From 2007 onward, the Hong Kong Government invested HK$ 2 billion each year to establish the Pre-primary Voucher Scheme (PEVS) to enhance the quality of ECE. However, PEVS fails to achieve the paradigm shift and the persistent gap still identifies between the official pedagogical intention and the enacted practice. Updated findings even show that children’s agency impact on learning is minimal and that the ‘flow’ coming out from children’s seriousness in play is either ignored or unintentionally disrupted by the teachers (Cheng, Fung, Benson & Lau, 2009; Fung & Cheng, 2012). Meanwhile, Cheng’s recent study shows the learning and teaching mode has an impact on our children’s agency development. In the talk, Cheng is going to share the difficulties of linking play with learning in the Hong Kong context and to discuss the potential impacts which might have on the children.

Dr. Doris Cheng, the Director of the Centre for Childhood Research and Innovation, is awarded with a government’s research grant in 2008 to conduct research on the implementation of play in the Hong Kong context contributing to this discourse about the issues of implementing learning through play. Her recent publications of play and learning are listed as reference:

Cheng, P. W. & Wu, S.-C. (2013). Serious learners or serious players? Revisiting the concept of learning through play in Hong Kong and German classrooms. The Information Age Publishing Inc.


