

Transnational Comparisons of Teacher Expectation of Mathematical
Functional Ability in Early Years and Key Stage 1 pupils - A Study
Undertaken in Hong Kong and England

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A number of reforms to the English education system have led to a re-defining of the National Curriculum framework for pupils educated in England. Focusing on the Early Years curriculum the research compares the expectations of trainee teachers in Hong Kong with those from England when judging the mathematical ability of their learners. Elements of Mathematical functioning particularly associated with skills in counting; understanding and using number; calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and the understanding of shape, space and measure are the focus of the research.

Conducted with a sample of 92 trainee nursery teachers from Hong Kong who were either undertaking a bachelor's degree or a postgraduate diploma in early childhood education in one of the teacher education institutes in Hong Kong was then replicated with the same number of English trainee nursery teachers with similar levels of qualification and at the same stage in their training. All research participants worked in institutions that had a training agreement in place with one of the two universities represented in this study. The majority of trainee teachers in both the HK and English samples were female (HK: 97%; England: 100%).

In identifying divergent national expectations the current panic over what constitutes an appropriate Maths curriculum is critiqued and recommendations made for further

exploration into teachers' expectations as to the age and stage at which elements of the Maths curriculum are introduced in English schools.

Further, the research demonstrated that the expectations of teachers being trained in England did not match the criteria for Mathematical success as set out in the English curriculum. This raises questions about teacher expectation and also issues of achievability for all in relation to national standards. The article records concern over the reduction in funding for teacher development in England and argues for greater coherence, advice, and training in pedagogic approaches if the English education system is to produce the same levels of Mathematical competence expected of learners from Hong Kong.