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Issues, Concerns and Prospects 25

Pham Thi Hong Thanh

Implementing Cross-Culture Pedagogies

Cooperative Learning at Confucian Heritage Cultures

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Pham Thi Hong Thanh
School of Education
University of Queensland
Brisbane, QLD, Australia

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Series Editors' Introduction

Several countries in Asia, such as China (including Hong Kong), Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, Thailand and Korea have a Confucian heritage culture (CHC) which underpins and impacts considerably on many aspects of the society concerned, including its education and schooling system. Sometimes Western cooperative learning and student-centred learning have been imported into CHC countries without adequate thought being given to the cultural and philosophical differences between Western and CHC countries. To be successful, Western developed practices need to be imported into CHC countries only after carefully consideration of their appropriateness within the sociocultural context of the CHC countries concerned.

Cooperative learning is a group-centred and student-centred approach to classroom teaching and learning that actively engages the student in the educational process. Under this approach each group member is not only responsible for their own learning and understanding but they also take responsibility for helping other members in their team so that students maximise their own and each others' learning This is often in contrast to the approach adopted in countries with a Confucian heritage culture where teaching and learning is organised in ways that stress teacher-centeredness.

As the author of this important and insightful book document, in an attempt to improve the quality and effectiveness of their education systems, CHC countries have often borrowed from Western educational philosophies, teaching and learning practices. This has not always worked well since education systems do not exist in isolation to the particular society in which they are embedded, but develop and evolve to meet the needs of a particular society at a certain time. Education systems reflect the political, cultural, social and economic characteristics of the society in which they are located, and so it often does not work well to simply take ideas from elsewhere which may not be compatible with the characteristics of the importing society.

This book examines and discusses various definitions of cooperative learning and the theoretical perspectives underpinning cooperative learning and examines how cooperative learning can work best in CHC classrooms. Cooperative learning

has become a favoured approach in CHC countries, and the book examines why this is the case. It provides an insightful analysis of the current situation and provides guidance on rethinking the importation of educational reforms to CHC classrooms. It goes on to examine educational reforms toward cooperative learning in Confucian heritage culture countries and how cooperative learning reforms in CHC countries can be most effectively implemented and managed. By examining actual experiences in the countries examined in the book, the author is able to effectively identify culturally appropriate strategies to enable CHC teachers promote cooperative learning. Having identified problems in CHC countries with regard to adopting cooperative learning strategies, the author identifies effective strategies to overcome these problems.

The book is important because it provides a theoretical framework and culturally appropriate and practical guidelines which will assist education researchers, policymakers and practitioners optimise success when importing cooperative learning models to classrooms in countries with a Confucian heritage culture.

The book provides an excellent overview of the theoretical perspectives that underpin cooperative learning, examines the claimed and real benefits of cooperative learning and assesses the pros and cons of cooperative learning strategies.

The book is likely to have a wide audience including teachers, teacher educators, education researchers and policymakers with an interest in understanding how to maximise the effectiveness of education systems. The book will also be of interest to members of the general public who are interested in understanding how school systems function and what needs to be done to increase the effectiveness and quality assurance of education and schooling systems.

Rupert Maclean, *Hong Kong Institute of Education, China*
Ryo Watanabe, *National Institute for Educational Policy Research of Japan (NIER), Tokyo*
Lorraine Pe Symaco, *Centre for Research in International and Comparative Education (CRICE), University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

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Preface

During the last two decades, countries with a Confucian heritage culture (CHC) (e.g. China, Hong Kong Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Vietnam) have widely promoted teaching and learning reforms to advance their educational systems. To skip the painfully long research stage, CHC educators have often borrowed Western philosophies and practices with the assumption that what has been done successfully in the West will produce similar outcomes in the East. The wide importation of cooperative learning practices to CHC classrooms recently is an example. However, many studies have documented that cooperative learning has not worked effectively in CHC classrooms. The reason is that cooperative learning was often imposed on CHC teachers and students without a careful consideration of its appropriateness in the sociocultural context of CHC countries. This procedure is not effective and professional because learning is not an independent factor that stands alone. Rather, it is shaped and influenced by other factors including teaching methods, learning tasks, assessment demands, workload and the learning culture of students in the local context. For cooperative learning to work effectively in CHC classrooms, reformers need to consider the importation of this approach in line with a careful examination of all supports and constraints that affect those factors associated with learning.

The main purpose of this book is to provide an applied theoretical framework and culturally appropriate and practical instructions that could assist policymakers, reformers and teachers to address various factors at multiple levels. By doing this, they could optimise success in importing cooperative learning to CHC classrooms. Specifically, the book will:

- Provide a general discussion about cooperative learning, an investigation of how and why CHC nations have been trying to replace teacher-centred instruction with student-centred instruction as occurs when cooperative learning is implemented
- Provide a review of studies on cooperative learning in CHC countries, document mismatches between principles of cooperative learning and the sociocultural context of CHC countries

- Propose culturally appropriate strategies to assist CHC teachers to adjust their teaching to promote cooperative learning and to design the types of assessment tasks that can enhance cooperative learning
- Develop strategies to modify principles of cooperative learning in a manner that is culturally appropriate to CHC students' learning culture
- Propose strategies to assist CHC teachers to overcome structuring barriers when implementing cooperative learning

This book will have a broad target audience including preservice and experienced teachers who are interested in implementing student-centred learning practices both in the West and Asia. It will also be valuable as a reference text in undergraduate and postgraduate courses that focus on teacher training in education. The book will especially have wide appeal to universities and colleges in Asia, especially in CHC countries where the governments and educators are strongly encouraging the importation of student-centredness. This book promises to be a valuable asset at CHC schools and colleges because it provides useful strategies to design student-centred learning practices, particularly cooperative learning, that are culturally and institutionally appropriate in the CHC context. There is now a demand for such a volume because globalisation is ensuring that information on Western teaching and learning practices is readily available in Asia, often with no evidence on its suitability in culturally different contexts. Unfortunately, many Asian educators are adopting Western practices without considering their appropriateness for either the different instructional contexts or the impact of these practices on their students' learning. Guidelines for instructing local teachers in applying appropriate practices provided in the book are extremely useful and practical. In addition, strategies developed in the book can also be applied at education institutions in Western countries, especially in English-speaking countries, to help non-Western students study more effectively. This is important because the number of non-Western students at Western education institutions is increasing. Therefore, many Western colleges are trying to internationalise their curricula to make them more culturally inclusive to students coming from all cultural backgrounds. Discussions about differences in teaching and learning between the West and the East and the development of culturally appropriate strategies in the book promise to provide Western educators with a better understanding about how non-Western students learn. This could then enable them to teach non-Western students more effectively. Finally, the book would also be a valuable professional resource for learning support teachers, counsellors and psychologists who are regularly called upon to assist teachers in developing effective learning techniques that provide for the academic needs of all students.

Acknowledgements

I have gone through a long journey to complete this book, but I would not have reached this destination without the love, support and encouragement of many people. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who made this book a possibility.

I first would like to express my deepest and sincere thanks to my husband and my daughter. This book would have been impossible to complete without their support and motivation. To my husband, I received his continuous and long-suffering support when he very generously and lovingly exempted me from most household chores and looked after my daughter so that I could work undisturbed on this book. To my daughter, I can only say thousands of times 'I love you, Dana'. Whenever I look at you, I feel so motivated and strong. You did nothing, but half of this book is your contribution. So my greatest debt incurred is to Lam and Dana. I promise to repay that debt properly – and with lots of interest!

I also would like to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Robyn Gillies and Professor Peter Renshaw from the School of Education, The University of Queensland. They were my invaluable consultant source of inspiration. They provided me consistent encouragement and advice over the long haul. They were forever giving and sharing and listened to my problems and gave me their generous commitment of time and patient attention to solve them all. Many thanks, Robyn and Peter, for your ongoing interest and support.

I am extremely grateful to the management board and staff of the School of Education, the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at The University of Queensland, who provided essential financial support and a wonderful workplace to commence the research, with the opportunities to consult experts and colleagues in my field of research. I have found the University to be my second home. I am so fortunate to be surrounded by many supportive friends and staff who were always willing to share any problems that I have had during the process of completing this book.

Finally, I wish to express my gratefulness to the teachers and students in Vietnam who participated in empirical studies reported in this book. Without their support and kindness, I would not have been able to conduct the experiments. Their participation and help is an essential contribution to the value and relevance of this book.

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction and Research Overview

In modern society, people cannot be successful in most workplaces without good communication and collaborative skills (Johnson and Johnson 1994; Kagan 1994; Shaw 1992). The ability to work together cooperatively has become one of the skills which enable people to survive in the global workforce. Several scholars have pointed out that people are often laid off due to a lack of good interpersonal communication skills in the workplace despite their job qualifications (Kagan 1994; Shaw 1992). More and more employers are now looking for people who are able to work in teams as well as communicate with people having different perspectives. Therefore, a strong need has developed for almost all education institutions to train students in communication, cooperation and self-learning skills. Kagan (1994) asserts roles of schools in today's world as below:

> At an accelerating rate we move into a rapidly changing information-based, high-technology, and interdependent economy. Along with the traditional role of providing students with basic skills and information, increasingly schools must produce students capable of higher-level thinking skills, communication skills, and social skills. (pp. 1–2)

To respond to these newly emerging requirements, schools worldwide have proposed significant changes, a major aspect of which is clearly seen in the approach to teaching and learning. Traditional views of teaching, with its emphasis on individual achievement and the transmission of information, have been found inadequate in supporting the development of students' thinking and learning skills in today's global society (Harmon 2000). Instead, constructivism, with its views of learning being mediated by the individual's active involvement and participation in situated social practices and not as the result of knowledge transmission, has become a popular theoretical perspective underpinning various recent educational studies. As a result, interest in the sociocultural views of Vygotsky (1978) has brought the issue of social interaction to the centre of recent educational reforms. From this perspective, the understanding of human cognition and learning are seen

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as social and cultural rather than an entirely individual phenomenon (Palincsar 1998). Sociocultural theory claims that the mind (our thinking, cognition, consciousness) is co-constructed through interaction with others. When people communicate with each other, they are given more than a chance to develop their cognition. This happens because when people prepare to express their ideas to others, they usually have to clarify their understanding and direct their attention to key points. This compressed process eventually helps them understand better or even produce new ideas. As a result, their cognition is developed to a higher level that is more complex. Lantolf (2000) claims that this is a self-communicative process that guides people's thinking. Moreover, when people share ideas with others, they usually receive feedback from each other. Then, they elaborate or critically reflect on the feedback by asking themselves various questions such as 'Should I agree? Why?' or 'Should I disagree? Why?' In order to answer these questions, they have to obtain more reasonable and logical explanations about their understanding. This source of consciousness residing outside of the head anchored in dialogues is internalised into the mind and helps people develop cognition. As such, social learning contexts promote explanations to others and self-explanations that lead to cognitive gains (Schwartz 1990), and social modes of working create effective learning environments for students to express, discover and construct knowledge (Kumpulainen and Wray 2002).

According to this perspective, teaching and learning are socially negotiated and constructed through interaction. Therefore, the roles of the teacher and students should be defined as communicators and learners. The sociocultural point of view implies that an effective teaching and learning approach in this global era should be the one that can create a situated context in which students have opportunities to exchange information and, in so doing, develop new understandings and learning. Supporting this point, Brookfield and Preskill (1999) emphasise how wonderfully exchanging ideas in discussions could help improve students' cognition as below.

> Discussion is one of the best ways to nurture growth because it is premised on the idea that only through collaboration and co-operation with others can we be exposed to new points of view. This exposure increases our understanding and renews our motivation to continue learning. In the process, our democratic instincts are confirmed; by giving the floor to as many different participants as possible, a collective wisdom emerges that would have been impossible for any of the participants to achieve on their own. (p. 4)

These arguments show that cooperative learning is an ideal alternative instructional approach replacing the traditional teacher-centredness because, as Cooper (1999) claims, cooperative learning creates a social context for students to engage in discussions and then assist one another to build their own understanding, integrate new learning into existing cognitive structures and adjust their understandings as needed. Moreover, the process of cooperating may also reveal some aspects of the topic that students do not understand, so that the teacher can scaffold by giving appropriate assistance enabling students to construct their own knowledge. In fact, Newman and Holtzman (1993) note that cooperative learning

overlaps with the sociocultural theory by attempting to build an environment that fosters mutual aid. The authors claim:

> Vygotsky's strategy was essentially a cooperative learning strategy. He created heterogeneous groups of ƒ children (he called them a collective), providing them not only with the opportunity but the need for cooperation and joint activity by giving them tasks that were beyond the developmental level of some, if not all, of them. (p. 77)

In a very basic sense, cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students share the responsibility of working together to maximise their own and each other's learning (Johnson et al. 1998). Cooperative learning activities involve groups of two to five students jointly working through the assigned tasks (after receiving instructions from the teacher) until all group members have successfully mastered and completed them. During the learning process, students not only learn to take responsibility for each other's learning by making individual contributions to the learning tasks but also learn to affect a compromise by resolving individual differences for collectively achieving the learning goals. In other words, through cooperative learning activities, students respect and learn from one another as well as learning how to explain the reasons for their opinions. Extensive research has shown that cooperative learning is a more effective instructional method over competitive and individualistic approaches (Johnson et al. 2000). Specifically, cooperative learners have demonstrated higher academic outcomes (Cohen and Lotan 1995; Foley and O'Donnell 2002; Slavin et al. 1996), enhanced critical thinking skills (Brandon and Hollingshead 1999), demonstrated more creative thinking abilities (Johnson et al. 1994) and enhanced social skills such as communication, presentation, problem-solving, leadership, delegation and organisation (Cheng and Warren 2000). Also, cooperative learning helps accelerate students' social-interpersonal development and thereby it helps students solve the teacher's instructional problems as well (Sharan 1980; Slavin 1980).

All of these advantages have made cooperative learning one of the most powerful learning strategies utilised in recent times. In fact, cooperative learning has been recognised as the most successful learning strategy in educational history (Johnson et al. 1994; Slavin 1996). Therefore, it has recently become the first choice of teaching and learning approach reforms in various countries, including CHC countries. The push for importing cooperative learning to CHC classrooms took place since the late twentieth century when almost all CHC nations have changed their economic development modes from closed and centrally controlled economies to open market ones. This happened because market economies, which are characterised by the domination of new fast capitalism where small enterprises and advanced technology emerged as predominant parts of the economy (Renshaw 1998), require employees to have such specific skills as being cooperative and interdependent in order to work in production teams with different people from diverse cultural backgrounds. These newly required skills are beyond the focus of the traditional perception about teaching and learning that sees textbooks and the teacher's knowledge as the primary information sources and mainly requires

students to work independently to quickly complete the tasks assigned by the teacher (Renshaw 1998). Modern global economies require educators to employ new teaching and learning approaches which cannot only help students obtain scientific and cultural knowledge but also provide them with skills to meet the demands of the new society such as logical reasoning, abstract thoughts and creative abilities. In other words, education must train students to become independent thinkers instead of 'technicians'. With benefits as aforementioned, cooperative learning appears to be the most suitable alternative learning approach at CHC education institutions. Therefore, it is not a surprise to see that more and more CHC education institutions have been trying to call for a shift from the traditional teacher-centredness to cooperative learning and other student-centred learning.

A paradox, however, is although there have been very few studies on cooperative learning in the Asian context, a review of the studies that investigated how cooperative learning worked in Asian countries found evidence that cooperative learning promotes learning is equivocal and, moreover, it is of little interest to Asian teachers and students (Thanh-Pham et al. 2009). The main reason contributing to such an outcome has, generally, been that cooperative learning, both theoretically and practically, conflicts with the culture of Asian countries, especially those inheriting Confucian culture (e.g. Vietnam, China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan). Specifically, many principles of cooperative learning and CHC cultural values have been found not to match with each other. For instance, while cooperative learning principles aim to encourage students to open up their own ideas and develop creativeness, CHC culture does not encourage students to focus on questioning, evaluating and generating knowledge because truth is not found primarily in the self, but in exemplars [teachers] (Confucius 1947). Usually, CHC students need to receive knowledge from teachers as a truth rather than try to think independently and draw their own conclusions (Ladd and Ruby 1999). CHC students are also expected to respect teachers and not to question or contradict what they say. While face-to-face interaction is emphasised as a main component of cooperative learning (Johnson and Johnson 1999), the deep-seated perception of 'surviving in harmony' strongly hinders CHC students from exchanging their true opinions (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005).

The issue raised here, therefore, is that instead of attempting to examine whether cooperative learning works in CHC countries, it would be more practical and useful if disjunctions between cooperative learning principles and the sociocultural context of CHC countries are investigated. More importantly, strategies to match these disjunctions need to be determined so that cooperative learning can be culturally adaptive to CHC classrooms. Unfortunately, very little has been known about these disjunctions and there has not been any research developing these strategies. To fill this gap, the main purpose of this book is to examine why and how cooperative learning does not fit in the sociocultural context of CHC countries. Importantly, it reports empirical studies that were conducted by the author in Vietnam during the last 5 years. The main purpose of these empirical studies was to develop strategies to modify cooperative learning principles to make them culturally and institutionally suitable in CHC classrooms. This book uses Vietnam as a case

study that represents other CHC countries. This choice was made because of two main reasons. The first was that the author did not have opportunities to conduct empirical studies in different CHC countries. This is a limitation this book owns and leaves a gap for future research. The second was that although CHC countries may own different cultural values due to their own geographic locations and social and economic developments, generally speaking CHC countries still share main cores of Confucian cultural values. In the case of Vietnam, the country was dominated by China for almost 2000 years (from 111 BC to AD 1858). During this long period, the Vietnamese were deeply embedded with Chinese cultural values, among which Confucian culture was predominant. This explains why in Vietnam the Confucian philosophy is still very much alive and has set a powerful interpersonal norm for daily behaviours, attitudes and practices demanding reflection, modernisation, persistence, humility, obedience to superiors and stoic response to pain (Park 2000). Consequently, Vietnamese students share a common Confucian heritage and can, to a great extent, represent CHC students. Throughout this book when phrases like CHC and Asian students are mentioned, they also imply Vietnamese students.

The book consists of nine chapters.

Chapter 1 *Introduction and Research Overview*
This chapter describes the research background and provides an overview of the research.

Chapter 2 *Cooperative Learning in Comparison with the Teacher-Centredness*
This chapter discusses various definitions of cooperative learning and three theoretical perspectives underpinning cooperative learning, namely, *the behavioural learning theory*, *the developmental perspective theory* and *the social interdependence theory*. It is emphasised that effective cooperative learning needs to consist of five components of *positive interdependence*, *individual accountability*, *face-to-face promotive interaction*, *interpersonal and small group skills* and *group processing*. The chapter then discusses major benefits that cooperative learners can gain including *academic achievement*, *psychological adjustment* and *quality of relationships*. The main procedures of popularly used cooperative learning strategies are also summarised in this chapter. Finally, the chapter points out differences between cooperative learning and teacher-centredness in terms of the teacher's role, students' role and objectives and instructional strategies.

Chapter 3 *Cooperative Learning in CHC Classrooms*
The main focus of this chapter is to investigate how cooperative learning works in CHC classrooms. To provide a background explaining why cooperative learning has become a favoured approach in CHC countries, the chapter first discusses how the globalised knowledge-based economy has driven CHC education institutions to shift from employing teacher-centredness to adopting learner-centredness such as cooperative learning. The chapter then reviews studies that investigated cooperative learning in Asian classrooms. This review aims to shed light on how CHC teachers and students responded to cooperative learning. Importantly, the chapter explores

causes contributing to the failure of cooperative learning in CHC classrooms and investigates why cooperative learning is of little interest to CHC teachers and students. The chapter generalises that the ineffectiveness of cooperative learning in CHC classrooms results from various disjunctions between cooperative learning principles and the sociocultural context of CHC countries.

Chapter 4 *An Applied Theoretical Framework to Implement Cooperative Learning in CHC Countries*
This chapter aims to develop an applied theoretical framework to assist reformers to achieve better success in implementing cooperative learning in CHC classrooms. It first discusses the procedures that CHC governments often apply to carry out their learning reforms and points out weaknesses in these procedures. To improve the present situation, the chapter proposes an applied theoretical framework that is central to the Activity Theory. This framework emphasises that learning should be seen as a factor that has connection with many other factors in a complexity. Therefore, to achieve success in cooperative learning reform, reformers should not simply impose the instruction on teachers and students but need to address various factors at different implementation levels. In brief, factors that have an impact on learning (i.e. teaching and assessment) need to change to enhance cooperative learning. Moreover, cooperative learning principles that are in serious conflict with unchangeable or hard-to-change CHC cultural values need to be modified. Finally, there must be techniques to fit cooperative learning activities within the institutional conditions of CHC institutions. The framework especially emphasises that the teacher's and students' voices need to be taken into careful consideration because they play a key role in determining the reformative success.

Chapter 5 *Teaching Practices at CHC Education Institutions: A Hidden Challenge and Techniques to Enhance Cooperative Learning*
This chapter aims to discuss teaching practices at CHC education institutions and points out how the traditional teaching teacher-centredness hinders cooperative learning. Relevant literature and findings of empirical studies documented in this chapter disclose that CHC teachers' resistance to empowering students in active leaning is the main barrier preventing CHC students from adopting cooperative learning. To improve this situation, there is a need to develop strategies that could enable CHC teachers to delegate part of their authority to students. The chapter then reports an empirical study that was conducted to develop such strategies. The results revealed that when teachers were mandatorily required to implement the reform, they tended to only implement 'artificial' changes (i.e. modify some teaching activities in class, redesign lesson plan) that did not empower students to engage in real cooperative learning. Students were only given a chance to practise proper cooperative learning activities when teachers were convinced about the effectiveness of the reform and especially assisted to change their belief. The study highlighted that CHC teachers' voices need to be taken into careful consideration. Then, culturally appropriate strategies that could assist CHC teachers to make the real change need to be developed.

Chapter 6 *Assessment at CHC Education Institutions: Problems and Strategies to Enhance Cooperative Learning*
The main focus of this chapter is to discuss the nature of assessment practices at CHC education institutions and how the current assessment system at CHC institutions impacts cooperative learning. Arguments in this chapter point out that to enhance cooperative learning, current assessment practices need to change from well-structured to ill-structured tests. The chapter then reports an empirical study that was conducted by the author to investigate the effects of ill-structured tests on cooperation among students. The findings reported that when students worked on ill-structured tests that aimed to assess students' high-level knowledge and required group efforts to accomplish (i.e. joint project), group members were conditioned to share equal opportunities to talk, make fairer contributions, highly evaluate each other's ideas, enthusiastically support each other by giving help and elaborative explanations, value group benefits more importantly than individual achievements and enjoy working with each other. Importantly, ill-structured tests were also found to increase cooperation among different ability students.

Chapter 7 *Learning Culture of CHC Students: Its Support and Challenge to Cooperative Learning*
Literature on educational change has warned that students play an important role in determining the success of educational reforms. Whatever reform is worked out, reformers have to remember that the reform should not be in serious conflict with students' learning culture. Therefore, to ensure a highly successful possibility of cooperative learning reforms in CHC classrooms, this chapter aims to investigate disjunctions between cooperative learning principles and CHC students' learning culture. Based on perspectives about cultural change and findings of relevant empirical studies, the chapter argues that to keep CHC students interested in adopting cooperative learning, some cooperative learning principles should be modified to match unchangeable and hard-to-change cultural values of CHC students. The chapter points out three potential disjunctions between cooperative learning principles and CHC students' learning culture including mixed-ability grouping vs. friendship grouping, role-rotating grouping vs. leader-led grouping and intra-peer assessment vs. inter-peer assessment. The chapter finally reports an empirical study that examined Vietnamese students' responses to these mismatches and suggested that in the CHC context the principle of forming mixed-ability groups recommended by cooperative learning researchers should be replaced by friendship groups, the role-rotating grouping concept should change to leader-led grouping and intra-group peer assessment should change to inter-group peer assessment.

Chapter 8 *Structural Constraints at CHC Education Institutions: Barriers Hindering Cooperative Learning and Strategies to Overcome*
Infrastructural conditions have been claimed to exert a strong impact on learning reform although they appear to have a loose link with classroom teaching and learning. Unfortunately, reformers tend to neglect this impact because they assume that it is impossible to make a change in structural conditions. This misconception

has contributed to the failure of cooperative learning reforms in CHC countries. To shed light on this issue, this chapter discusses the main institutional constraints at CHC colleges that strongly hinder cooperative learning, and then argues that if the constraints are impossible or really hard to change, reformers should have techniques to assist teachers to minimise their impact. The chapter finally reports an empirical study that attempted to develop strategies to assist CHC teachers to deal with three main constraints in Asian classrooms including large-size classes, curriculum coverage and limited reading resources. The findings revealed that when organising cooperative learning in large-size classes, teachers should subdivide each big group into two smaller groups and ask them to teach each other. To overcome the problem of overloaded curriculum, teachers should be selective with lessons taught in class and to enlarge reading resources, students should be encouraged to consult other sources rather than sticking with textbooks.

Chapter 9 *Conclusion: Reflection and Integration*
This chapter reinforces how CHC governments should reconsider the procedure of importing cloned pedagogies from the West because Western practices are often developed based on cultural values that have many conflicts with Confucian culture. Moreover, infrastructure developments and material resources in CHC countries seem inadequate for the requirements of these advanced practices. To guarantee a better chance for success, reformers should be assisted by an applied theoretical framework that provides them with clear instructions of what needs to be addressed. This book has attempted to develop such a framework based on concepts of the Activity Theory. In brief, the framework conceptualises that to promote cooperative learning and student-centredness in CHC classrooms, there needs to be a change in factors that have influence on CHC students' learning practices and adjustments of cooperative learning principles to fit hard-to-change learning values of CHC students. Besides, strategies that could assist CHC teachers to deal with local institutional constraints need to be developed. The chapter also summarises evidence found in empirical studies reported throughout the book to support the effectiveness and feasibility of this framework. The chapter finally discusses contributions and limitations of the book.

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