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Towards a cross-cultural understanding of ageing and learning by senior adults in Hong Kong and Australia

Ageing and learning are value-laden concepts that are culturally relevant. Culture plays an important role in influencing what people think, resulting in different views and understandings by people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In the literature, there have been researched and discussions relating culture with aging and culture with learning to shed light on the value systems and predominant cultural values that have influenced the understanding of aging and learning by people in different cultures. The aim of this presentation is four-fold. First, it examines the concepts of aging and learning and considers the role that culture plays in the understanding of these two constructs. Second, it draws on the predominant East-West cultural debate to shed light on the cultural values and views that have influenced the understanding and conceptualization of aging and learning. Third, limitations are identified for the East-West dichotomous view of aging and learning using the Confucian perspective of learning to illustrate the inadequacies of the Eastern and Western ideas of learning, or lifelong learning, in particular. Finally, it draws on findings from a cross-cultural study to compare and contrast senior adults in Hong Kong and Australia, with regard to aging and learning.

Biography

Maureen Tam has extensive experience in teaching, research and management in higher education institutions, both in Hong Kong and overseas. Currently, Dr Tam is Associate Professor in Elderly Education with the Department of International Education and Lifelong Learning at The Education University of Hong Kong. Also, she is Deputy Director of Centre for Lifelong Learning Research and Development, and head of the EdUHK Elder Academy. Dr Tam's research interests are wide-ranging which cover elderly education, lifelong learning, professional and vocational education, quality assurance, outcomes-based education, teaching, learning and assessment in higher education.

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