An on-site teacher education model and multilingual education for ethnic minority children in China

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Contents

I. Background

II. Project Design

III. Project Implementation

IV. Project Evaluation
MOE-UNICEF projects on teacher support system (TSS) at rural areas in China

METRU: Mobile Educational Training and Resource Unit

2007

TSS introduced from Romania to China

2007 - 2010

The TSS is piloted in 8 counties of 7 provinces.

2010, the working manual and monitoring indicators for TSS pilots published

2009 - 2014

Expand the TSS to earthquake affected areas, focusing on remote rural schools

METRU project

2012 - 2014

Expand the TSS to rural ethnic minority areas
I. Background

- In China, ethnic minorities comprise **8.49%** of the national population.

- The population of **113 million** is classified into **55** officially recognized ethnic minorities.

- **53 out of 55** officially recognized ethnic minority groups have their own languages.

Data source: the 2010 national census, China NBS, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Hello</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>你好 (Ni Hao)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisu</td>
<td>nA;kw.. hw..hw;-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uguer</td>
<td>Yahxi musiz;asslamu alzykum</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
METRU: Mobile Educational Training and Resource Unit

Baseline survey, January 2012
- questionnaires
- interviews
- school observation
- documents

Actions in project schools, since spring 2012
- professional support
- learning equipment
- curriculum and instruction

Mid-term assessment, April 2014
- questionnaires
- interviews
- school observation
- documents

Final assessment, December 2015
- interviews
- school observation
- documents
• Fact 1: the surroundings are becoming bilingual and both-visual-and-verbal-based mostly because of the great influence of **the media** (including TV programs, advertisements and commercial symbols).

• Fact 2: The village, the media and school become three independent worlds with different representations. The total of the three becomes the current cultural background and language resources of ethnic children.

• Fact 3: Schools are isolated from the community and local cultural tradition. There is a huge gap between what the children learn and what they live.
LaSCAP approach: Language sensitive and culture appropriate

Feature 1: Living Culture (Paul Willis, 1990)

- Willis, 2016: Teachers should be ethnographers; education is combined with giving (teach) and receiving (culture of students).
- Local community (both cultural and social-economic)
- Mass media, commercial goods
- Textbooks, classrooms, schooling experiences

Feature 2: Powerful Knowledge (Michael Young, 2013)
for cognitive development and emotional well-being

- Powerful knowledge: context independent
- No bias, but confidence-building
- Choice of stay, but ability of going out
Realizing bias is the beginning of making a change of themselves

Mother languages and experiences are always the scaffold of children’s cognitive development

There are good teaching and learning beyond language

LaSCAP provides friendly and long-term supports to teachers in minority areas
II. Project Design
on-site training and support for teachers trying LaSCAP

Tengchong, located in the southwest of Yunnan Province by the edge of sino-burmese border, inhabited by Han, Hui, Dai, Wa, Lisu, Ahchang and altogether 25 ethnic groups. In 2014, the population is 673,000, of which the ethnic population is 55,000, and the proportion of ethnic students is about 8.5%.

Jinghong, located in southern Yunnan Province, inhabited by Dai, Hani, Jino, Lahu, Bulang, and altogether 13 ethnics. The population of Jinghong is 416,400 in 2014, while the proportion of Dai is 34%. the population of ethnic students account about 60% of the total population.
Targets of the Project

1. Through LaSCAP, to improve academic achievement of ethnic students

2. To improve the learning environment for ethnic students

3. To improve teacher training methods and conditions in ethnic areas

4. To build up a teacher resource team and to develop teacher support and service system
III. Project Implementation

2012
- Project launched; national training of education equity, multicultural education, immersion English learning.

2013
- TPR; effective math learning; regional teaching materials.

2014
- LaSCAP; action research; mid-term evaluation.

2015
- Project extents for one year because of excellent effect. Picture book reading program, narrative study and evaluation.

County-level and township-level resource teacher teams established in both project counties, providing on-site training and support to teachers in project schools.
Understand how students feel of different languages

Understand how students learn of different languages
Project Resources: LaCAP, EML, TPR, ITM

**LaSCAP**
Language Sensitive and Culture Appropriate Pedagogy
Pay close attention to the mother-tongue experience, by appropriate oral and written language, multiple effective teaching methods, necessary and convenient teaching resources, bring together of children’s experience in the community, family and school to guarantee every ethnic child has access to quality education.

**EML**
Effective Math Learning
Learning math with ethnic culture, by multiple intelligence, through plays and games, and mathematical language included in teaching objectives

**TPR**
Total Physical Response
Use vivid body movements to help ethnic students to learn Chinese

**ITM**
Indigenous Teaching Materials
School teachers and students write their culture that integrated family life and community experience.
TPR: Total Physical Response

Drawing: An article about wind

Visualized: Phonix

Body language: Pangu separating the heaven from earth
EML: Effective Math Learning

Mathematical Modeling with Left Hand

165角=（ ）元（ ）角
90.05元=（ ）分

The Case of Rabbits and Chickens
ITM: indigenous resources as teaching materials

Multiple of 5

Classification
Patterns
The project took 4 years to cover all of the rural elemental schools in Jinghong and all of the ethnic rural elemental schools in Tengchong.
Teachers’ opinions before the project

- Under-developed
- Low academic expectations
- Do not understand what we are teaching
- Do not like study
- Do not attach importance to education

I am too unfortunate to teach minority students!

They are too hard to teach! There is no way to teach well!
Improved professional knowledge and skills

- Participatory learning: Project 88.7%, Non-project 80.7%
- Local teaching: Project 67.8%, Non-project 54.9%
- TPR: Project 69.5%, Non-project 42.6%
- School culture: Project 88.4%, Non-project 81%
- Effective math: Project 70.8%, Non-project 60.2%
- Minority culture: Project 62.8%, Non-project 44%
Improvement of teaching

Based on teachers’ answers to the questionnaire, those from project schools do better than those from comparing schools in classroom teaching.
In the past, the kids always ran away when strange visitors trying to talk with them. They were too shy. Now, you see, they come to say hello on their own initiative.

Teacher T1, Tengchong
1. In the 19 project schools at Tengchong, although the scores of Chinese were still below the average, the gap was narrowed.
2. Some positive changes in math scores were also found in the projects schools in Tengchong.
3. Differences in average scores between the Han and the minority nationality students were narrowed at Jinghong.
Conclusions and Implications

- On-site school-based teacher training by local resource teachers is effective for rural teachers’ PD.
- Language Sensitive and Culture Appropriate Pedagogy (LaSCAP) works for ethnic minority children to improve their academic performance and positive attitudes to the school.
- LaSCAP works for teacher training programs, too.
REFLECTION

Multilingual education: Languages & Cultures

Languages
- Discourse
- Body
- Pictures
- Music
- Story
- Blocks

Cultures
- Classroom
- School
- Local Community
- Larger Society
- Natural Environment
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Thanks