

# World Education NEWS & REVIEWS

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## International Trends

### Hong Kong Expanding Tertiary System

by Glenn Shive, Ph.D.

Hong Kong is still trying to regain its equilibrium from the June 4 trauma in Tiananmen Square. As the Chinese army crushed the democracy movement in Beijing in June 1989, it also shook the confidence of many Hong Kong people in their future under PRC sovereignty, which will begin in 1997. China's promise of autonomy and rule-of-law now appears to some Hong Kong people as a sham, a bargaining ruse that delivered Hong Kong from the British.

Two major disappointments last fall further eroded confidence. First, the Basic Law, drafted under tight constraints from Beijing, allowed less local autonomy than had been hoped for to post-1997 Hong Kong. Secondly, it became clear that Great Britain would offer passport protection to far fewer people in the twilight of its colony than had been expected.

Hong Kong's paradox was that people wanted foreign passports so they would not have to leave Hong Kong. Only with the security of knowing they could leave after 1997 if things turned out badly, could they feel confident to stay in Hong Kong through 1997 and help make the transition work. Even the security of acquiring a foreign passport has been shaken by Beijing's announcement that after 1997, such passports from Britain or anywhere else would not be considered valid travel documents. Hong Kong recipients of such passports would first have to renounce their Chinese citizenship before they could use foreign passports to leave Hong Kong. Beijing also said that after 1997, local people with foreign passports would not enjoy consular protection in Hong Kong and could not occupy key government positions.

### Uneasiness Prompts a Brain Drain

So people have begun to leave. In 1989, about 55,000 people emigrated from Hong Kong. About half of the emigrants are so-called PTMA's (professional, technical, managerial, and administrative). Their age is often between 25 and 39. They account for only 10 percent of the work force, but for about 60 percent of the emigration. PTMAs take a long time to create, and they are most difficult to replace. They tend to have a university education, either in Hong Kong or abroad, and are therefore more capable of transferring their skills overseas. Many of them are graduates of American universities.

Hong Kong's Chinese have always valued higher education. Enhanced international mobility is now an even greater incentive to pursue further studies either locally or overseas. Canada is the most common destination of choice (44 percent); Australia is second (25 percent); the U.S. ranks third with 16 percent. The U.K., New Zealand, and Singapore each received 4 percent.

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Latin America

tional opportunities among its urban and rural areas.

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"The selection process should weed out those who, after three days of tropical heat and no water, will run screaming to the nearest long distance telephone..."

## From the Publisher's Desk

### Erasmus Will Make U.S. Institutions Rethink Programs for Foreign Students Studying Here

I recently returned from a working vacation in Bologna where I was invited to give a paper at the annual conference of the Trans-European Exchange and Transfer Consortium (TEXT). Bologna is both beautiful and relatively tourist-free, the home of the oldest university in the western world, and renowned--justifiably-- for its Italian cuisine. The theme of the conference was Eastern Europe, an indication that western European institutions are looking beyond the European Community for exchanges. The conference organizers kept asking me to participate in small ways here and there until, suddenly, it was time to return home.

This was all to the benefit of WENR readers. First, I kept meeting some very nice and very informative delegates, including a few from Eastern Europe, who generously gave me their publications chock full of new, valuable information, which will be passed along to you in later issues. Secondly, I learned more about ERASMUS, and can share the following observations.

#### Erasmus Having Significant Impact

The ERASMUS program, headquartered in Brussels and launched in 1987 for the purpose of promoting student mobility across the 12 countries of the European Community, is having a significant impact. All the countries have established National Academic Recognition and Information Centers (NARIC) responsible for developing and disseminating information on their educational systems. Coordinators for international relations have been designated at most institutions, charged with providing information to students and partner institutions.

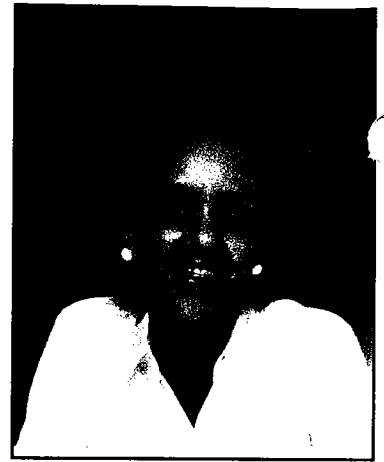
Another part of the ERASMUS program is the European Community Courses Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS), a six-year program running in 84 selected institutions in the EC countries. It was devised to help student mobility

by creating a framework for the recognition of study abroad. ECTS is a very bold undertaking which has the double task of introducing the idea of credit transfer and study abroad to institutions that heretofore granted little or no recognition for study completed at another institution in the same country, let alone abroad. With the implementation of ECTS, academic departments and faculties also are being involved in exchanges, and detailed information will become available to allow participating institutions to assess each other's programs and courses in terms of their content and scope.

While Americans have readily understood the idea and purpose of ERASMUS--educational exchange in Europe--its implementation, which has spawned a series of schemes and programs, all with catchy names, has proven difficult to grasp. It has also left many with a lingering feeling that ERASMUS may have created a closed European club which will inevitably lead to less emphasis being placed on trans-Atlantic exchanges. It is unlikely that institutions which had exchange programs with the U.S. prior to ERASMUS will abandon them, although it may be some time before institutions that had few or no exchanges before ERASMUS open up to non-EC programs.

ERASMUS has been a catalyst for many interesting developments. Already, some institutions realize that the exchange infrastructure that they have developed for Europe can be used for non-European exchanges, provided they use funds other than those provided by the EC.

Funding from Brussels has allowed the expansion of activities by releasing institutional resources for other purposes. Most importantly, ERASMUS has funded professional development, publications and travel, all of which have contributed to improving the overall quality of educa-



tional exchange.

ERASMUS already has its spin-offs. TEXT, for example, is inspired by ERASMUS. It is a consortium of European colleges and universities, open to all types of higher education institutions, both in the European Community and beyond, which promotes student mobility both within and outside of the EC. What is interesting about TEXT is that it was devised to expand on ECTS by broadening the range of participating institutions, programs and, eventually, countries. It is not difficult to imagine that, as a result of all these activities, U.S.-European exchanges will take on a new dimension. Encouraged by successful experiences in Europe and the favorable exchange rates of their currencies against the U.S. dollar, institutions may wish to encourage their students to spend some time in the U.S.

For the past three decades, only Americans went on short-term study abroad, while foreign students came to the U.S. for full degree programs. So far, most U.S. institutions are still operating on the old assumption that all foreign students are degree seekers. Few have made clear provisions to receive students for short-term study abroad programs. The situation in the 1990s is different. It calls for U.S. institutions to take stock of the new situation and to adapt their recruitment material and admissions policies to appeal to students who may wish to spend only one semester of one year in the U.S.

## A Challenge to American Educators

These new developments in Europe present a great challenge to American educators. Our assumptions about international educational exchange were shaped by events in the 1950s and 1960s when the U.S. was the most powerful nation in the world.

Foreign students, particularly from Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, flocked to the U.S. for degree programs. Though much fewer in number, Americans went to Europe for short-term study in languages or art. Although the U.S. educated a large number of foreign students in business, engineering and science, few Americans in those fields ventured abroad. Such has been the pattern of exchanges in the U.S.

The innovation of ERASMUS is that it is designed

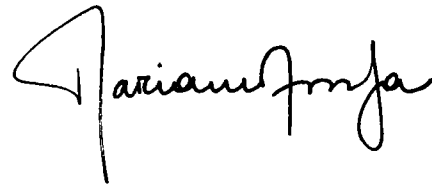
to foster study abroad in all disciplines including science, engineering and medicine, fields traditionally not receptive to the idea of students venturing outside of the home institution. The pilot programs which are now underway in Europe should help U.S. institutions as they, too, look towards encouraging study abroad in professional disciplines.

Sending students abroad to complete part of their major courses will require a great deal more preparation. The European idea of creating subject networks among institutions, which at first blush appears cumbersome and bureaucratic, may after all be the only way to reassure skeptical faculty members afraid of relinquishing total control over their discipline. By participating in such exchanges, U.S. institutions will also make their programs clear to the outside world which, in turn, would encourage foreigners to complete part of their studies in the U.S.

These programs do not come cheap, as can be seen from the amounts spent for ERASMUS and all the attendant schemes. Where the U.S. has an advantage is in the fact that programs are already set in discrete components, measured in credits, and that credit transfer is a common practice. In addition, international education has long been administered by a cadre of professionals. An infrastructure is in place.

In spite of these advantages, U.S. institutions would still need to prepare their students for study abroad by offering intensive language training beyond the typical elementary language courses. Provisions must also be made for visiting students, beginning with recruitment material specifically designed for the short-term student, admission and placement policies tailored to the needs of students and the requirements of their programs back home, rather than the requirements of U.S. institutions.

These are heady times in Europe, creating a vortex of changes in education which will surely pull U.S. institutions further into the international stream.



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# COUNTRY UPDATE: Czechs Reforming System

## Australia

A National Korean Studies Center is to be established in Melbourne. The center, to receive \$900,000 in Commonwealth funding over four years, will be made up of a consortium of tertiary institutions that will include the Swinburne Institute of Technology, and La Trobe, Monash and Melbourne universities.

The center will co-ordinate teaching, training and applied research activities in the four participating institutions in the areas of Korean language, politics, economics, social studies, history, business and law. In addition to facilitating Korean-related education, the center will maximize business and community participation in Korean-related issues and resources.

Swinburne already has a comprehensive Korean studies program and provides the only higher education award course in Korean language, politics, social studies and business through its Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Arts degree program offered by its faculties of Business and Arts. The director of the new Center will be based at Swinburne. (*The Australian*, August 22, 1990)

## China

More than 600,000 high school graduates will be admitted into China's colleges and universities this year, with selection based on their performance during the three-day National College Entrance Examinations held in July.

Some 2.8 million candidates, the majority of them soon to graduate from high school, took the exams.

About 1.81 million candidates applied to take tests in science and engineering, 820,000 in liberal arts and 180,000 in foreign languages.

In addition to the 600,000 freshmen to be enrolled in colleges and universities, television and correspondence universities will take in about 28,000. (*China Daily*, July 7, 1990)

## Czechoslovakia

Dissatisfaction with the four-year upper secondary/grammar school has become widespread. It is felt that the program in its current form is not fulfilling its intended purpose of preparing for university study or providing qualifications for certain professions.

A movement is underway, particularly in the Czech Republic, to return to the eight-year grammar school of the Pre-World War II period. A proposal for the curriculum of the grammar school is that Slovak language and literature would be taught in all four years, as would foreign languages, mathematics, information science and physical education. Other subjects to be included in various years would be civics, history, geography, physics, biology and up to three elective subjects which might be vocational subjects.

Originally, deliberations on the proposed reforms were to be concluded in time for the 1992-93 school year. Because of the widespread interest shown in reform, a decision is expected sooner. (*Council of Europe Newsletter*, #1/90)

## Germany

The new school year which began on September 3 for East Germany's 2.3 million students is unfolding a new and largely unfamiliar world. It will include geography lessons that are no longer restricted to Communist countries; foreign language instruction which gives English priority over Russian, and social studies that neither begin nor end with the ideas of Marx and Lenin.

The transition to democracy agreed on between East and West Germany last spring as the basis for unification moved too swiftly to be achieved totally by September's school opening.

At both secondary schools and East Germany's 54 universities, nearly all teachers and professors have been retained, despite their former membership in the Communist party. Also, many textbooks composed under Communist Party pedagogical guidelines still are being used. There are simply not enough new textbooks to go around.

The West German government has committed \$19 million for the initial purchase of textbooks for history, geography and literature for East German schools and universities.

Beyond this, West German universities have agreed to recognize the East German *Abitur*, or high school diploma, even though East Germans graduated after 12 years, while West Germans are required to spend 13 years in school to earn an *Abitur*. (*The New York Times*, August 9, 1990)

Executive personnel from the Soviet business sector will be attending seminars in the Federal Republic of Germany on the subjects of "Business Enterprises and the Market" and "Management and Marketing." These courses fall within the framework of seven further training programs being conducted by the Cologne-based Carol Duisberg Society.

Approximately 20 participants will attend each of the programs, to be held in different regions of West Germany. It is expected that more than 800 managers from the USSR will undertake training in 1990 under this program. Participants will receive a theoretical introduction to the structures of a social market economy as well as insight into the ways large and medium-sized corporations function. (*CEDEFOPnews*, August 1990)



