

Hui, Po Keung, Lingnan University, Hong Kong

‘Getting the Job Done’ – The Uses of Cultural Studies in Hong Kong Secondary Schools

“I’ll get the job done” was the (pseudo-)electoral campaign slogan employed by Chief Executive Donald Tsang in 2007 Hong Kong. Getting the job done could mean handing in “assignments” on time, regardless of the quality and relevance of the product. It could also mean effectively accomplishing the objectives of particular projects. This paper argues that the former meaning of “getting the job done” has defined the parameters of Hong Kong schoolteachers’ understanding of “practicality” or “usefulness”, whereas the latter has yet to be cultivated in the Hong Kong educational context. As a result, tremendous energy of teachers and students has been wasted in the schooling process. This paper, drawing on the author’s ongoing cultural research and development projects on a new secondary school subject – Liberal Studies – in Hong Kong since 2003, will discuss how the first notion of “practicality” and “usefulness” may be transformed into the second by way of applying cultural studies in a specific social context – the recent education reform in post-1997 Hong Kong.