The Contributions of Growth Rates in Phonological and Spatial Abilities to Chinese Reading and Mathematical Competencies: A Longitudinal Study of Hong Kong Kindergarteners

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Chair: Dr. Doris Law

Abstract:
There are well-established relations from overall levels of phonological and spatial abilities to Chinese reading and mathematical competencies: people who are stronger in the former perform better on tests of the latter. However, do the rates of growth in phonological and spatial abilities also matter? This longitudinal study of Hong Kong Chinese children (aged three to six) demonstrated that growth rate in phonological awareness during the preschool years significantly predicted both Chinese reading and mathematical competencies at the end of preschool, and that growth rate in spatial perception also significantly predicted mathematical competence. These effects were over and above the overall levels of phonological awareness, spatial perception, and spatial reasoning. The findings highlight the need to provide phonological and spatial learning opportunities for preschoolers whose rates of growth in these skills are slower than those of their peers.

About the speaker:
Dr. Zhang Xiao is currently assistant professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. His recent research is devoted to understanding children's motivation and learning. He is particularly interested in the cognitive, motivational, and environmental factors that underlie children's acquisition of Chinese language and mathematics. His research has used information from various sources, including longitudinal data of typically developing children, studies of children who have reading and mathematics learning disability, intervention programs for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and cross-cultural studies of Chinese and Western children.

Sandwiches and coffee served. Please register at: https://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec_regform.aspx?guest=Y&ueid=43523

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