

**Learning from Difference:
A Comparison of Australian and Hong Kong School Education**

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If the PISA results are accepted as an indicator of the relative worth of nation's school education systems, then Hong Kong (HK) would be considered to be far ahead of Australia. Australia is certainly a developed nation with an advanced and worthy education system, so why does HK education significantly outperform Australian education in all aspects of PISA? This paper provides insight into the differences between both, from the perspective of a school leader who has the unique credentials of having being a successful principal in both Australia and HK. The paper rebukes the belief that the highest performing countries, like HK, Singapore, South Korea, etc, are somehow successful because they are Asian countries with inherent cultures that emphasize authoritarianism, collective obedience and submission of the individual to the state. Instead, this paper argues that the reason for the difference is to be found in comparing school practices and educational beliefs, and that understanding this is important because it will lead to improving student outcomes in both Australia and HK. This paper describes the key points of difference between Australian and HK school education in order to add to the Asian knowledge base in educational leadership.



**ASIA LEADERSHIP
ROUNDTABLE**
BANGKOK
2015

**Building and Connecting an
Asian Knowledge Base in Educational Leadership**

March 8-10, 2015 @ Chulalongkorn University