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High School to Higher Education Transition

GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ROLES OF
SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION PRACTICES
IN SIX NATIONS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

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About the project in general (1)

yesterday: secondary education provided a ticket to economic success

today: the economic health of developed and developing countries depends increasingly on

- higher levels of general education
- more and more specialized levels of vocationally specific training

this report examines: how the education systems in six nations from East and West – Hong Kong, Japan, South-Korea, Thailand, Switzerland, and the United States – meet these challenges by offering general and vocational education with a focus on the transition from secondary to tertiary education

About the project in general (2)

Context

The six nations participating in this project are diverse:

- geographically: from very large to modest to small
- politically: from federalistic to centralized
- linguistically: homogenous versus heterogenous
- economically: from strong emphasis on service industry to more mixed industry with still a strong agriculture

Post secondary education especially: common tendency moving beyond secondary education

- driving force: economic resources and development strategies
- variance in level of tertiary education attainment

About the project in general (3)

Research Questions

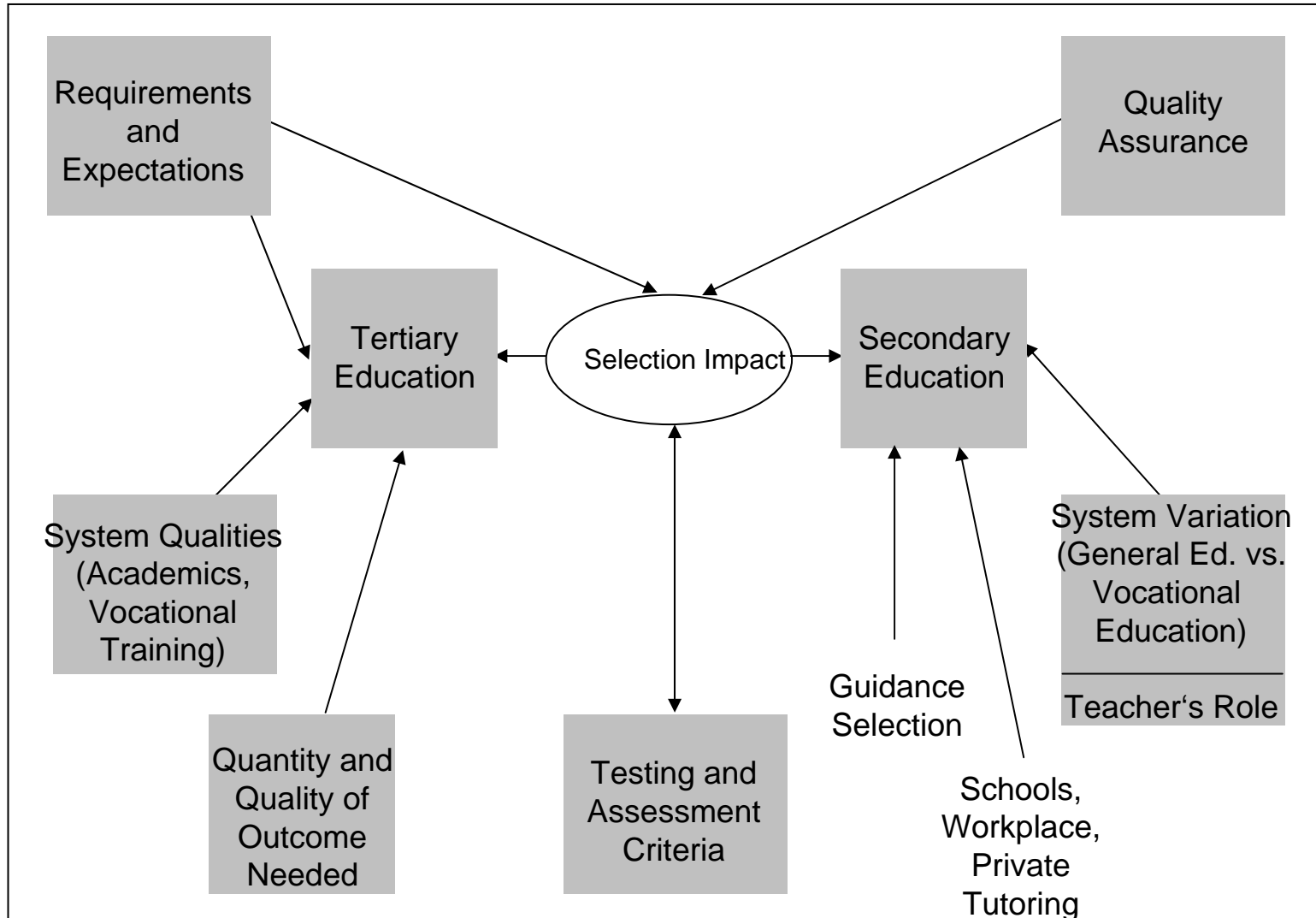
- Who needs a traditional college or university education and who a non-academic vocational education to succeed economically?
- How should we prepare and select students for college or university and for non-academic tertiary education?
- How can we meet the vocational needs of youth who do not go on to a traditional college or university?
- What are the impacts of such exercises to the education systems respectively?
- Are there any contextual factors contributing to such systems?

Methods

- Qualitative and quantitative analyses regarding each country:
 - desk research by each country's representative
 - discussion and synthesis by the research team
- case studies in three countries (Thailand, Switzerland, U.S.) by the research team
- Comparative analysis based on both country reports and case studies

Structure for the Cross National Comparisons (1)

Educational Values and Beliefs within the Country Education System: Structure and Qualities Economic and Social Background of the Country



Structure for the Cross National Comparisons (2)

Cross National Comparison of Educational Systems

Structure of the systems

- Degree of differentiation
- Degree of permeability
- Numbers of institutions and financing the system
- Main reforms

Commonly held education values and beliefs driving the educational system

- Values of Vocational Education
- Beliefs in Testing and Private Tutoring
- Notion of Trust

Content/Curriculum of the Educational System

Transition and Access to Higher Education

- Institutional Autonomy
- Postsecondary Admission and Application Processes
- The Role of Entrance and Exit Examinations
- Access to Postsecondary Education

Ethnographic study: Mutual visits by the entire research group in three countries

- **sample:** a small, but nevertheless typical sample of institutions and persons representing levels of the education system respective, actively involved in the transition issue

- **procedure:**
 - site visits to different institutions of interest, defined by the host
 - interviews and conversation with groups of persons concerned (faculty, students, administrators, researchers, politicians, and in the case of vocational education in Switzerland also managers and apprentices, etc.) based on questions defined by the research team
 - drawing conclusions by the research team

Case Studies: Results (1) Contextual factors

Economic conditions

- Wealth differences are mirrored in the levels of investments in education at all levels, but particularly at the post secondary level.
- The greater inequality of income and wealth in the U.S. and Thailand, as compared with Switzerland, is mirrored in the patterns of greater heterogeneity in educational attainment levels among the adult populations.

Case Studies: Results (1) Contextual factors

National values and nature of secondary and post secondary education are linked

THAILAND	U.S.	SWITZERLAND
University education highly valued for personal success and national development	Strong academic preparation for all students highly valued	High work-quality notion
↓	↓	↓
Low status of VE	VE on secondary level not seen as a good preparation for post-secondary education	Pride in education system and workforce
↓	↓	↓
Low status of completion education by VE on secondary level	Companies not ready to invest in public VE-System	High trust in vocational education (VE) system
↓		↓
Companies not ready to invest in public VE-System		Companies invest in public VE-System

Case Studies: Results (2) Four contrasts

Four contrasts have important implications for the nature of the educational opportunities available to youth

- Locus of control over decision - regarding the design and administration of various segments of the education systems
- Status of Vocational Education
- Competitiveness and Selectivity
- Centralization vs. Decentralization

Case Studies: Results (2) Four contrasts

Locus of control

	THAILAND	U.S.	SWITZERLAND
access	highly centralized system (national entrance exam), but independence of institutions has increased: non-test-based application materials can be considered	high degree of autonomy of higher education institutions <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> ↙ ↘ </div> competitive access schools open and easy schools	highly centralized system based on certifications conferred by the secondary educational institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vocational high schools <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> ↙ ↘ </div> federal certificate vocational matura <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gymnasium: Matura
curriculum	based on national standards curriculum is institutionally developed	based on some minimum-standardization of K-12 education Curriculum is institutionally developed	based on national minimum standards → high autonomy of gymnasium → medium autonomy of vocational schools

Case Studies: Results (2) Four contrasts

Vocational Education in Thailand and the USA are rather similar and differ very clearly from Switzerland

	THAILAND	U.S.	SWITZERLAND
system and numbers	many non-dual vocational high schools	less than 20 % of upper secondary level go to a non-dual vocational high school	65 % of upper secondary level go through a dual system of vocational education ↓
	many non-dual post secondary vocational schools	medium developed school based post-secondary vocational education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highly developed continuing vocational education • universities of applied sciences
value	highly stigmatized	highly stigmatized	not stigmatized
problem		the lowest 25 per cent of a school cohort	
challenge	higher education increasingly perceived as the educational path of choice		

Case Studies: Results (2) Four contrasts

Competitiveness and Selectivity

THAILAND	U.S.	SWITZERLAND
<p>Highly competitive prestigious universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition of requirements by the universities • Restricted study seats • very selective for elitist high schools • less selective after acceptance to university <p>Less or not competitive for remaining Institutions</p> <p>Private tutoring inevitable</p>	<p>Highly selective top universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition of requirements by the universities • drop out variation from school to school • focus on coaching at top universities <p>Less or not competitive for remaining Institutions</p> <p>Priv. tut. less important</p>	<p>Low competitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matura entitles to enter any university • Vocational matura entitles to enter any university of applied science <p>Very selective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transition sec. I to II • competition for apprenticeships • drop out during sec. II • high drop out at universities <p>Priv. tut. less important</p>

Case Studies: Results (2) Four contrasts

Centralization vs. Decentralization

THAILAND	U.S.	SWITZERLAND
<p>Centralized national tests for university admission (seen as more objective by the public)</p> <p>Centralized data bases</p> <p>Dezentralized direct admission system of competitive and non-competitive schools</p>	<p>Most decentralized due to high degree of autonomy of schools</p> <p>Some standardization by standard tests, accreditations, rankings and informations</p>	<p>Centralized admission system: Matura is the gate to university (accredited by a federal commission)</p>

Conclusions and Implications

- The case studies **affirmed** the general nature of the upper secondary and post secondary education systems in Switzerland, Thailand, and the U.S. that were described in the individual country reports.
- Moreover, they **offered** some interesting perspectives
 - on the factors that were instrumental in shaping each system
 - on the strengths and weaknesses of each, given current social and economic contexts.
- All systems are **on the move**, because general and vocational education are facing challenges.
- The **transition/admission systems** tend to become more comprehensive.