RECONSTRUCTING TRANSITION KNOWLEDGE IN TAIWAN

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Taking a post-colonial stand and using school to work transition as an example, the author re-examines the special education discourses in Taiwan and attempts to construct alternate understandings of transition from sociological and cultural perspectives. A review of past transition literature and a survey of the educational background of the special education faculty in Taiwan reveal the United States (U.S.) heritage of the special education knowledge. Although the introduction of transition concepts and models from the U.S. and the strongly U.S. influenced development of special education have contributed tremendously to the education of children with disabilities in Taiwan, the theories and philosophies that have their roots in the western history and civilization and manifested in special education theories and practices appear to go largely unnoticed by the special education scholars and practitioners in Taiwan for various reasons. In view of the continuously yet uncritically embrace and application of the borrowed theories and practices in Taiwan, the author excavates the three themes that dominate current special education and transition discourse and drive the special education practices in Taiwan. These themes include (a) the privileging of the U.S. transition knowledge, (b) the universality of transition concepts, and (c) the culture deficit approach to understanding transition in local contexts. The author then discusses the possible consequences of the contradictions and incompatibilities between borrowed transition theories and local practices, proposes alternative readings of these contradictions, and offers solutions based on Taiwan's local social and cultural contexts.

Introducing Thomas Kuhn's concepts of paradigm and paradigm shift to the field of special education, Thomas Skritic (1986) maintained that the positivist paradigm on which special education knowledge is based needs to be replaced with multiple sets of new meta-theoretical assumptions. Calling on the special education community to attempt a meta-theoretical critique of its professional knowledge, he urged special education researchers and practitioners to reflect on and critically reexamine the special education knowledge in a *multidisciplinary context that includes sociology, political science, anthropology, psychology, and biology, instead of a narrow base in psychology and biology* (p. 85).

To me, a special education scholar from Taiwan, Skrtic's call for multiparadigmatic and multidisciplinary special education knowledge signifies two urgent tasks that need to be initiated in Taiwan. One task is to deconstruct the current transition discourse by reflecting on, reconsidering, and interrupting the three current meta-theoretical assumptions that have entrenched the transition field in Taiwan. The three assumptions are (a) privileging the United States (U.S.) transition knowledge, (b) the universality of transition concepts, and (c) the special education professionals' culture deficit approach to understanding transition in local contexts. Under these assumptions, Taiwan's special education scholars have been reproducing the transition knowledge transmitted from the U.S. through monolithic theoretical approaches to research and special education training at home and abroad.

The other task is to reconstruct multiple paradigms of special education knowledge by looking beyond the current special education theoretical constructs. Particularly, the author intends to investigate indigenous and local knowledge and reconstruct new perspectives in transition through historical, cultural, and political lenses by *reframing* the issues of current transition discourse in Taiwan.

To bring to light the influence of U.S. special education discourse on Taiwan's special education knowledge, the author starts with an overview of special education teacher training in Taiwan. A review of publications on Taiwan's transition services follows to illustrate the transplant of transition knowledge from the U.S. to Taiwan. The author attempts to incorporate historical and cultural perspectives in the discussion and analysis of the meta-theoretical assumptions the Taiwanese special education sector is subservient to and continues to perpetuate. The author also attempts a speculative discussion of the application of possible new paradigms that adopt indigenous psychological constructs in transition planning for students with disabilities in Taiwan. The author concludes this paper with the hope that we can create new possibilities for generating special education knowledge through a reflective examination of our assumptions and incorporation of political, historical, and cultural dimensions in our search for multiple paradigms.

Located offshore from China's coast in East Asia, Taiwan is an island country where 23 million people call home. People of predominantly Han Chinese descent make up around 98 percent of the population as a result of several immigration waves from China in the last several hundred years. The rest two percent are comprised of native Taiwanese of Austronesian ancestry and recent immigrant spouses and workers from Southeast Asian countries (Government Information Office, 2009).

For reasons beyond the scope of discussion in this paper, the U.S. has been serving as a beacon for aspiring Taiwanese students from all academic areas, including the field of special education, after the WWII. From 1950 to 1989, 80-90% of Taiwanese students who studied overseas went to the U.S. Despite the fact that students have been able to choose any school on the face of the globe since the restrictions for studying overseas were lifted in 1989, more than 50% of the students continue to prefer U.S. higher education institutions for advanced studies (Chen & Chien, 2005). Returning students from the U.S. with doctoral degrees are highly sought after by the ever expanding higher education institutions and constitute the mainstay of the teaching and research faculty in Taiwan. As a result, *Taiwan's educational policies, systems, and categorization of academic disciplines are based on the U.S. model. The textbooks for higher education are also imported from the U.S.* (p. 4). The field of special education is no exception.

The U.S. has been producing the majority of the special education faculty for Taiwan. In Taiwan, 13 universities have special education programs. The author conducted an informal survey on the faculty credentials posted on these programs' websites in summer 2007. About 58% (85) of faculty received their doctoral degrees in special education from U.S. institutions while 33% (48) are locally trained and 7.5% (11) hold doctoral degrees from Japanese or European universities. The locally trained faculty members are the graduates of the three major national universities that host doctoral programs where U.S-trained faculty member enjoy a dominant presence. Bearing in mind that individual differences in faculty members and the institutions they attended do exist, the variance has not prevented them from transmitting the mainstream U.S. special education knowledge to Taiwan, which has in turn shaped the development of Taiwanese special education in the past 50 years.

U.S. special education knowledge is the product of mainstream U.S. culture and core values such as equality and individualism have contributed to the development of special education and continue to be the underpinnings for current policy and practice in the U S. (Harry, Kalyanpur, & Day, 1999). Taiwanese special education scholars have been emulating, consciously or unconsciously, the U.S special education models and ideals and significantly influenced the policies and laws governing education for people with disabilities in Taiwan. In this paper, the author focuses on the field of transition in special education to reveal a dominant and continuous trend of reproducing and transplanting U.S. transition knowledge, practice, and research methods in Taiwan.

Method
To make explicit the themes of Taiwan's current transition discourse, the author reviewed literature on transition in Taiwan by searching the major electronic journal and database sites that house transition literature in Taiwan. These include the Vocational Education Resources for Students with Disabilities (http://www.cter.edu.tw/index.asp), the Special Education WWW (http://www.spc.ntnu.edu.tw/), and the *Journal of Taiwan Normal University* (http://www.ntnu.edu.tw/acad/epub/epub.htm). The author obtained *the Outcome Report on the Development of Transition Services Assessment* (Lin, 2005a) from the vocational education resources site. The Special Education WWW is an online special education resource created by the Division of Special Education, Ministry of Education and managed by the Special Education Department of the National Taiwan Normal University. This website includes articles

published by the three major special education research journals in Taiwan from 1980s on: *Special Education Quarterly, Gifted Education Quarterly, and Special Education Research Journal.* Many articles come in full text in this database. The *Journal of Taiwan Normal University* is an academic-oriented, anonymously refereed periodical published by National Taiwan Normal University, the oldest, most prestigious teachers' education university in Taiwan. The university offers online PDF versions of all articles published since the journal's inception in 1956.

The articles published in English were retrieved from the databases including ERIC, PsycInfo, and Education Full Text. For both Chinese and English database and e-journal searches, the following key words and their combinations were used: transition, school-to-work, Taiwan, special education, children with disabilities. The search was limited to peer-reviewed journals. While there was not a restriction set for the time of the publication, the year of the publication of these articles ranged between 1999 and 2006. Altogether the literature provided one outcome report commissioned by the government, 12 articles in Chinese written by Taiwanese scholars, and five English articles written or co-authored by Taiwanese special education scholars about transition in Taiwan.

The review of the transition literature in Taiwan reveals the following three themes that dominate special education discourse in Taiwan. The authors of the works reviewed (a) privilege U.S. transition knowledge, (b) assume that transition concepts are universal, and (c) regard aspects of Taiwanese culture as barriers to transition. The first theme is prevalent throughout the publications. Almost every Taiwanese special education scholar grounded his/her research in American transition theories and models. The second theme is evidenced by the scholars' unquestioned acceptance of the U.S. transition concepts, models, and theories and their philosophical underpinnings and their applicability to the Taiwanese contexts. The third theme is addressed in a few articles in which scholars used Chinese culture to explain parents' belief in parental authority and their reluctance to let their children be independent. The following section is a detailed and critical analysis of these three themes running through the special education and transition discourse in Taiwan.

Theme One: Privileging American Philosophy and Theoretical Frameworks
The *Outcome Report on the Development of Transition Services Assessment* (Lin, 2005a) commissioned by the Ministry of Education and considered as guidelines for future transition development in Taiwan represents the quintessential theoretical united front in Taiwan's transition literature. In its 17-page literature review, 12 pages are devoted to extensive overview of the U.S. transition history, development of transition theories, public laws governing transition models and practice, transition assessment tools, and a detailed comparison of transition laws and services between Taiwan and the U.S. The remaining five pages of the review covered Taiwan's implementation of transition services and areas for improvement, as measured against the U. S. transition models and principles.

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the rapid development and conceptual changes of transition theories in the U.S. and the corresponding revisions of policies reflected by the amendments to public laws governing transition. In Taiwan, however, Lin observed that some transition related laws (in this case, the Special Education Curriculum and Instruction Implementation Regulations) continued to adopt the career development theory in the 1980's in specifying the amount of vocational training for high school students with disabilities, reflecting a disjunction among special education laws, some of which are based on life-span transition theories developed in the 1990's. Lin also commented on some Taiwanese special education scholars' limited knowledge of the historical aspects of transition in the U.S. These scholars, according to Lin, continued to equate transition with vocational education, rather than the broader perspectives utilized in the U.S. Lin urged these scholars to trace the historical development of transition theories in the U.S. to gain a better understanding of the philosophy and principles of transition services (Lin, 2005a).

Lin is a conscientious scholar who has closely followed the development of transition services in the U.S. and written prolifically to introduce the most current transition theories to Taiwan from the U.S. His most recent theoretical piece on transition *Theories and Philosophies Concerning Transition For Students with Disabilities in the United States* was written in 2005 right after the re-authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 (Lin, 2005c). In the article, he elaborated on (U.S.) career development theory, adolescent development theory, general systems theory, normalization, inclusion, and self-determination. He stressed the importance of considering the philosophical foundations of these concepts in applying them in Taiwan and maintained that *transition professionals in Taiwan need to construct a shared vision and a similar (U.S.) lens through which to*

discover the potential of students with disabilities and to develop the power of effective practice to maximize that potential (Lin 2005c, p. 2).

Other transition scholars also published articles to introduce theories and development of transition laws, career development, vocational education, and government educational campaigns in the U.S. (Chen, 2005; Chen, 2003; Chen, 2001; Lin, 2000; Lin, 2002; Niew & Wang, 1999). In the introduction section of their research papers, transition researchers always started with a historical overview of transition in the U.S. For example, IDEA components relevant to transition and U.S. government position and policies on transition were the most cited support for their claims that transition is important (Chan & Chadsey, 2006; Chen, 2005; Chen, 2003; Chen & Zhang, 2003; Chou & Lin, 2004; Kang, Lovett, & Haring, 2002; Lin, 2000; Lin, 2005a; Lin, 1999; Liu, 2004; Liu, 2005; Wang, 2003; Zhang, Wehmeyer, & Chen, 2005). Stressing the importance of parental participation in transition planning for students with disabilities, Chen Hui-ju (2005) cited the four pillars of transition plan proposed by the U.S. Division on Career Development and Transition of the U.S. Council for Exceptional Children. These pillars were education, counseling, community integration, and parents. She also supported her claim that parents were important in planning their children's transition by citing other American scholars' works on parent participation in IEP/ITP meetings. However, none of her references on parent participation was about Taiwanese views on parent-child or parent-teacher relationships and interaction, which are very different from the West (Bui & Turnbull, 2003; Chao, 1994; Ho, Peng, Lai, & Chan, 2001; Hsu, 1985; Hwang, 1999).

Scholars shared the same view that U.S. transition structure and policies served as the standard against which Taiwan should be measured also transplanted the same largely quantitative and positivist approach to research and utilized the same assessment tools. Chen and Zhang (2003) investigated transition service needs and services received in Taiwan. The authors used a U.S. developed outcome measures as the foundation in developing their questionnaire questions (Chen & Zhang, 2003). Zhang, Wehmyer, and Chen (2005) translated a U.S. developed survey into Chinese and used it with Taiwanese parents and teachers. They compared the support given by the U.S. and Taiwanese teachers and parents to their students' development of self-determination. The language and examples in both English and Chinese surveys were the same. The authors assumed people understood and expressed self-determination in Taiwan and in the U.S. the same way and concluded that teachers in Taiwan were no different from or even better than teachers in the U.S. in encouraging students to develop self-determination because they scored higher than their U.S. counterparts on the survey. Chan and Chadsey (2006) also translated a U.S. questionnaire, *Survey of School to Work Transition Practices* (SSTWTP) and used it as a tool to understand how Taiwanese teachers' practice in facilitating transition of high school students with disabilities. Although the Chinese translation was piloted by practitioners in Taiwan and revised by the researchers (no details given about revisions), the conceptual framework which was based on the *National Transition Alliance (NTA) for Youth and Disabilities Transition Practice Framework* stayed the same with five fixed categories: student-focused transition planning, student-focused transition development, inter-agency/inter-disciplinary collaboration, family involvement, structures/policies. Their results showed that Taiwanese teachers rated family involvement and structure/policy less important than student-focused transition planning and development. They speculated that it could be attributed to a possible lack of pre-service or in-service teacher training in the importance of family involvement or, referring to U.S. studies, due to decreased parent involvement because of students' age and/or parents' socio-economic status. Both speculations were not grounded in local contexts.

The promotion of transition concepts and models by scholars has raised the practitioners' and policy makers' awareness of the school-to-work transition needs of students. As a result, a mandatory on-line reporting system of students with transition needs and laws specifying transition process and timelines have been created by the government to ensure and monitor transition services for students. However, Taiwanese transition scholars' grounding their research in the U.S. frameworks perpetuates the dominant position of the U.S. transition knowledge and inadvertently limits the scope of transition research and ways of framing research questions that reflect Taiwan's local contexts.

Theme Two: Self-Determination Is Universal
The author uses the concept of self-determination in U.S. transition to illustrate how concepts developed in the U.S. become universal in Taiwan. Before delving into the Taiwanese scholars' view on self-determination, it is imperative to define self-determination expressed in the U.S., where this concept has been promoted as a government initiative at the federal level to help people with disabilities have more input in the decisions that affect their lives (Ward, 1996). Research has demonstrated that self-

determination is important because it enhances independence, autonomy, and normalization, factors influencing the outcomes of transition of students with disabilities. Students who were more self-determining have more success in finding employment, staying on the jobs, and receiving higher wages compared to students who were less self-determining. (Frankland, Turnbull,Wehmeyer, & Blackmountain, 2004; Zhang et al., 2005). According to Wehmeyer (2003), functional characteristics of self-determination include (a) behavioral autonomy, a developmental process of individuation; (b) acting on own interest and free from undue influence; (c) self-regulation behavior such as self monitoring and goal setting; (d) psychological empowerment from learned hopefulness and perceived control, and (e) self-realization, knowing one's own limitations and strengths (Wehmeyer, 2003).

Wehmeyer (2003), Mithuag (2003), and Abery and Stancliffe (2003) introduced three theoretical frameworks of self-determination. Wehmeyer took a philosophical stand tracing the foundation of self-determination back to the classic theological and philosophical question: do people have free will? He sided with Locke as Locke stated that human agent is free and has the power to act (Wehmyer, 2003). Mithuag (2003) viewed self-determination from a social political point of view. He asserted that self-determination is universal because it has been demonstrated by historical events and documents such as French revolution, United Nation Charter, and Universal Declaration on Human Rights. He also viewed self-determination as a psychological need citing Deci and Ryan's (1985) belief that self-determination is innate (Mithaug, 2003). Abery and Stancliffe (2003) adopted an ecological perspective and defined self-determination as the interaction between individuals and their environments. To achieve self-determination, a person needs both personal competences (skills, knowledge, beliefs/attitudes) and the facilitation of the environment. A person's environment includes daily life settings, coordination and communication of these settings, and the overarching institutional and ideological systems in which these settings fell under (Abery & Stancliffe, 2003).

In these authors' eyes, Christianity, French Revolution, United Nations, the conclusion of the innate nature of self-determination based on research in the West (Deci & Ryan, 1985) validate the universality of self-determination. Despite the inclusion of environment, Abery and Stancliffe (2003) continued to place individual as the center of their ecological model, putting more weight on the ideals of individualism and independence.

None of the reviewed articles on transition published by Taiwanese scholars deviated from the major self-determination theories summarized above (Lin, 2005a; Zhang, Wehmeyer, & Chen, 2005). Through the inculcation of the Western philosophy and training, Taiwanese transition scholars and professionals have accepted and advocated these theories without questioning their Western roots. The encounters of transition practitioners, parents, and students in Taiwan with the theory of self-determination and other transition theories stemming from a Judeo-Christian and Eurocentric paradigm (Shohat & Stam, 1994) have received little attention.

Theme Three: Cultural Deficit Approach in Transition
While acknowledging the importance of self-determination, some culturally conscious transition scholars in the U. S. acknowledge the lack of discussion of linguistic, cultural, and familial factors in relations to self-determination. Studying transition planning for students with learning disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Trainor (2002) questioned the universal implication of self-determination and called attention to the need to consider the interplay between programs that promote self-determination and the life experiences of and expectations for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Frankland et al. (2004) examined the application of self-determination within context of the Dine culture and traditions. While self-regulation and autonomy are valued in the Dine culture, interdependence and group cohesion prevail. Despite the universality of certain aspects of self-determination observed in the study, the authors stressed a critical need for educational services that reflect racial, cultural, and familial values of the student. These inter-group and intra-group differences are taken into consideration and might be incorporated, not dismissed or denounced, in transition planning.

On the other hand, few transition scholars in Taiwan mentioned culture and beliefs. When they did, they regarded local beliefs based on Chinese culture and history as the remnants of the past. Local beliefs seemed to contradict the modern universal concept of self-determination, the central component in today's transition planning in the U.S. and a purported universal value for all people. Lin's (2005b) view on culture is an example:

The concept of self-determination within the Taiwan special education system has been influenced by the culture strongly linking to Confucianism. In addition, specific family values and patriarchy has caused certain individuals with disabilities to be limited or denied the opportunity to take risks, make decisions, and, therefore, experience these highly prized values throughout their educational experience and into their adult life (p. 1).

Lin essentialized Taiwanese culture to Confucianism and patriarchy. He and other scholars implicated that when Taiwanese parents adhered to traditional beliefs, they are poor models and create barriers to their children's development of self-determination (Lin, 2005b, Liu, 2004). Other scholars treated culture as a variable which did not warrant further discussion. For example, Zhang et al. (2005) compared Taiwanese and U. S. teachers and parents in facilitating self-determination of their children and students. Although the authors raised the issue of culture and attributed parents' lower scores as compared to American parents to cultural differences, they diminished the importance of the difference through the generality of their comments.

> Chinese culture, for instance, emphasizes belonging to groups and adjusting the self in order to meet group needs. In this culture, parents and teachers often act as authorities for children and young adults, who are expected to respect and listen to these authorities (p. 56).

This matter-of-fact over-generalization of Chinese culture without carefully examining the people and the contexts they are in reduces culture to a descriptive variable and reinforces the stereotypical depictions of certain groups. It appears that these scholars used culture as proxy for a phenomenon for which they could find no other explanations. Furthermore, parents' cultural beliefs and child-rearing practices, in these authors' view, were problems that prevented their children from achieving self-determination, representing a culture deficit approach (see Allen, 1978). Assumptions about the universality of self-determination and the need for parents to change their outdated beliefs and practices divert the scholars from exploring deeper into Taiwanese psychological constructs, cultural values, and social conditions that affect child-parent relations. These assumptions also limit scholars' visions in studying self-determination in a Taiwanese context, parent participation in transition planning, and community integration. For example, despite the fact that the law requires equal participation (Act of Special Education, 2004), the great respect accorded to intellectuals and teachers in Taiwan (Fwu & Wang, 2002) might thwart parents from being equal partners in such occasions as in the IEP/ITP meetings. In addition, it is very likely the scholars' and teachers' unfavorable opinion about the parents' complacency and inaction due to their different understanding of self-determination would further compound the dissonance between teachers and parents. This dissonance could in turn affect the students' transition outcome.

It is necessary and commendable that Taiwanese scholars diligently keep up with the latest trend of transition in the U.S. and introduce Western concepts to Taiwan. While it is crucial to understand U.S. development of transition, it is time to critically examine and deconstruct the assumptions that are the building blocks of Taiwan's transition. We cannot discount the greater historical, economic, and political forces behind their seemingly unconditional acceptance of U.S. transition knowledge. As Ho (2001) stated that *the wholesale importation of Western psychology into Asia as a form of cultural imperialism that perpetuates the colonization of the mind* (p. 927), the author argues these Taiwanese scholars' deep-seated assumptions and their touting of U.S. special education knowledge are part of the legacy of the U.S. cultural imperialism. The history of U.S. cultural imperialism and the global structure of inequality continue to impact on how other countries develop their local knowledge (see Chilcote, 2002; Palladino & Worboys, 1993; Zevin, 1972).

Reframing Transition
Reframing is one of the 25 projects described by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) in her *Decolonizing Methodologies* for conducting research by indigenous communities. She argued that *one reason why so many social problems which beset indigenous communities are never solved is that the issues have been framed in a particular way* by government or social agencies which failed to see the connection between the social problems and the history (p. 153). In a similar vein, Taiwan's special education discourse has been historically framed by U.S. trained scholars and needs to be reframed within a local context.

Incorporate Culture in the Transition Discourse
Instead of dismissing our cultural beliefs as backward, traditional, and problematic, we need to start to reconstruct multiple paradigms of special education knowledge by carefully studying our own culture

and incorporate it into the transition discourse in Taiwan. Family and kinship and their roles in transition planning, for example, need to be understood very differently in Taiwan from how they are perceived in the U.S. (Hsu, 1967; Hsu, 1971; Hwang, 1999).

In the transition process, instead of insisting parents change their beliefs and learn new concepts as Liu (2004) suggested in her writing or judging parents holding *traditional* values as incompetent planning partners (Liu, 2004; Lin, 2005), we need to acknowledge and understand where the parents come from. Homi Bhabha reminded us that the Iranian government's demands over *The Satanic Verses* (by Salman Rushdie) which Western countries deemed *archaic, almost medieval, are being made now, out of a particular political state that is functioning very much in our time,...Besides this, many of the Muslims making the demands are not a million miles away...they happen to live in Bradford (England)* (Homi Bhabha & Rutherford, 1990, p. 215). The author surely hopes that parent-teacher relationships are not as tense as the ones between the Western world and the Islamic countries; nevertheless, the same rationale applies. However *traditional* or *outdated* parents' cultural beliefs are, they are functioning and impacting their children's daily life. Homi Bhabha even went further to claim that the founding moment of modernity was the moment of colonialism (p. 218). In this sense, in order to maintain a status quo in the power structure, Taiwanese scholars and teachers represent a group of oppressors in defining parents as the *other* because they are less modern than the professionals and being the *other* rendered parents powerless.

We need to realize that adjectives such as traditional or archaic cannot erase, negate, falsify, or invalidate the different beliefs people hold just as modern, American, rational, and progressive do not mean good or correct. Ignoring or dismissing parents' concerns or values is arrogant and this arrogance contradicts the equal teacher-parent partnership principle legalized in the Act of Special Education (Ministry of Education of the Republic of China (Taiwan), 2004), a law ironically originated from these scholars' U.S. training, and prevents new knowledge from being created. Professionals and scholars should learn to use culture to achieve goals and remediate different frameworks (Artiles, April 27, 2006).Harry, Kalyanpur, and Day's framework on developing a posture of cultural reciprocity can help both parents and professional take advantage of their cultural knowledge in transition planning for their children and students by carrying out the following steps.

> Step 1: Identify the cultural values that are embedded in your interpretation of a student's difficulties or in the recommendation for service.

> Step 2: Find out whether the family being served recognizes and values these assumptions and, if not, how their view differs from yours.

> Step 3: Acknowledge and give explicit respect to any cultural differences identified, and fully explain the cultural basis of your assumptions.

> Step 4: Through discussion and collaboration, set about determining the most effective way of adapting your professional interpretations or recommendations to the value system of this family (Harry, Kalyanpur, & Day, 1999).page?

The exchange and application of cultural knowledge is both a negotiation and learning process. Teachers, parents, and students participating in this process will eventually take away with them new perspectives about themselves and people they work with.

Indigenous Research
In order to be truly culturally reciprocal, Taiwanese scholars in special education must carefully examine our own history, culture, and psycho-social constructs. A detailed discussion of indigenous research is beyond the scope of this paper and my current capacity. I am excited about the fairly large amount of indigenous psychology literature published internationally and the prospect of developing new special education frameworks (Ho, 1988; Ho, 1998; Ho, 1998; Ho et al., 2001; Hsu, 1985; Hsu, 1981; Hwang, 1999; Kim, 2000; Matsumoto, 1999; Yang, 2000).

Although alternatives to Western self-construals have been slow to emerge in Asia, let alone in Taiwan, there is a non-Western framework on self-hood developed by the Chinese-born, British and American trained psychological anthologist, Francis L. K. Hsu. Hsu contended that *the concept of personality is an expression of the western ideal of individualism. It does not correspond even to the reality of how the western man lives in western culture, far less any man in another culture* (Hsu, 1985, p. 24). Hsu

proposed a Galilean *view of man that sees him in terms of a larger whole, as contrasted to the personality approach or a* Ptolemian *view that sees the individual human animal as the center of his world* (p. 33). He broke away from the individualism-collectivism dichotomy and developed a model explaining human behaviors. This example illustrates that there are more than one approach to understanding self.

With the new frameworks, let me speculate in a Taiwanese context how transition planning would look when we take culture into consideration. In its most crude form, the transition focus is likely to be family-centered instead of student-centered. Self-determination will look different as well. The students not only need to know their personal strengths but also understand that their lives are intertwined with their families and family is part of them. Family as a whole provides resources and assistance for every member in it. Here we see the line between the person and the family is less clearly defined. Living independently can be expressed in sharing housework and taking care one's family instead of living away from family. The possibilities are limitless because the responsibility of transition planning no longer only falls on teachers' shoulders and its success is now contingent on the efforts from all sides. Parents and their children, with the new found respect and recognition from the professionals, will be able to actively contribute to this process and have more choices than before.

Summary and Implications
In this article the author traced the epistemological development of Taiwan's current special education knowledge and exposed the meta-theoretical assumptions under which Taiwanese transition scholars develop their theories and models of transition. Special education field in Taiwan has no way to escape the U.S. influence that has been taken roots in our collective subconscious. We privilege U.S. special education knowledge, follow our U.S. colleague's lead in believing that Western psychological constructs are universal, and dismiss local culture as irrelevant or obstacles in the process of transition planning.

To deconstruct these assumptions of the special education discourse in Taiwan and reconstruct new sets of multiple meta-theoretical frameworks, we need to bring local cultural beliefs and practices into our discussion of special education knowledge. We also need to, in addition to understanding U.S. knowledge, investigate alternative psychological, social, political, and historical frameworks through the reframing process to develop new paradigms for special education knowledge in Taiwan.

Reframing issues facing special education scholars through indigenous research projects is a journey of self-examination. This journey might be scary and difficult for many researchers and scholars grounding their knowledge in the positivist paradigm and in western traditions. The constant need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge brings many challenges but at the same time many hopes. The challenge of leaving the comfort zone of our original epistemology formed under the taken-for-granted dominant academic discourse is disconcerting. It is even more unsettling to turn our own beliefs upside down and critically analyze the assumptions behind these beliefs. What is important to note is that as soon as we start to face and examine our beliefs, we create opportunities to explore areas we have never been aware of or thought of venturing into before.

After many years of studying and teaching in the West, Francis L. K. Hsu, the psychological anthropologist the author mentioned before, realized that *the stranglehold of the ideal of individualism on our intellectual deliberations must at least be loosened. Many social scientists of non-western origin, like myself, have in this regard essentially acted like intellectual Uncle Toms* (Hsu, 1985, p. 24). Hsu's realization that he has been trained as an intellectual Uncle Tom all these years at the London School of Economics and in his early years teaching Anthropology at the Columbia University and at the Northwestern University must have come as a shock. He turned this shock to an opportunity and decided to deconstruct the ideal of individualism and reconstructed a self-hood framework that explains how we understand human relationships in a totally different light. His revelation sends me a clear and inspirational message: While many intellectual Uncle Toms, both male and female, are making important contributions to Taiwan's special education field, the uniformity of special education discourse needs to be questioned and deconstructed so more room will be created to incorporate our cultural knowledge from both parents and professionals. Reconstruction of special education knowledge in Taiwan then can be accomplished by reframing our special education issues based on indigenous research and multi-paradigmatic and multi-disciplinary frameworks.

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