

# Facing Death: Should Death Education Be Taught to Chinese Youth as a Controversial Issue?

Ruiyi Cao

Institute of Education, University College London, London, England

Email: ruiyi.cao.21@ucl.ac.uk

**How to cite this paper:** Cao, R. Y. (2024). Facing Death: Should Death Education Be Taught to Chinese Youth as a Controversial Issue? *Creative Education*, 15, 678-691. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2024.154041>

**Received:** March 4, 2024

**Accepted:** April 26, 2024

**Published:** April 29, 2024

Copyright © 2024 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

---

## Abstract

The COVID-19 epidemic has caused many adolescents to experience bereavement, which has brought attention to death education. Using three assessment criteria, namely behavioural, political and cognitive, this paper separately assesses whether death education is discussed as a controversial issue in the classroom in the Chinese context. The article presents the view that death education is not a controversial issue but a sensitive one. And it demonstrates possible ways of implementing death education in Chinese classrooms through an example.

## Keywords

Death Education, Controversial Issue, Safe Space, Non-Directive Teaching

---

## 1. Introduction

Death is something from which no one can escape, and the outbreak of COVID-19 has brought the topic of death to the forefront of people's minds as it occurs more frequently and closer to everyone than usual because of the threats to their health and lives and those of their loved ones (Kavaklı et al., 2020; Herrero et al., 2023). Many negative psychological consequences exist when people face death, such as worry, anxiety, depression and even panic (Bakioğlu et al., 2020; Satici et al., 2021). Death education effectively alleviates these negative experiences (Bugen, 1981; Knight & Elfenbein, 1993; McClatchey & King, 2015). It can guide people towards a proper understanding of death, help them gain a sense of control to cope with the unpredictable and overwhelming experiences that come with death and enable them to accept the death of others and themselves better.

Unlike death, a widespread phenomenon, death education is not widely available. Even though researches have shown the positive impact of death education on young people's appreciation of life, many voices still question the practice of death education and have a negative attitude towards it. For example, whether young people are cognitively and psychologically developed enough to face death-related discussions and activities. Teachers and parents fear that talking about death with adolescents may cast a psychological shadow over them (Stylianou & Zembylas, 2016; Branch & Brinson, 2007) and also express embarrassment and embarrassment if talking with children about it (Barry & Margaret, 2000). Death education faces many difficulties in its spread in China. Even students in health professions, highly associated with death, do not receive systematic death education (Tang et al., 2014). These different views seem to indicate that death education is a controversial topic.

Through this paper, this article wants to address the argument that although a sensitive topic in China, death education should not be taught to adolescents as a controversial issue. In order to effectively address this argument, I will first define death education and present the current situation of death education in China. Next, I will analyze whether death education should be taught to Chinese youth as a controversial issue and explore the difficulties in its development in terms of behavioural, political and epistemic criteria respectively, which will be the most critical part of the paper. Finally, I will propose a combination of soft instruction and safe space for teaching and learning, using the Chinese film *Lighting Up The Star* as an example of a Chinese classroom conversation about whether teenagers should be allowed to face death head-on.

## 2. Death Education in China

In exploring death education, it is necessary to define death. In medicine, the prevailing view of death is the whole brain approach (Beecher, 2007: p. 117), where doctors should “pronounce death to have occurred in an individual sustaining irreversible coma as a result of permanent brain damage”. In addition to biological death, the philosophical definition of death includes spiritual death and self-denying death. Parfit (1984: p. 228) supported the idea of reincarnation, arguing that death is due to the loss of “psychologically continuous with the original person”. Although this view has been criticised for making historical figures and events that have made facts untenable, it does open the way to a definition of death. Other criteria have been used to define death, such as loss of personality, loss of consciousness and loss of thought (Botkin & Post, 1992). A third definition of death is that proposed by Hegel, “understanding death as spiritual negation instead of natural negation; the improvement in techniques of introjection; or a more efficient mourning” (Hegel, 1977: p. 78), which gives a positive meaning to death.

Although there is no unanimous consensus on the definition of death education, the vast majority have developed based on these three definitions of death.

Death education can be seen as an application of death pedagogy, which encompasses education, teaching and training in the study of death as it is used (Herrero et al., 2022). According to this definition, although the study and promotion of death education in China have been relatively slow (Shu et al., 2023), traces of death education can now be found in the teaching of young people. In junior high school ideology and politics classes, students learn about the right to live, embrace an awareness of valuing life and learn safety techniques to save themselves, such as how to escape from a fire. In primary school science classes, children learn about the evolution and development of life by raising silkworms to observe the development of mulberry larvae into moths. These elements fit into Herrero et al.'s (2022) definition of death education, but they seem more oriented towards exploring life. Most scholars included death education in the context of ethics to education, emphasising the importance of "life" (Zhang, 2015). Life and death must be recognised as co-existing, and teaching how to protect and understand life is also a way of understanding death. However, this approach is too indirect and implicit, and life education cannot be equated with death education. Death education is expected to emphasise thinking about death more directly. Death education should be a part of life education (Wang, 2005).

Kastenbaum's (2000) definition of death education emphasises the importance of death. He defined death education as an activity that enables people to reflect on and understand existential issues such as death, dying and bereavement and to deal with the dysfunctional emotions that arise (p. 328). The scope of death education under this definition is particularly broad, encompassing not only school activities but also, it seems, family education and social education. Such activities can be designed for daily life, and mourning is one of the many ways Chinese youth experience death education. Deleuze's philosophy of temporal repetition (Deleuze, 1968/2014) suggested that mourning as a repetitive activity that destabilises the experience of self-identity allows the living to turn back in time to face death. Mourning makes death visible and allows people to confront and reflect on it without division. Young people are organised to mourn for their deceased compatriots on the anniversary of special events, such as the anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre and the anniversary of the Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan. In addition, young Chinese people often visit graves to pay respects to their ancestors, also included in the Kastenbaum definition of death education. Their parents lead them to their ancestors' destinations for cleaning and remembrance at the annual Qingming Festival or Chinese New Year. The scene where the family member who used to accompany them becomes a tombstone may give young people an insight into death. However, it is questionable whether students can be inspired to reflect on death in Chinese culture through these hidden lessons with no specific purpose or design. Public mourning is not a spontaneous response to death (Durkheim, 1912); it is more of a complex political act, a means by which the government tries to gain support by sending a moral, political message (Xu, 2013). In the event of mourning, its political overtones overwhelmingly engulf the ideological stimulus of death educa-

tion. The real purpose of ancestral worship is also very different from death education. People pay regular homage to their ancestors not only to honour and remember the deceased but also to express their obligations and filial duties to their elders as children (Yick & Gupta, 2002). Also influenced by religion, ancestors are seen as having an essential role in the rise and fall of a family, and this is a way for future generations to ask for refuge and blessings from their ancestors (Lee, 1995). It is impossible to assess what touched adolescents during these activities, whether they were concerned with the occurrence of death, and whether their reflections on death were overshadowed by their reflections on political, religious, and moral culture.

Warren's definition emphasises the systemic nature of death education, defining it as "an attempt to provide a formal, institutional program addressing the phenomena of death and dying" (Warren, 1989: p. 8). He saw the limits that religion and culture place on the practice of death education, even when it is present in the classroom as a formal curriculum. Death education may only appear as an add-on to other classroom presentations (Smilie, 2022). The current state of death education in China is also in this situation. According to Warren's definition, death education exists in the formal classrooms of middle and high schools in China. As an example, the high school language text *The Temple of Earth and Me* is a formal lesson about exploring death. The text is an excerpt from parts one and two of Chinese author Tiesheng Shi's book, which is about the author's deep thoughts on life and death after a sudden tragedy that left him paralysed in both legs and his feelings after facing the untimely death of his mother. This text seems to be a good opportunity to practise death education. However, in reality, teachers of Chinese class as language teachers are more likely to lead students to think about the author's perception of death from a literary perspective like rhetorical devices. Death education is integrated into the rest of the curriculum, leaving students with no real opportunity to understand the sadness of death and process their feelings (Smith & Walz, 1995). The effectiveness of such death education is limited, favouring a metaphysical exploration of spiritual death, with people more willing to talk about the meaning and value of life (Wang, 2005). Students focus more on subject-related content rather than on the experience of death. Death education, attached to other disciplines, emphasises death in the general sense and does not focus on individual young people's exploration of their mortality (Warren, 1989).

In summary, by exploring the definition of death education, we find that although death education has been developed and practised in China, there are many challenges. People in China are used to thinking about death in terms of survival and may feel uncomfortable talking about it directly. Death education in the family and society often has a strong political, cultural and religious dimension. Death education in schools does not form a separate field but is covered by other subjects. Chinese youth rarely have the opportunity to think about and face their mortality. For the definition of death education in this paper, I will draw on Wass's (2004) definition, which defines it as a formal or informal

death-centred educational activity that helps people understand the nature of death and related knowledge and confront and reflect on their own death. In this paper, death education is more likely to refer to teaching activities in schools that directly confront the nature of death. I will analyze whether the teaching activities that young people in China receive to help them face up to death should take the form of controversial questions.

### **3. Should Death Education Be Taught as a Controversial Issue in China?**

Whether or not death education should be taught as a controversial issue in China is assessed using different criteria that will give different answers. How to define a controversial issue is the key to answering this question. I will use the three assessment criteria summarised by Hand (2008)—behavioural, political and epistemic—to analyze the controversial nature of death education being taught in China.

#### **3.1. Behavioural Criterion**

Bailey described the behavioural criterion as “an issue is controversial if numbers of people are observed to disagree about statements and assertions made in connection with the issue” (Bailey, 1975: p. 122). According to this criterion, death education can probably be taught as a controversial issue in both Western countries and China, as there always are different voices regarding death education. Some scholars have worked to demonstrate that children have the mental capacity to recognise death and to show the developmental benefits of death education for young people. Not all of these concerns are addressed. Some continue to question young people’s capacity to cope with death and the effectiveness of death education, and to justify their views. We can all get different answers by thinking about this question longitudinally with just an inter-band perspective. There are different experiences and cultural contexts between generations, and cultural images of death are a dynamic trend (Manzano et al., 2023), so there are many conflicting voices on this issue. According to this criterion, death education in China is a controversial issue. However, the behavioural criterion has been rejected by many scholars, not least because it needs to be narrower and encourage irrational views (Dearden, 1981; Hand, 2008). As a result, an alternative criterion, the political criterion, has emerged.

#### **3.2. Political Criterion**

It may get the opposite result if political criterion is used to assess death education. The political criterion suggests that a moral question should be taught as controversial when no answer to it is entailed by the public values of the liberal democratic state (Hand, 2008: p. 221). In other words, the key to determining whether death education is taught as a controversial issue is whether there are “public values” about it in China. Although a culture of death avoidance and

denial is thought to prevail in China (Tu et al., 2022), according to Rawls' (1993) definition of public values, they are rights to which members of society are entitled and which the state has a responsibility to uphold. I argue that the attitude of the Chinese Communist Party (Backer, 2006), which represents the people in China as a people's democratic dictatorship, is the public value of death education in modern society. The proletariat promotes a Marxist philosophy of death. He believed that death was an inevitable reality for human beings (Blackburn, 1976). Even though there is no explicit law governing death education in China, the basis for this can be found in the materialist promotion that people should face up to the fact of death. Therefore, there are "public values to be upheld" (Hand, 2008: p. 221) on the issue of death education in China, and death education for young people should not be taught as a controversial issue.

### 3.3. Epistemic Criterion and the Rebuttal of the Three Opposing Views

The third criterion, the epistemic criterion, emphasises rationality. Hand (2008: p. 218) argued that rationality is "beliefs are formed or adopted on the basis of good reasons". The key to determining whether an issue is controversial under the epistemic criterion is that more than one viewpoint has rational evidence and support. Specifically, under the epistemic criterion, whether death education should be taught as a controversial issue depends on whether there are at least two rational views having evidence, which also means that we first have to enumerate the different viewpoints and then analyze each one in turn to see if it is rational.

I would summarise the reasons for opposing death education for young people in the following three points, the first being that it is detrimental to the psychological development of young people; the second reason is the traditional Chinese cultural and religious attitude towards death; and the third reason is the belief that teaching death in schools would defeat the purpose of education and be a waste of time and resources. I will analyze these reasons to defend my view that teaching Chinese youth to face death is a sensitive but not controversial teaching issue.

Scholars' concerns about the negative impact of death education on adolescent development are based on the belief that adolescents are not yet capable of accepting death (Stylianou & Zembylas, 2016; Branch & Brinson, 2007) and on research showing that death education has no alleviating effect on death anxiety (Maglio & Robinson, 1994). According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Piaget, 1952), I believe it is a sound stage for adolescents to receive death education. Adolescents have entered stage 4 of their cognitive abilities, where they are already capable of logic and abstraction. Death is an abstract event that has not yet occurred, and students can explore and reflect on this complex event with the guidance of their teachers (Raccichini et al., 2022). Adolescents need to receive correct knowledge of death, and their perceptions of death may be unrealistically influenced by the media and the internet (King & Hayslip Jr., 2002).

If they are not provided with proper death education, they may acquire knowledge of death in other ways, and some views may lead them to bad outcomes, such as suicide or extreme risk-taking (Cotter, 2003). Concerning the second argument, it is true that there are studies that show that death education does not have a significant effect, but there are many factors that contribute to this outcome. The effectiveness of death education varies between teaching styles, and the effectiveness of death education cannot be seen in every individual (Maglio & Robinson, 1994). That teenagers have not already prepared to understand death is an irrational argument that dismisses the value and significance of death education in a biased manner.

The second most controversial opposing view is that talking directly about death is taboo in traditional Chinese culture (Lai & Chen, 2019), and Confucianism and religious beliefs seem to provide a rational basis for this view. However, I argue that these two pieces of evidence are flawed. Some people believe that talking about death often brings misfortune and even death, and avoiding prophecy has become part of the Chinese culture of communication and an act of superstition, avoiding talking about prophecies that might be fulfilled in the future (Simmons & Schindler, 2003). I do not think this is inconsistent with teaching young people to face death head-on. Instead, it seems like an excuse for people to avoid cognitive dissonance because they are afraid of the fear of death. The fact that there may be many uncomfortable topics in death education that provide information that is different from previous perceptions and that the negative emotional experience of this shift leads people to dismiss it unconsciously due to traditional culture does not mean that it is meaningless but rather highlights the importance of death education (Zheng et al., 2021). Chinese culture is not shy about talking about death. The people have changed the authentic Confucian culture, and only part of it has been perpetuated (Gasster, 1968). There is a need for people to face death, and this is a time that everyone must face. People do not benefit from excessive faking of death or deception and denial; truth and fidelity to reality are more likely to enable them to overcome their fears and accept death (Feifel, 1969). Religious beliefs have made death education controversial, as each religion has its views on death.

The complexity of religion has led to religious differences in death education (Manzano et al., 2023). However, I believe that this shows that death education is a sensitive issue, and teachers should take into account the existence of different religious beliefs among students when dealing with death education activities. Death education should be discussed from a secular, non-religious perspective rather than taught from a religious perspective (Herrero et al., 2022). As Hand (2008) explains in his defence of “reason”, we cannot erroneously “equate epistemically controversial issues with issues on which reason can get no purchase” (p. 220). There can be opposing views on an issue, but we should choose the view with evidence. Cultural and religious diversity can allow people to have different views on the issue of death education, but there is no rational evidence to support them. The nature of death taught in the face of death is supported by

the overwhelming evidence that death education should be a non-controversial presence.

The third argument is a disagreement that arises in response to the purpose of education. It is argued that death education is incompatible with the aims of education for young people because the aims of teaching to the test are wrongly equated with the aims of education. The purpose of education should be to “help students lead prosperous lives”, which requires schools to prepare students for their future lives (Reiss & White, 2014: p. 78). Death is an experience that students must face, and schools should prepare students to face it. The difficulties of implementing death education in schools cannot be ignored, and death education and sex education have something in common in that their sensitivity can make educational stakeholders uncomfortable. Controversy and liability can be avoided by not talking about them directly (Leviton, 1969). However, teachers have to guide young people to deal with death properly, and it is natural and human to ask schools to act as educators in the face of the death of their students (Herrero et al., 2022). The third argument against it is untenable, it seems like an excuse for schools to avoid their responsibilities, and this argument is not rational.

Overall, the issue of teaching death education to Chinese youth is assessed controversially on three criteria. While it is controversial on behavioural criteria, it should not be considered controversial when assessed on political and epistemic criteria. I acknowledge that teaching death education in China will face many divergent views, difficulties and opposition in practice, and it can cause unpleasant emotions. Facing death is a sensitive subject, but that does not mean that it should be taught as a controversial issue.

#### 4. Possible Teaching Methods

Hand (2008) presented directive or non-directive teaching for controversial and non-controversial issues in his debate on the epistemic criteria. Directive teaching is when teachers believe that only “one view is correct”, whereas non-directive is when they believe that there are a variety of answers to a question (p. 213). Whether Chinese adolescents are receiving death education to help them face the death has been answered based on an assessment of the epistemic criterion. The question is sensitive but not controversial; it possesses only a rational perspective. In this context, Hand (2008) suggested that teachers use directive instruction to guide students to support a rational perspective. Directive instruction is not a teaching style or style but a perception. He emphasises that “the central aim of education is to equip students with a capacity for, and inclination to, rational thought and action” (Hand, 2008: p. 218). Thus whether teaching directly or not, improving students’ rationality is the key to education. Teachers should guide students to recognise that being educated about death and confronting the fear of death is a rational choice.

Directive instruction is powerful. It is centred on the presence of only one



powerful position and guidance on the issue (Warnick & Smith, 2014). Specifically, teachers can use “strategic prompts, questions and interjections” (Hand, 2013: p. 499) to force students to accept the views of others, thus allowing them to learn through discussion and reject irrational views. However, students may resent the teacher’s “preaching”, “pushing”, or “forcing” in the process of transforming them (Hess, 2009: p. 102). They may accept the teacher’s viewpoint because of authority (Warnick & Smith, 2014), but this goes against the rational thinking advocated by Hand (2008). Soft-directive teaching can be well avoided this problem, where the teacher uses implicit encouragement and guidance to allow students to critically analyse and thus assert a rational viewpoint (Warnick & Smith, 2014: pp. 241-242). Allowing teachers to circumvent coercion in teaching allows for a trusting relationship between students and the teacher. Teachers could present an erroneous viewpoint, and students refute this viewpoint by citing evidence and reasoning. Thus, the students’ rational viewpoint is established, and their reasoning ability is enhanced. The fallibilism leaves room for the correction of views in contrast to relativism. It forces students to take a stand but allows them to change their views when given better arguments. Although not a controversial issue, Soft-directive is more appropriate than directive teaching for Chinese youth in the classroom.

However, the sensitive nature of the issue of adolescents facing up to death means that there are still many challenges in the actual practice of teaching. For example, students with different religious beliefs can be reluctant to talk about the reality of death. Most religions believe that human mortality is determined by God (Sabriseilabi & Williams, 2022). On the other hand, Buddhism believes that if one is to be free from the fear of death, one should seek to transcend physical or other forms of attachment (Masel et al., 2012). After death, people are rewarded or punished and enter reincarnation for a new life (Ilyse & Mariko, 2008). These views conflict with religion and with the reality of the existence of physical death. I believe Barrett’s (2010) “safe space” can inspire teachers when talking to young people about the sensitive issue of death.

A “safe space” emerges from the interaction between individuals in a particular physical, temporal and social space, and is a fluid and changing entity (Hunter, 2008: p. 8). It usually exists as a metaphor (Barrett, 2010). By creating metaphorical spaces, teachers give students the opportunity to talk about their experiences and feelings without being directly overt. Having discussions in a fictional context makes young people more willing to state their valid opinions and share their experiences (Ackroyd, 2007: p. 24). It is also an ethical practice that minimises the harm that talking about sensitive or controversial issues may cause to young people. Therefore, I suggest that a safe space strategy is appropriate when guiding students to explore death head-on, avoiding some conflicts that come with religious, multicultural and personal experiences.

When teaching death education to Chinese teachers, I promote a combination of soft-directive teaching and safe spaces is effective. Soft-directive teaching al-

lows students to take ownership of rational perspectives and develop their critical perceptions of facing death. A safe space, on the other hand, considers the issue's sensitive nature and provides a comfortable and trusting space for students to have practical discussions. I will use the example of introducing an exploration of the Chinese film *Lighting Up The Stars* in the classroom to illustrate in detail what is possible in their teaching practice.

A film released after China's experience with COVID-19, *Lighting Up The Star* is about what happens to mortician Sanmei Mo after he adopts Xiaowen Wu, an orphan who witnessed the death of her grandmother while working in the funeral industry. These events change Mo's attitude towards her profession and attitudes of life and also introduce the audience to the funeral industry. The release of this film also demonstrated the gradual opening up of young Chinese people's attitudes towards death, as the film was also a way of open discussion that could reflect the culture and shape ideas (Rosenstone, 1986). The pandemic forced many teenagers to face bereavement unprepared and forced them to confront death directly, but they still had a very vague idea of what death was (Jiang, 2022). The film is good teaching material. It could create a relational situation that allows students to put themselves in the characters' shoes while maintaining a psychological distance and approaching sensitive topics more gently (Schonmann, 2002).

The little girl woke up in the morning to find her grandmother appearing abnormal. She had no concept of death. After a quick treatment by relatives, she still did not accept that her grandmother had died and kept clamouring to find her. The girl's grief peaked when the undertaker, Mo Sanmei, showed her the concept of death and bereavement. In the classroom, the talk will be ready to go. "Do you agree with what Mo Sanmei did? If you were Mo, what approach would you take to tell the girl about her bereavement? Of course, you can also choose not to tell." "If you were Wu, what would you do when facing death again?" The teacher can give some wrong but justified ideas to help students open up for discussion and reflection. "What if she kept looking for her grandmother by hiding that fact and telling her that her grandma was out of town? Would it make her feel abandoned again?" Students can think about their attitudes towards death by allowing teenagers to feel the grief of bereavement from the girl's perspective. How will they face death, and how will they deal with the fear and pain caused by it? They will need to constantly disagree with or support the ideas put forward by the teacher and give reasonable explanations. In the process, they can repeatedly overturn their position and establish a new point of view. The soft guidance approach may lead to developing their attitudes towards facing death head-on and to increasing their reasoning and rational skills.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has struggled to argue that teaching Chinese youth to face death head-on is not controversial. First, I introduced the current state of development

of death education in China and the difficulties it presents by defining it. This part was followed by assessing the controversial nature of death education for adolescents using behavioural, political and epistemic criteria respectively. I supported that death education should be taught as a non-controversial topic under the cognitive criterion. Finally, considering the sensitivities of death education in China and the educational aim of developing rationality, a pedagogical approach combining soft-directive teaching and safe space to help students talk directly about death was proposed, and suggestions for pedagogical practices using the film *Lighting Up The Stars* as material were given.

It is essential to recognise that the pedagogical approach proposed in this paper may only apply to some classrooms and may not help every student develop the capacity for rationality. Development is a process, and getting students to accept death through death education is not overnight. It needs to be gradually built up through constant infiltration and critical thinking about death. At the same time, I would like to clarify that this paper takes a positive view of the practice of death education. However, teachers encounter many difficulties when practising teaching sensitive issues, such as teachers' lack of understanding of death education, school resources and parents' attitudes. Therefore, the teaching method offered in this essay is theoretically feasible but needs to be adapted by teachers to suit their students' circumstances and abilities. It is also important to admit that the argument presented in this paper is based on theoretical analyses. Therefore, it may need to be supported by further empirical research evidence.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Prof. Jeremy Hayward and Dr. Bronwen Jones for their guidance.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

### References

- Ackroyd, J. (2007). *Research Methodologies for Drama Education*. Trentham Books.
- Backer, L. C. (2006). The Rule of Law, the Chinese Communist Party, and Ideological Campaigns: Sange Daibiao (The Three Represents), Socialist Rule of Law, and Modern Chinese Constitutionalism. *Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems*, 16, 29.
- Bailey, C. (1975). Neutrality and Rationality in Teaching. In D. Bridges, & P. Scrimshaw, *Values and Authority in Schools* (pp. 124-132). Hodder and Stoughton.
- Bakioğlu, E., Korkmaz, O., & Ercan, H. (2020). Fear of COVID-19 and Positivity: Mediating Role of Intolerance of Uncertainty, Depression, Anxiety, and Stress. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 19, 2369-2382.  
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/fear-of-covid-19-and-positivity%3a-mediating-role-of-bakio%2c4%9flu-korkmaz/d5a8c052266c51dd1b245d5de410a44d7767b41e>  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-020-00331-y>
- Barrett, B. J. (2010). Is "Safety" Dangerous? A Critical Examination of the Classroom as Safe Space. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 1, Ar-

- ticle 9. <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2010.1.9>
- Barry, M. M., & Margaret M. (2000). Death Education: Knowledge, Attitude, and Perspectives of Irish Parents and Teachers. *Death Studies, 24*, 325-333. <https://doi.org/10.1080/074811800200487>
- Beecher, H. K. (2007). A Definition of Irreversible Coma. *International Anesthesiology Clinics, 45*, 113-119. <https://doi.org/10.1097/AIA.0b013e318142cb9e>
- Blackburn, R. (1976). Marxism: Theory of Proletarian Revolution. *New Left Review, No. 97*, 3.
- Botkin, J. R., & Post, S. G. (1992). Confusion in the Determination of Death: Distinguishing Philosophy from Physiology. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, 36*, 129-138. <https://doi.org/10.1353/pbm.1993.0060>
- Branch, M. L., & Brinson, S. A. (2007). Gone But Not Forgotten: Children's Experiences with Attachment, Separation, and Loss. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 16*, 41-45.
- Bugen, L. A. (1981). Coping: Effects of Death Education. *Journal of Death and Dying, 11*, 175-183. <https://doi.org/10.2190/IOPA-QFHW-VQ7A-MCAK>
- Cotter, R. P. (2003). High Risk Behaviors in Adolescence and Their Relationship to Death Anxiety and Death Personifications. *Journal of Death and Dying, 47*, 119-137. <https://doi.org/10.2190/38CT-E5MB-12NG-YXAR>
- Dearden, R. F. (1981). Controversial Issues and the Curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 13*, 37-44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0022027810130105>
- Deleuze, G. (1968/2014). *Difference and Repetition*. Bloomsbury.
- Durkheim, É. (1912). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Oxford University Press.
- Feifel, H. (1969). Attitudes toward Death: A Psychological Perspective. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 33*, 292-295. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0027565>
- Gasster, M. (1968). The Death and Transfiguration of Confucianism. *Philosophy East and West, 18*, 205-213. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1398262>
- Hand, M. (2008). What Should We Teach as Controversial? A Defense of the Epistemic Criterion. *Educational Theory, 58*, 213-228. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.2008.00285.x>
- Hand, M. (2013). Framing Classroom Discussion of Same-Sex Marriage. *Educational Theory, 63*, 497-510. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12037>
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1977). *Phenomenology of Spirit* (A. V. Miller, Trans.). Clarendon Press.
- Herrero, P. R., De La Herrán Gascón, A., & Sempere, P. G. (2013). Impact of a Teacher-Training MOOC on the Pedagogy of Death during the Pandemic. *Death Studies, 47*, 804-813. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2022.2132549>
- Herrero, P. R., De La Herrán Gascón, A., Pérez-Bonet, G., & Sánchez-Huete, J. C. (2022). What Do Teachers Think of Death Education? *Death Studies, 46*, 1518-1528. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2020.1817176>
- Hess, D. E. (2009). *Controversy in the Classroom: The Democratic Power of Discussion*. Routledge.
- Hunter, M. A. (2008). Cultivating the Art of Safe Space. Research in Drama Education: *The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 13*, 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569780701825195>
- Ilyse, J., & Mariko N. W. (2008). *Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Jiang, Q. (2022). Psychological Support and Demand for Death Education among Chi-

- nese College Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Mediating Role of Neutral Death Attitude. *Nursing Open*, *10*, 172-181. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.1292>
- Kastenbaum, R. (2000). *The Psychology of Death*. Springer.
- Kavaklı, M., Ak, M., Uguz, F., & Türkmen, O. O. (2020). The Mediating Role of Self-Compassion in the Relationship between Perceived COVID-19 Threat and Death Anxiety. *Turkish Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, *23*, 15-23.
- King, J., & Hayslip Jr., B. (2002). The Media's Influence on College Students' Views of Death. *Journal of Death and Dying*, *44*, 37-56. <https://doi.org/10.2190/HGXD-6WLJ-X56F-4AQL>
- Knight, K. H., & Elfenbein, M. H. (1993). Relationship of Death Education to the Anxiety, Fear, and Meaning Associated with Death. *Death Studies*, *17*, 411-425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481189308253386>
- Lai, H., & Chen, Y.-C. (2019). Chinese Metaphorical Expressions in Talking about the End-of-Life Journey. In H. Tao, & H. J. Chen (Eds.), *Chinese for Specific and Professional Purposes: Theory, Pedagogical Applications, and Practices* (pp. 189-212). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-9505-5\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-9505-5_9)
- Lee, P. C. (1995). Understanding Death, Dying, and Religion: A Chinese Perspective. In J. K. Parry, & R. Angela (Eds.), *A Cross-Cultural Look at Death, Dying, and Religion* (pp. 172-182). Wadsworth Pub Co.
- Leviton, D. (1969). The Need for Education on Death and Suicide. *Journal of School Health*, *39*, 270-274. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.1969.tb04318.x>
- Maglio, C. J., & Robinson, S. E. (1994). The Effects of Death Education on Death Anxiety: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Death and Dying*, *29*, 319-335. <https://doi.org/10.2190/KEA9-2G73-AMJM-MNP6>
- Manzano, B. F. S., Herrero, P. R., & De La Herrán Gascón, A. (2023). "Mum, When We Die, What Do You Think Happens?" A Qualitative Study of Views on Death Education among Spanish Families. *Death Studies*, *48*, 64-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2023.2186536>
- Masel, E. K., Schur, S., & Watzke, H. H. (2012). Life Is Uncertain. Death Is Certain. Buddhism and Palliative Care. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, *44*, 307-312. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2012.02.018>
- McClatchey, I. S., & King, S. (2015). The Impact of Death Education on Fear of Death and Death Anxiety among Human Services Students. *Journal of Death and Dying*, *71*, 343-361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222815572606>
- Parfit, D. (1984). Reasons and Persons. *Philosophical Books*, *25*, 220-224. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0149.1984.tb01925.x>
- Piaget, J. (1952). *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*. International Universities Press. <https://doi.org/10.1037/11494-000>
- Raccichini, M., Biancalani, G., Franchini, L., Varani, S., Ronconi, L., & Testoni, I. (2022). Death Education and Photovoice at School: A Workshop with Italian High School Students. *Death Studies*, *46*, 279-286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2022.2052206>
- Rawls, J. (1993). *Political Liberalism*. Columbia University Press.
- Reiss, M. J., & White, J. (2014). An Aims-Based Curriculum Illustrated by the Teaching of Science in Schools. *The Curriculum Journal*, *25*, 76-89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2013.874953>
- Rosenstone, R. A. (1986). *History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History on Film (or What a Historian Begins to Think about When People Start Turning His Books into Movies)*.

- Sabriseilabi, S., & Williams, J. (2022). Dimensions of Religion and Attitudes toward Euthanasia. *Death Studies, 46*, 1149-1156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2020.1800863>
- Satici, B., Gocet-Tekin, E., Deniz, M. E., & Satici, S. A. (2021). Adaptation of the Fear of COVID-19 Scale: Its Association with Psychological Distress and Life Satisfaction in Turkey. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 19*, 1980-1988.
- Schonmann, S. (2002). Fictional Worlds and the Real World in Early Childhood Drama Education. In L. Bresler, & C. M. Thompson (Eds.), *The Arts in Children's Lives: Context, Culture, and Curriculum* (pp. 139-151). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/0-306-47511-1\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/0-306-47511-1_12)
- Shu, W., Miao, Q., Feng, J., Liang, G., Zhang, J., & Zhang, J. (2023). Exploring the Needs and Barriers for Death Education in China: Getting Answers from Heart Transplant Recipients' Inner Experience of Death. *Frontiers in Public Health, 11*, Article 1082979. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1082979>
- Simmons, L. C., & Schindler, R. M. (2003). Cultural Superstitions and the Price Endings Used in Chinese Advertising. *Journal of International Marketing, 11*, 101-111. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jimk.11.2.101.20161>
- Smilie, K. D. (2022). Death Education's "Period of Popularity": Lessons for Contemporary P-12 Schools in the United States during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Death Studies, 46*, 65-77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2021.1902427>
- Smith, T. L., & Walz, B. J. (1995). Death Education in Paramedic Programs: A Nationwide Assessment. *Death Studies, 19*, 257-267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481189508252729>
- Stylianou, P., & Zembylas, M. (2016). Dealing with the Concepts of "Grief" and "Grieving" in the Classroom: Children's Perceptions, Emotions, and Behavior. *Journal of Death and Dying, 77*, 240-266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222815626717>
- Tang, L., Li, Y., & Zhang, L. (2014). Medical Staffs' Attitudes toward Death Education and Their Learning Needs. *Journal of Nursing Science, 29*, 66-68.
- Tu, J., Shen, M., & Li, Z. (2022). When Cultural Values Meets Professional Values: A Qualitative Study of Chinese Nurses' Attitudes and Experiences Concerning Death. *BMC Palliative Care, 21*, Article No. 181. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12904-022-01067-3>
- Wang, X. H. (2005). *Research of the Life Education on University Student*. Master's Thesis, Central China Normal University.
- Warnick, B. R., & Smith, D. S. (2014). The Controversy over Controversies: A Plea for Flexibility and for "Soft-Directive" Teaching. *Educational Theory, 64*, 227-244. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12059>
- Warren, W. G. (1989). *Death Education and Research: Critical Perspectives*. Haworth Press.
- Wass, H. (2004). A Perspective on the Current State of Death Education. *Death Studies, 28*, 289-308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481180490432315>
- Xu, B. (2013). For Whom the Bell Tolls: State-Society Relations and the Sichuan Earthquake Mourning in China. *Theory and Society, 42*, 509-542. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-013-9200-5>
- Yick, A. G., & Gupta, R. (2002). Chinese Cultural Dimensions of Death, Dying, and Bereavement: Focus Group Findings. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 9*, 32-42.
- Zhang, H. L. (2015). [Analysis and Reflection on the Development of Death Education at Home and Abroad]. *Journal of Nursing (China), 22*, 29-32.
- Zheng, R., Bloomer, M. J., Guo, Q., & Lee, S. F. (2021). New Graduate Nurses' Coping with Death and the Relationship with Death Self-Efficacy and Death Anxiety: A Multi-centre Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 77*, 795-804. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14621>