# Distributed approaches to developing curriculum leadership: a Hong Kong case study

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## Abstract

*This study was originally designed to explore the impact of a distributed approach to developing curriculum leadership among school teachers. Previous papers have focused on reporting evidence of teacher learning in the process of engaging teachers in various types of curriculum decision making in an innovation project based on interview data. This paper reports a discourse analysis of the interactions based on the visual data in videotaped meetings among teachers in a Chinese curriculum development team and shows that teacher participation is constrained by the leadership styles of the positional leaders in the team. The meditational effects of the leadership styles invite policy makers and school management to rethink the effectiveness of school-based approaches to curriculum development in enhancing teacher learning and development.*


**Keywords:** school-based curriculum development; teacher leadership; curriculum leadership; discourse analysis

## Context of change

The decentralisation of educational decision making in general and curriculum decision making in particular has been one of the key debates in the broad discussion on change strategies to enhance school improvement, teacher development, and pupil learning for the past several decades among policy makers (Skilbeck 1984; Fullan 2001; Hopkins 2001; Leithwood 2008). The urge for decentralisation has been argued as a result of the failure of the use of central agencies in designing and planning new curricula for implementation in schools, as well as the call for the more democratic participation of professional teachers in school and curriculum decision-making processes in the 1960s and 1970s in developed countries such as the USA and

Australia (e.g., Australian Education Union 2004) except that England and Wales experienced a contrastive shift from a model of education influenced by local educational authorities to a more centralized model of a national curriculum in 1988 (Lawton, 1992). Some reform initiatives have focused on the leadership of principals in bringing about changes in schools, neglecting the equally important roles and the shared responsibilities of individual teachers and the transformative role of the teacher community as a whole in schools in the 1980s (Jackson 2000; Day, Harris, and Hadfield 2001). Decentralisation means making decisions on what to teach more relevantly, how to teach more effectively, and how to accurately assess where learning takes place in order to meet the diverse needs of pupils in mixed-ability classrooms due to the introduction of compulsory education for all in the 1970s. Therefore, it also means changing the traditional roles of teachers from being curriculum users to curriculum developers, taking up more responsibilities and initiatives in making curriculum decisions for pupil learning (Stenhouse 1975; Marsh 1997; Ovens 1999; Wallace, Nesbit, and Miller, 1999; Frost and Durrant 2002, 2003; Harris 2003). In Hong Kong, this movement away from a traditionally highly centralized curriculum whereas decisions about aims, content, pedagogy and assessment were largely in the hands of the centralized agencies such as the former Education Department in the British colony towards a school based model of involving and engaging teachers in a wider range of curriculum responsibilities has been taken up formally by the Llewellyn report in 1982 and more systematically by various education reports in Hong Kong. However, the pattern and level of involvement and commitment of teachers in participating have yet to be well defined and elaborated with empirical data on what works and what does not work in the Hong Kong context (Law, 2003; Law & Galton, 2004; Law & Wan, 2005). The establishment of a curriculum coordinator at the senior level in primary schools in 2002 has shown the determination of the government in terms of institutionalizing the previous policy orientations and investing additional resources on their implementation. However, its efficiency and effects on teacher development and pupil learning remain largely unanswered empirically. The current project adopts a distributed approach on teacher involvement, which is understood as a shared phenomenon and responsibility to be realised collectively in school settings. Curriculum decision making, therefore, is not the sole responsibility of a few key personnel appointed by the school hierarchy, but it is a process (or a

phenomenon) that is shared equally among all teachers in the school (Elliott 1991; Ball and Cohen 1996; McLaughlin and Talbert 2001; Shulman and Sherin 2004). All teachers should be responsible and are able to be responsible for making their own curriculum decisions for their pupils in their own classrooms. By taking up this responsibility, participation creates opportunities for school improvement, teacher development, and enhancement of pupil learning (Hiebert, Gallimore, and Stigler, 2003).

## The curriculum leadership innovation project

The project was started in September 2004 in a Hong Kong primary school. As stated in the project proposal, its goals are as follows:

- To develop teachers' abilities and skills in strategic planning and development and using evaluation for school improvement
- To enhance the effectiveness of a school's self-evaluation
- To develop a quality culture for school self-evaluation for school improvement

### *Curriculum development teams*

Two curriculum development teams were formed on a key subject basis, namely, Chinese language and Mathematics, which comprise over one-third of the curriculum time in Hong Kong primary schools. The selection of team leaders was deliberately manipulated and 'chosen' based on their observed commitment and professional attitudes toward curriculum reforms and innovations. In the first action cycle of the innovation project in the first semester, the subject panel heads were chosen as they had assumed hierarchical power, and their selection was expected to alleviate some political tension against the introduction of a new structure in the working lives of the teachers within the infrastructure of the school. In the second action cycle in the second semester, however, these team leaders were replaced, and other participating colleagues were 'persuaded' to take turns in leading the team. These two arrangements had two advantages. First, the subject-based approach in the formation of a curriculum development team was intended to control the subject content of the interactions among members in teamwork activities in order to maximise the positive

effects of the shared subject identity and working experiences among team members (Schon 1983; MacBeath 2004). The second one was to eliminate the potentially negative influence of any hierarchical structure and power relationship among team members in order to create a conducive team work environment for the emergence of professional dialogues among members, therefore cultivating a culture of shared and distributed curriculum leadership among team members (Carr and Kemmis 1986; Fullan 1993; Black and Atkin 1996; Putnam and Borko 2000; Britt, Irwin, and Ritchie, 2001). The latter advantage was thought to give confidence to the teachers in initiating and leading activities on pedagogical changes in schools. These two factors were essential because they allowed the development of a common yet open educational language and the strengthening of a shared yet democratic identity among a group of professional teachers, concentrating on solving the problem of an identified pedagogical issue collectively (Day, 1993).

All participants in the curriculum development team were given guidelines about their roles, the purposes of the activity, and the procedures of the planning and reflection meetings. In the guidelines, leadership was expected to invite and stimulate thinking about the experiences in the trial lessons, specifically how meetings should be conducted, rather than giving instructional information. The participating teachers were expected to involve themselves actively. The guidelines emphasised a collaborative spirit and shared responsibility and leadership in the innovation project.

***Planning, experimentation, and reflection (PER) model of change***

The innovation pattern adopted the PER model (see Table 1), in which the team reviewed, planned, and designed a lesson or a unit of learning in collaborative meetings to start off. The team then assigned teachers to try out the planned innovation lesson. In step 3, the team conducted a reflection meeting.

Table 1. A three-stage model of teacher planning, experimentation, and reflection curriculum practices (PER model)

| ***Stage*** | ***Aims*** | ***Teacher Activities*** |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Planning Stage* | *To identify the goals and design strategies for a plan of innovation* | *SWOT, Whole School Conference, Action Planning Meetings, Collaborative Lesson Preparation Meetings, Production of Materials* |
| *Experimentation Stage* | *To put the plan in action in classrooms* | *Trialling, Peer Observation, and Evaluation* |
| *Reflection Stage* | *To review the actions and plan for future actions* | *Post-observation Conference, Completion of Feedback Sheets* |

This model of change is used in the first action cycle and is repeated in the second action cycle in a spirally continuous structure (author's paper withdrawn). This organisation has several advantages. First, it creates opportunities for collaboration and teamwork. Second, it locates the changes in pedagogy based on the teaching subject. Third, it adopts a problem-solving and critical approach. Fourth, the change becomes an open venture. Therefore, school knowledge is taken as a matter of possibility and is open for challenge, rather than a group of definitive subjects merely imposed from external agents for professional deliberation at school sites (Macpherson et al. 1999; Harris, 2004).

***Focus of innovation***

Each curriculum development team was free to choose between two directions of change. Each team selected a teaching topic and then decided to use either the same pedagogical approach for all tryout lessons or to adopt a different pedagogical approach in each tryout lesson. For example, the Chinese curriculum development team chose the 'Dragon Boat Festival' as the topic targeting the development of reading comprehension skills and the creativity of primary five children. The creation of internal variations on pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning was geared toward the generation of opportunities for contrast and comparison in both the discussions in planning and reflection meetings. In addition, the realisation on these pedagogical approaches in try-out lessons provided teachers with concrete experiences to

discuss and analyse (Ball 1996; King and Newmann 2000; Birman et al. 2002). Therefore, curriculum reforms and change would not remain as some abstract language or concept in policy documents but become authentic experiences that are not too distant from the real lives of most teachers (Garet et al. 2001).

## Procedures of analysis

As we based each action cycle on our planning, experimentation, and reflection (PER) model (authors' citation is withdrawn for review purpose), we chose one videotaped planning meeting and two reflection meetings from the second action cycle of the Chinese curriculum development team. This approach of using three team meetings will allow the triangulation of emergent themes and the categorisation of the data from the curriculum development team, as well as the identification of the uniqueness of each of the team meetings (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2000).

We also determined from the very beginning that we could not exhaust the potentiality of the visual data embedded in the videotaped meetings from one viewing. Therefore, we decided to adopt a more organised but collaborative approach in analysing the data in the following manner and procedures.

### *Emerging themes in each phase of the analysis*

Four researchers viewed each of the videotaped meetings in sections of 10 minutes together but with a similar pattern of procedures and actions. In each 10-minute section, every member of the research team worked together to identify the features of the interactions and key points of interests which would be followed up in the next 10 minutes. For example, in the first 10 minutes, we identified the roles of the consultant and the teachers in the interactions. The roles of the consultant tended to be dominating and instructive, while the teachers were passive and attentive. Then in the next 10 minutes, some emerging themes appeared. For example, the responses from the consultant were clear that he is the source of pedagogical strategies and wisdom. His assertiveness often dominated the discourse and indirectly suppressed the opportunities for the other team members to raise issues and extend their thoughts. This

developmental approach exhausts as much as possible the enriching layers of meanings and their interpretations in the analysis process, while observations can be confirmed, rejected, identified, refined, and ultimately decided among a team of researchers (Banks 2007).

***Division of labour and confirming the accuracy of the transcriptions***

Although all four researchers watched the videotaped meetings together, we made some form of a division. One focused on accuracy, one on facial expressions and nonverbal behaviours, another on the dialogues, and the last one on the potentiality of the videotaped data and images. However, we all wrote down field notes of whatever we felt was essential and related to our investigation and discussed them after each viewing. We viewed the videotaped meetings alongside the written transcriptions of the meetings to ensure accuracy. We often revisited the sections to deepen our understanding and allow more alternative themes to emerge. The four researchers discussed with one another and sought consensus, as well as disagreed on alternative interpretations. When points of departure required some further investigation, the research team would write them down for further development.

**Methods of analysis**

Our major approach is a grounded one, with the intention to allow possibilities to emerge and categories of concepts derived from the videotaped data to be refined. However, we cannot deny that the theoretical underpinnings of our design framework should have some impact on the ways that we choose to analyse and understand them. We tend to view this as a normal practice in qualitative research approaches. For example, we have in mind the possibility of the effect of the participant's status, power in the school hierarchy, experience in the teaching profession, and personality on the ways that they interact with one another. All these factors have an impact one way or another on the negotiation process among participants. However, themes or categories of data are compared and triangulated among the four researchers and from the data of the four videotaped meetings. Selections of interactions will be analysed and used to illustrate the key features of each participant in the meetings. Aside from qualitative approaches, the team also decided to

strengthen our arguments by organising some quantitative analysis of the visual data in the tapes, such as the distribution of time among the participants across the interactions in each meeting and the counting of the types of discourse features.

**Findings and analyses**

The planning meeting was conducted on 22 April 2005, and the two reflection meetings were held on 10 June and 17 June 2005, respectively. The first meeting was attended by all six team members with a duration of 51.04 minutes. On the other hand, the second and the third meetings on reflection had a duration of 29.59 and 51.21 minutes, respectively, and they were attended by four teachers including the panel head, consultant, project leader, and one teacher.

***The external consultant and the impact of his leadership style***

In these three meetings, one striking feature is the assertion of authority by the external consultant who was a senior academic in the faculty of education in a local university. His authority can be classified as a source of information, pedagogical strategies, wisdom, and power. His expression of authority was communicated through verbal medium. His domination of the interactions was expressed mostly through monologues, and the content of theaw monologues was instructive and directive. He assumed a sense of superiority in pedagogy and knowledge, allowing little opportunity for the negotiation of meanings among the participants. One of the discourse features is the emphasis on his personal contribution by using the first-person 'I' frequently. His use of 'da' as a discourse marker to signify his symbolic role in making professional judgments on the practice of the participating teachers is an explicit expression of his overriding power in the meetings. The following is a selection of his monologues in the two meetings to illustrate the nature of his delivery. The duration is about eight minutes.

> *'I am pleased after watching the trial lesson. In the lesson, three steps were completed clearly. Without the last step, the effects would not be as satisfactory as one would expect. Afterwards, talking about the worksheet can finally give the pupils opportunities for reflection. In group discussions, they are informative and pedagogical. In the next lesson, remember to*

*remind the pupils of the time "BC" for all the events they discussed…About the term "dragon boat," why not call it the "dragon canoe?" Afterwards, the teacher could work with them. I have thought about the possibility of asking the pupils to write down the vocabulary. However, I am worried about the fact that their inability to write quickly would eliminate opportunities for thinking activities. You could, however, tell the pupils to jot down the main points or they will forget what they have in mind. The pupils' views are not too bad. In fact, many things can be further developed. You can talk with them more…let them talk more … Some are about moral and affective … Finally, can we ask them to access the Internet and search for more information? Working in pairs and groups can benefit the pupils'* (Literal translation from a selection of the reflection meeting, reading 3.14 to 11.20).

To illustrate how his perceived role and style of leadership was realised in the discourse, we conducted a content analysis of a series of utterances in a selected monologue.

The Consultant:

1. Rejects the current practice of the teacher in the try-out lesson
2. Proposes an alternative
3. Gives an example
4. Refocuses on the pedagogical objective
5. Makes concession
6. Gives an example to illustrate
7. Compares three try-out lessons in different classes
8. Uses student activity in one lesson to illustrate
9. Gives suggestion
10. Offers pedagogical strategies
11. Rejects the pedagogical decision
12. Proposes alternatives derived from the pupils' ideas
13. Reconfirms his proposed alternatives
14. …

(Third meeting, reading 03.20 to 10.00)

The above analysis of a selection of his monologue illustrates three aspects related to his personality and style. First, he rejected the teachers' pedagogical practice and decisions. Second, his rejection was not based

on pedagogical evidence and was without justification of a professional kind. Third, he continued his commentary to around 10 minutes without inviting the participation of the teachers. His style gave no negotiation space and allowed no interaction with the other parties in the meeting. He imposed his pedagogical theories on the practicing teachers without considering professional autonomy and the development of the teachers. His imposition delimited participation and allowed little room for the teachers' active learning. His consultancy can be considered as a form of external coercive agency, reproducing a discourse of power and status within the culture of the school (Gee, Michaels, and O'Connor 1992). Rather than engaging the participating teachers in a reflective and critical discourse, revisiting deeply rooted beliefs embedded in the current practice, his agency reinforces a 'legitimate' form of professionalism which is hierarchical and submissive (Woods et al. 1997).

***The internal panel head and the impact of his leadership style***

The panel head seemed to also indulge in his status and positional role in the subject. His participation is a form of reassertion of his hierarchical status and his superiority in the subject matter. He deliberately joined the 'side' of the external consultant, sharing the legitimate power of the overt leader in the meeting. For example, he started a topic but concluded it without facilitating the participation of the other teachers. He was often conclusive in his speech. He assumed his role as the ultimate decision maker in this collaborative lesson preparation proposing a topic for the try-out lesson without expecting further discussion on its suitability, therefore blocking further negotiation space among the participating teachers. His assertive style clearly gave a strong sense of his hierarchical role in his interactional patterns such as interrupting others and nodding his head to show his recognition of the consultant's view, exhibiting his share of the consultant's professional power. His emphatic use of 'you' in his discourse marks his distant role from the practicing teachers who assume a subordinate role in teaching in schools.

> *'I talk a little here, but not those mentioned by Dr. Ho…The term "new traditions" is problematic linguistically... but you need to explain this term clearly…This topic was handled well in the try-out lesson, having included a modern perspective and also the contemporary movements in thoughts, having considered the moral principles in actions…Poet Wat was a*

*leading figure in Chu literary styles in ancient China. This is an important topic even for primary pupils and deserves a lesson on its own' (Literal translation, a selection of the monologues in the reflection meeting, reading 11.20 to 18.00).*

We also selected for analysis a series of utterances from his monologue in order to illustrate how the discourse features show the underlying principles of his communications beliefs.

The panel head:

1. Shows another available perspective
2. States what that perspective is
3. Continues to explain
4. Gives pedagogical advice
5. Indicates an alternative pedagogical strategy
6. Gives alternative pedagogy
7. Gives the purposes
8. Moves to another topic
9. Offers possibilities
10. …

(First meeting, 24.45 to 26.10 minutes)

The above analysis shows that the panel head did not have any intention to engage the teachers in an interactive mode of discussion. His discourse feature shows his dominating power in dictating professional judgment and wisdom. His form of leadership is far less than enquiry based and restricts room for negotiation and participation authentically. Coincidentally, his leadership style matches the imposing style of the external consultant.

This camp of authority, including the consultant and the panel head, met with the participating teachers who were expected to play the role of being the juniors in the professional decision-making processes and in the eyes of those in the hierarchy. Four teachers behaved differently in the three videotaped meetings. The project leader had little leadership role, and she tended to be much reserved. Raising a few questions in the

planning meeting and responding to a request from the panel head in the reflection meetings, she had little to contribute in terms of pedagogical wisdom and strategies. She apparently ignored the instructions and advice in the guidelines about her role in conducting meetings. In the planning meeting, one participating teacher remained silent, while the other one only whispered to the ear of the project leader next to him from time to time. The third one murmured one or two utterances publicly. The overall participation of the teachers was minimal. In the reflection meeting, the discourse was explicitly initiated and led by the panel head or the consultant. The project leader and the participating teacher only responded passively to the requests of the panel head. Hardly could we find the initiatives of the two participating teachers in the absence of the two other teachers.

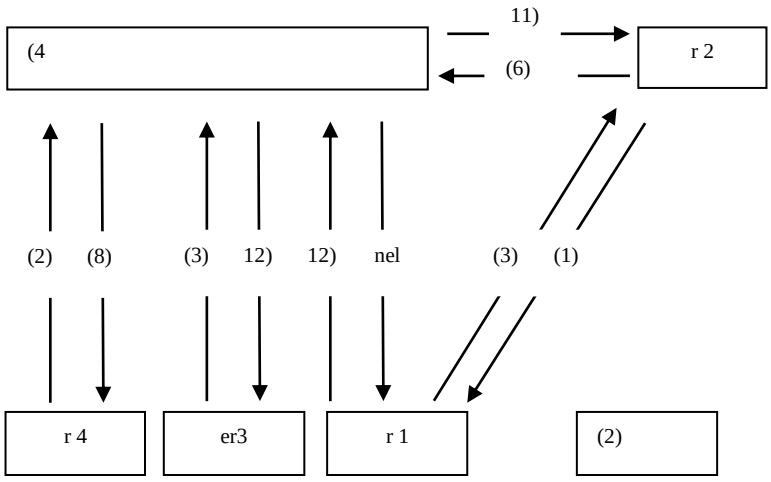
The division of the two camps is clearly identifiable. On one hand, we have a camp of authority with a higher status, assuming the overall source of information and solutions. On the other hand, we have a group of teachers who were passive and contributed little to the meetings. The meanings negotiated in the interaction are extremely limited, and the opportunities for extending thinking are restricted. One side assumes the role of the source of wisdom, while the other side assumes the role of being the recipients.

***Interactional patterns***

One effective way to illustrate the power relationship between the members of the meeting is to analyse microscopically the nature of the participation of each member and the pattern of the 'flow' of interaction in the discourse structure of the meetings (Locke 2004). To achieve a good level of validity, we had the following procedures. Four researchers watched the three videotaped meetings, stopping every 10 minutes to discuss the content first. The purpose for this was to deepen our understanding of the contextual meanings of the interactions. While watching, the researchers drew on a piece of paper their own tentative graphic representation of the interaction patterns derived from their own views and interpretation (Ball and Smith 1992). Afterwards, we compared all drawings and sought consensus and agreement. From time to time, when we had disagreements, we would return to the videotapes for confirmation and verification. The following are some of the interaction patterns we finalised with agreement and consensus.

Figure 1 illustrates the pattern of communication style among the members in the planning meeting. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of utterances between pairs, and the arrows indicate the directions of the utterances. One feature that attracted our attention is the lack of interaction between the teachers, and the dialogue of the meeting is uni-structural. On one side, we have the external consultant and the panel who dominated 87.82 percent of the total time of the whole meeting. On the other side, we have the teachers who played the role of information and advice recipients from the superior in the hierarchy. This pattern of domination in terms of the discourse time distribution is reconfirmed when the same graphic is worked out for the two reflection meetings.

Figure 1. The interactional pattern of the planning meeting




The pattern of communication is similar to that in the planning meeting, uni-structural without cross interaction among the teachers (see Figure 2). Again, the consultant and the panel head dominated the discourse in terms of time, occupying 78.71 percent of the total time of the first reflection time. The lack of interaction among the teachers is still significant. It is useful to note that the aim of the meeting was to reflect on the try-out lessons conducted by the teachers. However, their lack of participation in the reflection and the sheer domination of the discourse by the two leaders turned the meeting discourse to a non-reflective one. This indirectly shows the lack of opportunities for teacher reflection and thus for teacher learning because of the imposing leadership style of both the panel head and the consultant.

Figure 2. The interactional pattern of the first reflection meeting

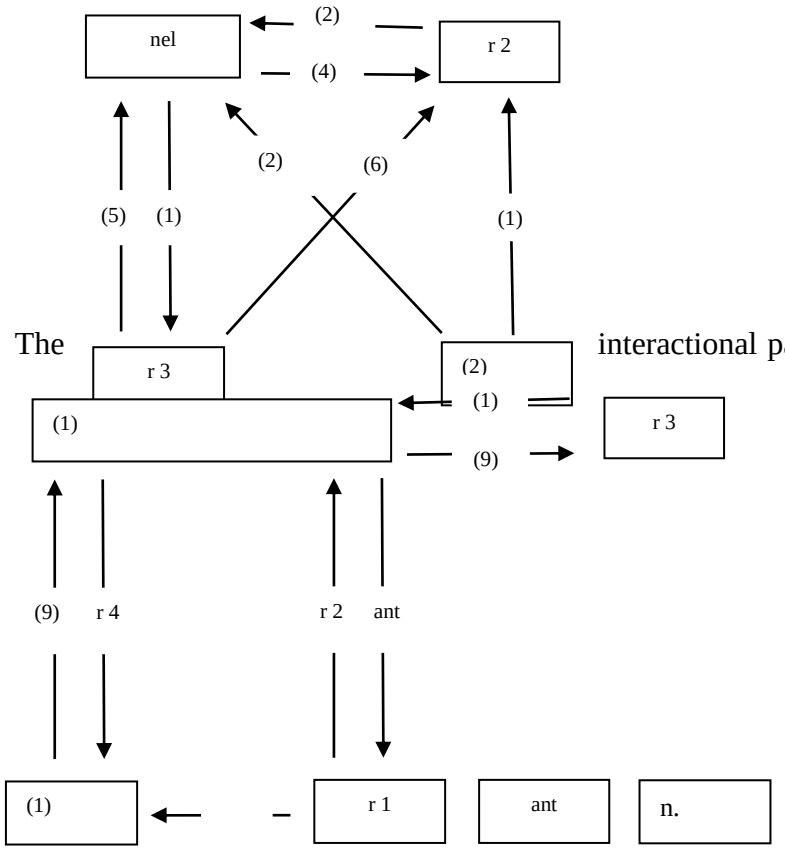



Figure 3. The interactional pattern of the second reflection meeting

The analysis of the communication pattern of the second reflection time confirms the consistency of the leadership style and the domination of the discourse of the two hierarchical leaders of the meeting (see Figure 3). Both occupied 90.43 percent of the total meeting time. The interactions between the teachers were scarcely found, and the extreme cases were found in teachers 3 and 4 who were silent throughout the meeting. The panel head was very late, coming into the remaining 10 minutes of the meeting.

Table 2 shows the time distribution of the participation of each participant in the three meetings. This further supports our observation on the effects of leadership styles on the negotiation space of the meetings for teachers who are less experienced with junior hierarchical status in the curriculum development team.

Table 2. Time distribution of the participation of each participant in each meeting

| | Planning meeting | 1st reflection meeting | 2nd reflection meeting | Total amount of time of the meetings (minutes) | Occupation Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Panel Head | 5’32 | 8’26 | 0’06 | 14’04 | 10.63% |
| External Consultant | 39’18 | 15’10 | 46’26 | 100’54 | 76.22% |
| Teacher 1 | 1’07 | Absent | 1’31 | 2’38 | 1.99% |
| Teacher 2 (Project Leader) | 4’20 (chair) | 3’56 (chair) | 3’18 (chair) | 11’34 | 8.74% |
| Teacher 3 | 0’46 | 2’27 | 0’00 | 3’13 | 2.43% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher 4 | 0’00 | Absent | 0’00 | 0’00 | 0.00% |
| Total amount of time (minutes) | 51’03 | 29’59 | 51’21 | 132’23 | 100% |

Looking at Table 2, particularly at time distribution, we can easily determine that the total time occupied by both the panel and the consultant is 86.85 percent for all three meetings, which were primarily for teacher development and learning. To a certain degree, these quantitative data further support our observation and analysis of the impact of the dominating leadership style of the consultant and the panel head on teacher participation. The quality of teacher participation becomes a critical issue for any model of school-based approach to educational change and innovations in general, and to the development of professionalism among teachers in schools. The latter will be further discussed in the section below.

**Discussion**

The current analysis which is based on visual data from the videotaped meetings shows that a specific type of leadership is identified between the panel head and the external consultant in the three meetings. We bear in mind that a distributed leadership environment was recreated in the Chinese curriculum development team through the insertion of a policy of rotating the leadership for the team. The original purpose was to allow and encourage authentic and active participation by the team members. However, the assertion of professional authority of both the external consultant and the internal panel head proved to be ‘too suppressive’ of any opportunity to engage the participating teachers in reflective and creative dialogues in the team meetings. This domination may not be the original intention of the two leading figures in the team. The discourse features, however, show the underlying principles of pedagogy and communication among the leaders in particular. They also indicate the uni-structural nature of the interactional patterns, a type of question and response communication pattern, between the sources of pedagogical authority and the recipients of the pedagogical wisdom. Therefore, the optimism we generally collect from the popular

proponents of school-based curriculum development and a team or collaborative approach to curriculum development in schools should be at least considered with some reservation with regard to the constraining elements embedded in the traditional organisational leadership and professional leadership styles of our school systems. The following are some suggestions for the policy makers and faculty members responsible for teacher education and training. These suggestions are also relevant for the management teams in the school sector.

***For Individual Teachers***

1. Awareness of the changing roles of teachers in the teaching profession should be enhanced, and the changing expectations of the society should be clearly conveyed in the teacher education programs. An extended version of teacher professionality should be the key focus in teacher development programs.

2. Teacher participation should be the key to the successful implementation of curriculum and educational innovations, and teacher capacity in reflective and critical thinking is essential. The culture of a flattened hierarchy should become a focus of school reform programs.

3. The theories and practices of teacher leadership and initiation in school-based curriculum innovations and reforms are still vaguely conceived among the participating teachers who generally look for leadership and wisdom from their hierarchical superiors.

***For Middle Managers***

1. Middle managers such as subject panel heads or curriculum leaders should receive training and professional development courses for conducting meetings or collaborative activities in ways which allow opportunities for participants to negotiate meanings in the process of their participation. The emphasis is on the likely consequence of having different types of leadership styles and the creation of learning opportunities.

2. They should also receive training and educational programs which enhance their ability in conducting

school-based research activities with an aim to enhance professional practices and the effectiveness of student learning.

3. They should also receive training on leadership and on how they can lead the way for change and innovations among teachers professionally.

***For the School Management Personnel***

1. The school management should possess knowledge on how a program on human development among teachers in schools should be developed, designed, and evaluated in order to allow new and experienced teachers to form a coherent whole in generating and implementing innovations and policies in the school level.

2. The school management should also possess a macro view and knowledge of the strategies that can enhance a learning and expansive environment in schools to empower teacher capacity for leading and planning change and innovations (Fullan 2008).

**Conclusion**

Leadership studies in school-based curriculum development have been focused mainly on a managerial and hierarchical basis to the extent that school teachers have been considered to be peripheral in making pedagogical decisions (Andrews and Soder 1987; Hallinger and Murphy 1986). Recent studies on curriculum or teacher leadership have moved our bias away from this model of organisational leadership to a leadership model that is trying to recapture the essence of the professional role and identity of teachers in making curriculum decisions within the tradition of school-based curriculum development. Teacher participation in making curriculum decisions seems to have received a consensus among policy makers and school management, while teacher leadership in curriculum decision making in schools is a new phenomenon in both international and local (Hong Kong) literature, and its practice is still in its embryonic stage. How this concept and practice could be institutionalised within the infrastructure of the current school ethos with the domination of traditions and seniority still needs substantial theoretical and experimental work. Our previous

reports on the first and second action cycles of a curriculum leadership development project here in Hong Kong have demonstrated the complexity and the interrelationship of the key structures, that is, the establishment of curriculum development teams and processes such as the three-stage PER model of teacher planning, experimentation, and reflection of curriculum practice that the case school has created in response to the challenges of the community. These structures and processes have yet to find their home within the traditions and cultures of the case school in the study. However, the experience has proven that engaging teachers in curriculum decision-making processes does enhance the development of professional knowledge and skills among teachers in general. However, how the concept of teacher leadership in curriculum decision making could be put into practice more effectively in schools, and how the structures and processes could be institutionalised in schools on a wider scale remain important issues to be explored and investigated in both theoretical and empirical studies through the collaboration among researchers in university faculties and teacher leaders in schools.

The current paper focuses on determining the meditational effects of the leadership style of both the panel head and the consultant on the negotiation process among teachers in curriculum decision-making processes. The analysis of the discourse features of the interactions indicates the power relationship between the positional leaders and the teachers. These features indicate that the participation of teachers is dominated by the panel head and the consultant in terms of quantitative time distribution, as well as the qualitative control measures realised by the imposing power and status. The panel head and the consultant allowed little time for teacher participation, therefore imposing a passive image to the teacher participants. This control measure was strengthened by the language of knowledge and professionalism. The discourse features illustrate this observation and support our argument about the negative effects of the leadership styles of the panel head and the consultant on the number of opportunities for teacher participation and development. The constraints can also be understood qualitatively; teachers are shaped into the role of being the recipients of knowledge and professionalism of the positional leaders only. Teacher participation is restricted to uni-structural question and response type, and in most cases, this type is closed and requires factual answers. This

communicative style made the teacher participation one sided, and left teachers with little room for negotiation and exploration. Therefore, development opportunities were taken away by the leadership style imposed upon the teachers. School-based curriculum development has been the consensus in educational policy studies for many years in international education and in Hong Kong since the 1980s. It is time that policy makers and the school management should revisit its conceptualisation and its realisation in various types of school situations and milieus across countries with different cultural backgrounds and traditions.

Focusing solely on teacher leadership development without a concurrent suitable program of leadership education based on research findings for both middle management and school management will diminish the effectiveness of teacher education programs and the initiatives of innovative teachers in creating and expanding spaces for development work in schools. The leadership program should include key concepts of extended professionalism, strategies for developing human potentiality in schools, school-based research strategies, and comparative and socio-cultural studies in leadership. Extending and stretching the educational and human horizon of middle managers and school management personnel, including school heads, will complement and support an enhancement program for teacher leadership in schools for a new era of quality education for our children within the holistic view of reforming school education.

Distributed leadership, as part of the conceptualisation of school-based approaches to curriculum development, has been with us for the past 30 years, but how it works effectively across nations with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds remains a critical issue in this era of global education. This paper is our first attempt to contribute to the international discussion on this critical issue.

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