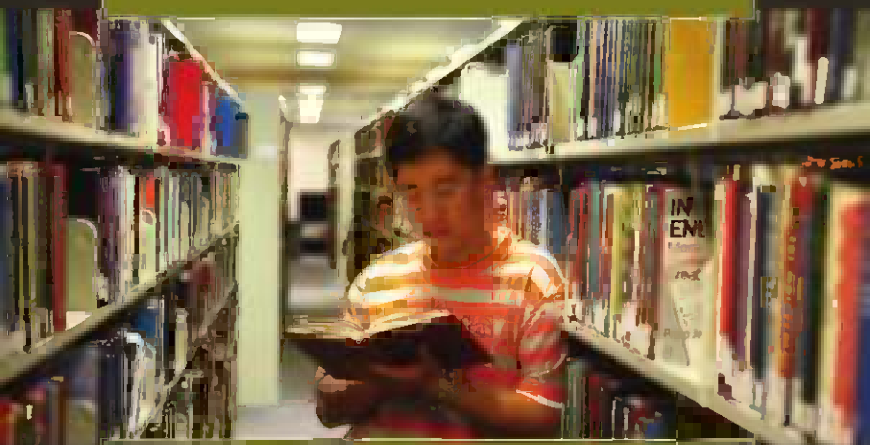


CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE FUTURE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

# Chinese Scholars on Western Ideas about Thinking, Leadership, Reform and Development in Education

Sylvester Chen and Michael Kompf (Eds.)



*SensePublishers*

**Chinese Scholars on Western Ideas about Thinking,  
Leadership, Reform and Development in Education**

## CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE FUTURE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Volume 7

*This series represents a forum for important issues that do and will affect how learning and teaching are thought about and practised. All educational venues and situations are undergoing change because of information and communications technology, globalization and paradigmatic shifts in determining what knowledge is valued. Our scope includes matters in primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as community-based informal circumstances. Important and significant differences between information and knowledge represent a departure from traditional educational offerings heightening the need for further and deeper understanding of the implications such opportunities have for influencing what happens in schools, colleges and universities around the globe. An inclusive approach helps attend to important current and future issues related to learners, teachers and the variety of cultures and venues in which educational efforts occur. We invite forward-looking contributions that reflect an international comparative perspective illustrating similarities and differences in situations, problems, solutions and outcomes.*

*Edited by*

**Michael Kompf** (michael.kompf@brocku.ca – Brock University, Canada) &

**Pamela M Denicolo** (p.m.denicolo@reading.ac.uk – University of Reading, UK)

**Michael Kompf** is Professor of Education at Brock University, Canada. Interests include developmental issues for adult learners and teachers; personal construct psychology; global policies and practices in higher education; and philosophies of inquiry. Recent writing and presentations have included exploring the nature of university corporatism, higher education success rates, individual and the social implications of distance learning, and Aboriginal education. A member of the International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching (isatt.org) since 1985, Michael has served four terms as Chair in addition to four terms as editor of the ISATT Newsletter. Michael is a member of several professional associations and serves as associate editor and reviewer on several journals. He is co-editor of six volumes of work in adult education and the various areas of teacher thinking. He has consulted, presented papers and given lectures throughout North America, the EU and Australasia.

**Pam Denicolo** is the Director of the Graduate School at the University of Reading and an active member of the University Committee for Postgraduate Research Studies. Her passion for supporting and developing graduate students is also demonstrated through her contributions to the UK Council for Graduate Education Executive Committee, the Society for Research into Higher Education Postgraduate Network, and other national and international committees and working groups which, for example, review and evaluate research generic skills training and the concordance of UK universities with the European Code and Charter, produce a framework of skills for researchers over their full career and consider the changing nature of the doctorate. As a psychologist working particularly in the fields of Professional and Postgraduate Education, she has supervised more than 50 doctoral students to successful completion, examined many more, and developed and led Research Methods Programmes for social scientists in her current and previous universities. She was honoured to be appointed an Honorary Member of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society for her contributions to the education of pharmacists. Her lifelong interest in student learning, and hence teachers' teaching, led her to become an active member of the International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching (ISATT) and serving member of the Executive Committee for many years. Her research has been oriented by a commitment to understanding the way participants in learning processes construe their roles, situations and activities, through the use and development of Personal Construct Theory approaches and methods.

# **Chinese Scholars on Western Ideas about Thinking, Leadership, Reform and Development in Education**

**Edited by**

**Sylvester Chen and Michael Kompf**  
*Brock University, Ontario, Canada*



**SENSE PUBLISHERS**  
**ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI**

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: 978-94-6209-008-8 (paperback)  
ISBN: 978-94-6209-009-5 (hardback)  
ISBN: 978-94-6209-010-1 (e-book)

Published by: Sense Publishers,  
P.O. Box 21858,  
3001 AW Rotterdam,  
The Netherlands  
<https://www.sensepublishers.com/>

*Printed on acid-free paper*

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## FOREWORD

I have had the honour and pleasure of working with the Beijing Principals' Cohort during their year of studies for the Masters of Education degree at Brock University. I must say that it was a truly unique and educative experience for myself, our faculty, and the principals. The principals have impressed us with their probing scholarship, their creative professionalism, and their thoughtful love of educational life. Allow me to elaborate.

The scholarship of the Beijing Principals can be seen in the quality of their contributions to this publication. They have chosen topics that are meaningful to the advancement of educational purposes in both China and Canada and found significant ways to go below the surface regarding complex issues and get to the heart of the matter. Their passion for obtaining a deeper understanding of educational concepts comes through in all they have done. My belief is that their research will have an important impact on the conceptualization and practice of education in schools and beyond regarding thinking models, leadership, change, curriculum, and teachers' professional development.

As professionals, the Beijing Principals have been exemplary in their learning and organization. They ask good questions and persist in understanding and applying the ideas of our courses in thorough and creative ways. I have been particularly impressed with the organization of the study activities and the professional work of the group. They have been a very cohesive group and have taken extra time to go over and reflect on the work in every course. I have mentioned to our department members that this is a good model for all of our students to follow and I am appreciative that I have had a chance to see it successfully in action. This is professionalism at its best and it will live on here at Brock University long after the Beijing Principals leave.

Finally, on a personal level, I have thoroughly enjoyed teaching the Beijing Principals. They have had a positive energy about everything they have done and demonstrated a thoughtful love of educational life. By that I mean that they have found ways to savour the educational experiences they have been given and have enabled us here at Brock University to be more appreciative of the educational possibilities right in front of us. They have worked to understand and be understood so that everyone has become more knowledgeable in the encounters in class and outside the classroom. And, they have made themselves and Brock University better as a result. I can truly say, this is a most inviting group and I am a better person as a result of my encounter with them. I wish them continued success and say thank you for all they have taught me.

Dr. John M. Novak  
Professor of Education  
Brock University  
St. Catharines, ON Canada  
March 2012





## 前言

我感到十分愉快和荣幸能与来自北京的校长们一块儿度过他们在布鲁克大学攻读教育管理硕士学位的一年。我必须说，对我、对我们教育学院、对这些校长们来说，这都是真正独特和有意义的一年。校长们对学术研究的探求、富有创造力的专业精神、以及对教育的深思和热爱都给我们留下了深刻的印象。请允许我详细表达。

北京校长们的学识从他们这本出版的质量上可窥一斑。他们选择的课题，对促进中加教育都非常有意义，能够透过复杂事物的表面看到其本质。他们对教育理念更深层次理解的追求和热情都体现在他们的所作所为中。我深信，他们对思维模式、领导力、变革、课程以及教师专业化发展的研究，将会对校内外教育的理论与实践产生重要的影响。

作为教育专业人员，北京校长们的学习和组织形式堪称榜样。他们提出非常好的问题；他们执着于理解和运用课程理念，缜密又不失创新；尤其是他们学习活动的组织形式和他们的专业经验给我留下了深刻的印象。这是一支具有高度凝聚力的团队，他们总是利用课余时间一起复习和反思每门课上所学内容。我曾经给我们系里的教授提过，北京校长们的这种学习方式和组织形式值得我们所有的学生效仿。我真的非常感激我有机会亲自看见这种学习模式的顺利运转。这是将专业精神发挥到了最高境界，即使校长们离开了，这种精神也将会永驻布鲁克大学。

最后，以个人的名义，我真的是非常享受执教北京校长班的经历。他们对从事的任何事情都精力充沛，表现出对教育的深思和热爱。我的意思是不仅仅是他们倍感珍惜他们在布鲁克获得的教育经历，他们也让我们布鲁克的教授充分认识到我们当前的教育潜力。为了使自己的知识渊博起来，他们在课内课外的交流中努力地表达自己、理解他人。进而，他们提高了自己，也发展了布鲁克大学。坦白地说，这是一支最具感召力的团队，与他们的互动使我获益匪浅。我衷心希望他们能不断取得成功，并对我从他们那儿所学到的一切表示诚挚谢意。

布鲁克大学教育学院终身教授

约翰·诺瓦克 博士

2012年3月



## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This volume is a collection of papers written during 2009 by a group of Chinese educational administrators sponsored by the Education Committee of Chaoyang District of Beijing who studied in the Master of Education International Student Program (MEd ISP) at Brock University in Canada. The overall objective of the program was to provide a meaningful and useful graduate experience that facilitated comparisons of educational practices from other cultures.

Any social movement towards the development of useful, meaningful and respectful heterogeneous educational thought and practice takes place against the backdrop of globalization. An implicit assumption within any aspect of globalization and particularly in the field of educational services has to do with the character and reputation of institutions offering those services. Quality assurance indicators have been adopted by many states, provinces and countries to measure the quality, credibility and relevance of systems, programs and educators involving administrative and educational audits and evaluations. Performance levels on indicators are usually defined by areas of specialization and often connected to funding. Quality *per se* as an indicator of national or international status is a complex set of factors often reported on in the public press as rating scores such as are reported nationally (e.g., in Canada *MacLean's Magazine* or the *Globe and Mail*) or internationally (e.g., the *London Times Higher Education Supplement*). Establishing and maintaining a highly regarded reputation has increasingly become intertwined with branding and public relations strategies played out on a global stage.

Collaborative international programs involve meeting the needs of learners in ways that allow contrast and comparisons of practices, policies and educational principles. The structure, function and value of programs tend to reflect the cultural context in which they were developed. Through providing opportunities for careful consideration and study by those who have a firm basis in the culture of origin understandings can be derived that are of use in educational development and reform. The many barriers ISP candidates faced must be acknowledged for culture shock, communication and language adjustments and b for braving Canadian winters. The host university benefits from the influence of international students as a way of moving significantly beyond local, regional and national conceptions of how teaching and learning are thought about and carried out elsewhere.

Comparisons of educational institution on an international basis are telling when examined through transfer credit policies and degree recognition. Transferable academic credits may represent a form of scholastic currency currently benchmarked by programs such as the Bologna Project that affords student movement between and among participating institutions in the European Union. The worth of institutional accreditation and associated academic credits has a value that is increasingly being determined by a globalized educational marketplace.

Within such a dynamic, the need for recognition of development in thinking, policies and practices takes place in both top-down and bottom-up directions. Not

## INTRODUCTION

only must permissions and encouragement come from above, but front-line educators must also recognize, accept and act on developmental initiatives that will ensure authentic and meaningful considerations that lead to improvements in practice for the sake of efficacious learning systems but also preserve the essential cultural characteristics that define nations, regions and schools. Change for the sake of change is as fruitless as inflexibility in the face of change. The ways in which education is thought about and practiced around the world is changing;

China and Chinese educators recognize that movement and take it most seriously. Laudably, the group of educational ambassadors who have contributed to this volume represent a new wave of thinkers whose studies embraced their native culture but also opened minds and hearts to alternative ways of understanding and acting on rapidly changing educational circumstances for learners, teachers and administrators.

The title of this volume *Chinese Scholars on Western Ideas about Thinking, Leadership, Reform and Development in Education* reflects the various sections into which contributions have been sorted. It is our hope that the potential for further studies on the topics presented will become apparent on reading the chapters that follow. It is also our hope that additional volumes will present a sampling of issues that not only illustrate the richness that cultural diversity brings but also the commonalities that unite the thoughts and practices of teachers and the places in which education takes place.

Sylvester Chen &  
Michael Kompf  
March, 2012

PART I

**RESEARCH ON THINKING MODELS**

## RESEARCH ON THINKING MODELS

Postmodern education has evolved with multiple facets combining information, internationalization and globalization. Leaders, such as principals in school system, must possess fundamental understandings that incorporate global perspectives in order to lead schools and effectively educate future generations. The research focus of Part I of this book presents differences between Eastern and Western cultures and the ways of thinking. It examines the international perspectives of Chinese school principals in through analyses of cases that require logical, reflective, critical and creative thinking.

Nie Tingwe (a school Principal) in his chapter *A Principal With An International Horizon - Be Familiar with the Eastern and Western Thought Patterns* presents a comparison of the differences of the Eastern and Western thinking patterns and suggests that a qualified principal is one who possesses a sound understanding of both the Eastern and Western theoretical perspectives of education, and who can implement such visions in practice is thus able to successfully educate students. Yang Yamin (a Vice Principal) establishes a theoretical foundation of *Class-Grade Quantification* through transformational learning theory. Wen Juan (a Director) addresses the needs of teachers who must possess ability of critical thinking skills in order to develop teachers with such skills for the Chinese school system.

NIE TINGWU

## 1. A PRINCIPAL WITH AN INTERNATIONAL HORIZON

*Be Familiar with the Eastern and Western Thought Patterns*

### INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to explore the respective strengths of the Eastern and the Western thought patterns, which principals can apply in different management practices. The paper consists of three parts: an overview of Eastern Western thought patterns, transferring the strengths of these two values into leadership practices and conclusion. By exploring these issues, one can develop a deep understanding of the strengths of these two thought patterns, as well as translate these strengths into educational leadership practices.

I believe that principals with an international horizon are expected to be familiar with thought patterns of both the East and the West. It is significant for educational leaders to observe and analyze an educational issue from two lenses; East and West. I argue that a principal with an international horizon can be more effective in promoting school improvement than those principals who only understand the local culture. As Guo (2009) argued, “[c] Confucianism’s emphasis on “the middle way”, remind us to recognize strengths of both educational systems – the East and the West – and to seek a balance in integrating these strengths based on local situations” (pp. 233–234). Meanwhile, I would like to thank my instructor –Mary Lovering for her guidance in the Comparative Education course, which presented different perspectives on the Western thought and the new national curriculum in China.

### AN OVERVIEW OF EASTERN AND WESTERN THOUGHT PATTERNS

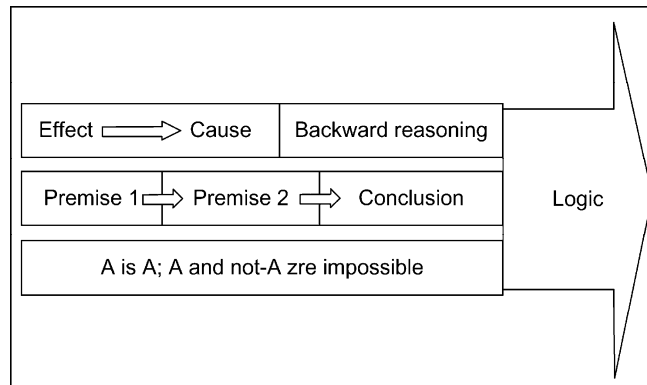
*The Main Differences of these Two Thought Patterns*

The main difference between Western thought and Eastern traditional thought are different styles of reasoning: the Westerner emphasizes logical reasoning, in contrast to the Easterner who is inclined to dialectical reasoning. As Graham stated,... “[t]he most striking difference between the traditions at the two ends of the civilized world is in the destiny of logic. For the West, logic has been central and the thread of transmission has never snapped...” (Nisbett, 2004, p. 165). Nisbett (2004) indicated that logical thought included the following rules: the



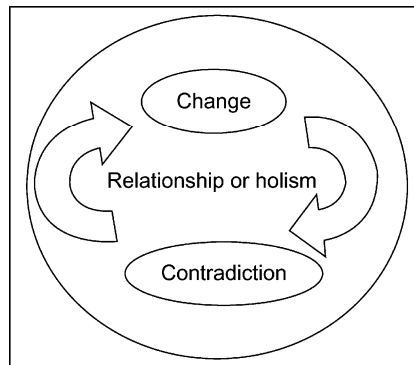
N. TINGWU

Syllogism, the Law of Identity, the Law of Noncontradiction and Backward Reasoning.



*Figure 1. Westerners' success in science arises from logical thought.*

Westerners' success in science arises from logical thought. In contrast, the Easterner is inclined to dialectical reasoning. According to Nisbett (2004), dialectical reasoning covers three principles: the principle of change, the principle of contradiction and the principle of relationship, or holism. The three principles of dialectical reasoning have mutual influences (pp. 174–175).



*Figure 2. Dialectic.*

The Chinese culture focuses on holism, which means each part is related to the other. Nisbett (2004) explained holism as,

## A PRINCIPAL WITH AN INTERNATIONAL HORIZON

*The principle of relationship, or holism.* As a result of change and opposition, nothing exists in an isolated and independent way, but is connected to a multitude of different things. To really know a thing, we have to know all its relations, like individual musical notes embedded in a melody (p. 175).

Chinese apply holism to guide their actions; in other words, it is second nature.

Through research it was found that Western researchers also studied holism. For example, Senge (1990) studied systems thinking and he stated:

... human endeavors are also systems. They ... are bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated actions, which often take years to fully play out their effects on each other. Since we are part of the lacework work ourselves, it is doubly hard to see the whole pattern of change. Instead, we tend to focus on snapshots of isolated parts of the system and wonder why our deepest problems never seem to get solved. Systems thinking is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed over the past fifty years, to make the full patterns clearer and to help us see how to change them effectively (Senge, 1990, p. 7).

From the readings, I believe that holism and systems thinking very similar. The Western thought and traditional Chinese thought are gradually moving toward integration and a blend of both.

## DIFFERENT WORLD VIEW

Different styles of reasoning result in different world views. Nisbett (2004) stated, there are a large number of diversities between Westerner's and Easterner's viewpoints.

*Table 1. Differences between Westerners' and Easterners' viewpoints*

<i>Westerner's positions</i>	<i>Easterner's positions</i>
Independence	Interdependence
Freedom	Self-control
Logical rules	The Middle Way
Controlling the environment	Adjusting to the environment
Personal agency	Collective agency
Debate	Harmony
Stability	Change
Linear	Cyclical
Equality	Hierarchy

## TRANSFERING STRENGTHS OF THESE TWO THOUGHT PATTERNS INTO LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

Systems thinking or holism is very important in management activities, whether to the Chinese leader or the Western leader.

#### APPLYING SYSTEMS THINKING OR HOLISM THOUGHT IN PRACTICE

##### *Principals Are Required to Master Systems Thinking Capacity*

Compared with principals in Canada, Chinese principals are expected to master systems thinking or holism for the following reasons. Firstly, most Chinese schools are larger in size and number of students than Canadian schools. On average, there are approximately fifteen hundred students and one hundred fifty teachers. In some schools there is an elementary, junior and secondary section. These schools can accommodate about two thousand students. In Canadian schools one can expect to find one Principal and two Vice Principals who take responsibility for the entire school. In China, middle managers are responsible for implementing principals' ideas and requirements. Middle managers usually consist of two Assistant Principals, three Deans, Assistant Deans and other members. If Principals in China want to lead a larger school successfully, they should master holism or systems thinking.

##### *Chinese Teachers' Evaluation System Reflects Holism*

Who is qualified to evaluate a teacher in Chinese schools? All the stakeholders can participate in teachers' evaluation in China. They include the Principal, Vice Principal, and Dean, a colleague, parent or student. Some principals invite parents to observe teachers' lectures in the classroom every year; parents are encouraged to provide their feedback when they leave the school. Many individuals may participate in teacher evaluation in China; this opportunity does not exist in Canadian schools. In Canada, only the Principal, Vice Principal and appropriate supervisors can evaluate teachers in the classroom. Why have Chinese principals adopted this evaluation system? This may be influenced by holism. In Chinese culture, in order to ensure the equity of the result of the evaluation, all stakeholders should be involved. The opinion of only one principal or vice principal may be biased, which would directly affect the result of the evaluation. Canada's educators believe that evaluators should be professionals, so students and parents have no authority in evaluating teachers.

##### *Leading the New National Curriculum Reform with Systems Thinking or Holism*

Principals face many challenges during the process of implementing curriculum reform; they may also utilize holism or systems thinking to solve these problems.

To date, China's curriculum reform has been implemented for nearly ten years. At present, many teachers have questioned the curriculum reform: wearing new shoes to walk the old path; an examination-oriented evaluation system has not been fundamentally changed; the effect of teacher training is not satisfactory. Many teachers are trapped in confusion. In the current educational environment, how should principals analyze these complicated problems and after analyzing, what should the principals do? Principals should utilize systems thinking or holism to analyze and clarify these problems for teachers.

For example, principals can state the following opinions about the curriculum: Fullan (2003) argued that education change is an ongoing and complex process, rather than an event (Guo, 2009, p. 23). Implementing the new curriculum reform is a huge change in the educational field. It is common that changes result in some problems, which include loss, incompetence, confusion and conflict. Should we go on to implement the curriculum reform? If we let teachers make a choice, how many teachers would want to return to the old path? I believe few teachers want to go back, because the orientation of curriculum reform is absolutely right. It is beneficial to students' development. A perfect curriculum reform policy does not exist. Even if this kind of policy exists, it ultimately depends on the implementation of teachers in the classroom. In addition, no policy can contain every detail issue of teaching and learning. Therefore, there is no use for complaints.

Teachers should actively study ideas of the new curriculum, solve teaching problems and take the initiative to meet the requirements of the reform. One of the objectives of the curriculum reform is to change the passive learning and rote learning styles into active and problem-solving learning styles. Everyone should discard complain and blame. Within everybody's responsibility, everyone try their best and make itself a positive change.

### *Make a Difference*

Most Westerners are confident that "each individual has a set of characteristic, distinctive attributes. Moreover, people want to be distinctive - different from other individuals in important ways" (Nisbett, 2004, p. 47). We had an internship course last semester, from which we also recognized that Canadian education has an advanced concept. Principals and teachers respect students' choice, respect students' differences and encourage students to make a difference. This sense of unique distinctiveness is rooted in Western thought.

In the last five years, we can also sense this in Chinese education. For instance, our school district leaders encouraged all principals to develop unique schools. They do not expect that all schools are the same or have the same mode of development. They emphasized that all schools should not only improve student test scores, but also develop their own characteristics. Some schools should encourage the arts for students that are good at music and art while other schools should feature sport. Joe is my classmate; his school is a key school in my district and it has a good reputation. His principal advocated an educational philosophy in 2003. The philosophy was to build a unique school, develop unique teachers and cultivate unique students. His principal determined this educational idea as his school's motto. Using this motto as a guide, his school achieved development and a good reputation as well.

### *Sharing Leadership*

Chinese traditional culture is characterized by an organized, hierarchical system. Most people are accustomed to compliance and respect to authority. They do not like self-aggrandizement; some of them are lack of sense of initiative and participation. In contrast, Westerners are in pursuit of equality, participation and actively demonstrating their potential. This Western thought pattern permeated after Chinese economic reform in the 1980s. Most principals recognized and accepted this thought pattern, they encouraged teachers to share leadership. This can be proven with the following case.

I initiated a school reform regarding cultivating students to acquire good habits in 2008. In order to motivate teachers to commit to this reform, I encouraged teachers to create a new school motto. Teachers actively took part in composing the school motto and offered more than 30 mottos. All teachers voted to determine our school motto: *To Acquire Good Habits and to Foster an Awareness of Responsibility*. This motto had been carved onto a large display board that was placed at the most eye-catching location in the school so that teachers and students could see it at any time. I expected them to put the motto into practice. I organized teachers to engage in this activity in order to let them have a deeper understanding of the significance of this reform, which is a method of sharing leadership. This action can also improve the teachers' sense of ownership.

### CONCLUSION

In short, principals should be familiar with the cultural characteristics of the East and the West and absorb the strengths of these two cultures to improve their leadership capacity. In order to promote the rapid development of the school, principals should arm themselves with an international horizon.

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YANG YAMIN

## **2. A CRITICAL REFLECTION OF CLASS-GRADE QUANTIFICATION CHECK BASED ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING THEORY**

### INTRODUCTION

In China, many schools adopt a class-grade quantification check to cultivate good student habits. There is an interesting phenomenon in these schools; the higher the grades, the lower the marks of Class-Grade Quantification Check.

What may produce this unusual phenomenon? Transformative learning theory provides some illuminating perspectives to help us analyze the phenomenon. The core perspective of transformative learning is that it is the process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating and integrative understanding of one's experience (Cranton, 1992). Only people who critically self-reflect the assumptions of their perspectives can find the real problem and thoroughly change their perspective, value and action.

This article is about critical self-reflection of the Class-Grade Quantification Check from four aspects. First, many Chinese educators train students' good behaviours by coercive power. Second, some Chinese teachers attempt to create habits in twenty one days. Third, some educators educate students in the mode of training slaves, but not a model of Civic Education. Finally, many Chinese educators believe that the Class-Grade Quantification Check is a process of the condition reflection, but not a process of cognitive structure change. The Class-Grade Quantification Check is the traditional means of education. If the educators reform the Class-Grade Quantification Check from correct educational aims and the appropriate psychology theories, the traditional means of education may still exert its great influence.

### CONTEXT

In China, Class is the basic unit of the school and the foundational environment in which the students live. The class-grade quantification check is an education administration pattern which has been adopted in Chinese elementary and secondary schools. There are four characteristics in the class-grade quantification check. First, students' behaviour in school may be quantified and allocated a certain mark. Good behaviours are rewarded with a higher score while behaviour that breaches the school's rules, etiquette, customs or morality will be result in lower scores. Second, special teachers check students' behaviours and tally up the

Y. YAMIN

marks of the class once per week. Third, all class marks are published regularly. Fourth, schools will praise the classes which obtain high scores and they are rewarded with material items at the end of the term.

According to common logic, senior classes should have higher scores than the junior classes in the class-grade quantification check. In other words, senior students should have better behaviour habits than younger students since they have had longer education and training. In actuality, junior classes often have higher scores than the senior classes; junior students demonstrate much better behaviour than senior students. How can these disappointing results be explained?

#### TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

Cranton used Mezirow's (1990) theory to define "transformative learning [as] a process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating and integrative understanding of one's experience. Learning includes acting on these insights" (p. 151).

According to Mezirow's theory, Cranton (1992) discussed how transformative learning occurs. People's values and assumptions about the perspective of the world are stable. When people encounter other "people, events or change in context which challenge the learner's basic assumptions" (Cranton, 1992, p. 148) and are stimulated strong enough, they start to examine the assumptions and presuppositions. In the step of critical reflection, if people judge that the assumptions are invalid; they will change their assumptions and rebuilt meaning perspectives.

The values of transformative learning are presented in the following statements. First, transformative learning is beneficial to liberate the individual consciousness. Second, transformative learning helps us recognize that meaning perspectives, values and culture can be changed. Finally, transformative learning enhances the ability to understand and analyze the essence of society and life (Cai Wenyu, 2002).

Transformative learning theory provides an angle to help us reflect and analyze the Class-Grade Quantification Check. Only people who critically self-reflect the assumptions of their perspectives find real problems and thoroughly change their perspectives, values and actions. The reason why higher grades indicate lower marks of Class-Grade Quantification Check exists perhaps in the assumptions of the Class-Grade Quantification Check, but not in how people use the evaluation.

#### ASSUMPTION ONE

##### *Teachers Can Train Students' Good Behaviours by Coercive Power*

McGraw-Hill (2005) defined coercive power as a power which influences people's behaviours through threats, sanctions, pain and punishment. McCroskey and Richmond defined the teacher's coercive power as the following:

#### A CRITICAL REFLECTION OF CLASS-GRADE QUANTIFICATION

A teacher's coercive power is based on a student's expectations that he/she will be punished by the teacher, if he/she does not conform to the teacher's influence attempt. The strength of the teacher's coercive power is contingent upon the student's perception of how probable it is that the teacher will exact punishment for non-conformance and the degree of negative consequences such punishment would entail, minus the probability of punishment from other sources if the student does comply with the teacher's influence attempt (1983, p. 176).

From the previous definitions we learn that teachers have coercive power and may change students' behaviours. On the other hand, it is difficult to change students' motivation by coercive power. McGraw-Hill (2005) found that "coercive power strategies ... are the least effective ways of motivating people because they diminish the capacity of individuals to change, improve and develop themselves" (para. 1).

The class-grade quantification check is one way to cultivate students' good behaviours in Chinese schools. Depending on the use of coercive power, the class-grade quantification check does not help teachers to achieve the educational goals of the school because "coercive power tends to result in negative performance responses from individuals, decreases satisfaction, increases mistrust and creates fear" (Robbins and Langton, 2002). More importantly, depending on the use of coercive power, teachers may not be able to change students' inherent motivations.

With the growth of students' age, intelligence and experience, coercive power cannot control the students and the class-grade quantification check has thoroughly lost its function of cultivating good behaviours. The research of McCroskey and Richmond (1983) proves the view: "It is important to note that in environments where very strong peer-group pressure against the teacher exists, the teacher may have no coercive power at all, even though the teacher may be in a position to exert a high degree of punishment" (p. 176).

Based on the above reflection and analysis, one can conclude that if teachers believe that the coercive power is the presupposition of the class-grade quantification check, the class-grade quantification check will fail in cultivating good student behaviours.

#### ASSUMPTION TWO

##### *Creating a Habit in Twenty-One Days*

Many Chinese teachers believe in the theory of creating a habit in twenty one days. Peale stated "the concept of creating a habit in twenty one days was first introduced by Dr. Maxwell Maltz, in a book titled, *Psycho-Cybernetics* in 1960 and it was and still is, very influential for other self-help books and personal growth teachers" (2009, para. 1). Dr. Maltz noted, "it took twenty one days for amputees to cease feeling phantom sensations in an amputated limb so our brains will not even accept a new habit unless it is repeated every day for twenty one days without missing a day" (para. 1). It seems reasonable that "if people simply go



through the motions of doing something for twenty one days straight, then it will become ingrained in their neural pathways and they are set for life” (para. 1).

Today, many Chinese teachers regard this theory as the psychological basis of cultivating students’ good behaviours. They insist that the class-grade quantification check is an appropriate method to cultivate good behaviours, because it can encourage students to repeat the same behaviours over a period of time.

If the theory is correct, who can encourage the students to repeat the same behaviours in twenty one days; do teachers carry out this job? Chinese law stipulates that the teacher-to-student ratio is 1:12.5 in city middle schools (Huarui, 2008). It is impossible for one teacher to instruct and supervise twelve students so they repeat the same behaviours for twenty one days. Do students do this job themselves? What is the ultimate motivation for a student to repeat behaviour for twenty one days? In practical terms, creating a habit in twenty one days is not feasible and valid in a Chinese school.

The class-grade quantification check is ineffective in cultivating students’ good behaviours is because teachers misunderstand the concept of habit. From the traditional definition, “habits [are] acquired reflexes that emerged due to the inherent plasticity of the nervous tissue. As a behavioural sequence is repeatedly enacted, the brain matter underlying the action was thought to become ever more predisposed to reproduce the sequence” (Gale, 2008). Thus, habits become a conditioned reflex without sense, ignoring the role of a person’s initiative. Contrary to traditional positions, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) argue that “habits are integral to free will and agency insofar as they provide a framework of action possibilities that can be imaginatively reconfigured to meet a person’s current goals and circumstances” (Gale, 2008). It means that sense is the real motivation behind the habits.

If educators regard training habits only as a process of nervous reflection, students cannot perceive the sense of action and do not know what can lead to what. Without external coercive power, students’ behaviours become arbitrary and irrational. If educators regard training habits as a process of perceiving the meaning behind the behaviour, when a scenario and its significance is understood by the student at the same time, then the individual will demonstrate habits and make sensible decisions without thinking. Only with an understanding of the sense and goals can the class-grade quantification check cultivate good behavioural habits in students.

### ASSUMPTION THREE

#### *The Mode of Training Slaves is Helpful to Cultivate Good Behaviour*

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (2009), the rights of the slaves come from their owner. The owner can bestow rights upon slaves and deprive the slaves of rights. Only unconditional obedience to the will of the owner will give slaves their rights. Slaves have neither awareness of their rights nor awareness of the

#### A CRITICAL REFLECTION OF CLASS-GRADE QUANTIFICATION

rules; they only need to obey the owner's power and responsibility and do not have their own rules or rights and social responsibilities. Once the owners are bankrupt of their power, the slaves' rights and obligations will be separated as well. Without obligations and responsibility, what the slaves bring to their owner is only "violence and fear" (Schultz, 2009), because the obligations and responsibility cannot bring rights to slaves.

The model of training a slave can explain the phenomenon of why the higher grades receive lower marks on the Class-Grade Quantification Check. For a long time, some Chinese educators established a mode of slave training to cultivate good behaviour in students. Educators arranged checking, feedback and assessment to align student behaviour with the requirements of the teacher. Through reward and punishment, teachers consistently strengthen the idea that students must submit to the teacher's power, authority and standard. As a result, students form set thinking that their behaviours only hold them accountable to their teacher. When students escape from a teacher's supervision or are able to break free of the constraints of a teacher's power, their behaviours become a self-willed and unconscious, because students do not understand their obligations, responsibility or who they should obey.

The concepts of rights and obligations originated from the social contract theory (Wikipedia, 2009). Rousseau (1762) believed that "the individual citizen puts aside his egoism to create a 'general will'. Popular sovereignty decides what is good for society as a whole and the individual must bow to it, or be forced to bow to it" (Wikipedia, 2009). From Rousseau's opinion, we can distinguish the difference between slave and citizen regarding rights and obligations. For the slave, there is no relationship between rights and obligations; rights only connect with power. For the citizen, obeying obligation and bearing the responsibility means enjoying and protecting their own rights.

Citizen's rights and obligations are unified in order to ensure maximum realization of individual interests, obeying rules and laws subject individual rights. If Chinese educators can help students accept the concept of rights and obligation but not of rights and power, it is possible that students may cultivate their own good behaviours.

#### ASSUMPTION FOUR

##### *The Behaviourist Approach to Learning*

In Behaviourist Approaches, James (2008) discussed the behaviourist approach to learning that it is almost a conditioned reflex as a result of a permanent change. Behaviour is automated; controlled and formed by the result which occurs after the behaviour.

In China, some teachers conduct their teaching practice with a behaviourist theory. For example, they believe that through sermon, demonstration, guidance, manipulation, reward and punishment and the class-grade quantification check, teachers can change and shape students' behaviour to ensure that they achieve their

educational goals. When the teachers observe that students demonstrate the behaviours expected of them, teachers affirm that behaviour training is successful; otherwise it would be considered a failure. This encourages teachers to focus the emphasis of cultivating good behaviours on designing various practical projects of managing and measure, as well as the class-grade quantification check. In this way, education simplifies a process of condition to stimulate reflection. As long as educators develop the code of conduct and constantly check and provide feedback, students will automatically form good behavioural habits.

Phillips and Jonas (2003) suggested the criticisms of behaviourism, including the following:

- Behaviourism does not account for all kinds of learning, since it disregards the activities of the mind;
- Behaviourism does not explain some learning—such as the recognition of new language patterns by young children—for which there is no reinforcement mechanism;
- Research has shown that animals adapt their reinforced patterns to new information (Purpose Associates, 2008).

The experiences of Chinese schools show that if guiding practice is based on behaviourist theory, it is almost inevitable that the phenomenon occurs in which the students in higher grades receive lower marks on the Class-Grade Quantification Check because the educator ignores the fact that students have the ability to think and choose for themselves.

Social cognitive theories of Piaget and Bruner (Williams, 2001) state that people's behaviour is neither automatic, nor is it a mechanical response to environmental stress. Behavioural change is due to changes in motivation. Long-term and far-reaching change is motivated by the cognitive changes in the structure caused by, in other words, only by understanding the meaning behind the behaviour, is it real learning. In fact, the goals of cultivating behaviours are to encourage students to understand their future role in society and encourage students to obtain information on the individual, their own perception of the world and individual psychology. It is possible to be successful so that teachers cultivate students' behaviours in a meaningful way through the class-grade quantification check.

## CONCLUSION

In reflection of the class-grade quantification check based on transformative learning theory, it is evident that Chinese educators train good student behaviour by coercive power, attempting to create habits in twenty one days, educating students in the model of training slaves and conducting educational practices based in behaviourist theory. Because the assumptions of cultivating behaviours are invalid, the class-grade quantification check based on this principal must be almost ineffective. Although the class-grade quantification check is traditional but still valuable, if we can change these assumptions, the future of cultivating behaviours may be full of difficulties but it is still bright.

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### 3. HOW TO BE A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

#### INTRODUCTION

With the implementation of the new curriculum reform in China since 2001, the quality of teachers is one key factor that determines whether the basic education reform could be successful or not. As a result, the voice of teacher's professionalism is becoming stronger and stronger. The study of teacher professional development is blossoming in China; particularly the study of the reflective teacher. Reflection plays an important role in the professional development of teachers. Reflective practices and reflective teachers are paid more attention by educators and experts.

In China, according to the status quo of China's teacher professional development and the comparative analysis of the extent of teacher professional development at home and abroad, we find that teacher professional development in China is still at a low or intermediate level. Although the country has organized many training courses for teachers in order to implement the reform, the problems regarding the teacher's professional training are still quite serious. First, the contents are about the individual's professional knowledge, common knowledge and common teaching philosophy. Second, the methods of training are to spoon-feed teachers, focusing on the knowledge itself while ignoring the self-study and self-reflection of teachers. Third, most teachers pay more attention to receiving a diploma instead of the professionalism. Fourth, many of the training courses are presented as training courses rather than seminars. As a result, teachers do not receive practical and useful strategies and gradually lose interest.

First and foremost, teachers should adapt to the needs of the curriculum reform in educational ideas and educational activities. The traditional role of teachers and teaching activities has been facing serious challenges; teachers need to re-examine their role and position to reflect on their teaching behaviour, to improve their quality as a teacher and promote the growth and development of other teachers. Schools must change ways in which they train teachers and promote professional development. A school which invests more time to the professional development of its teachers will be leaps and bounds ahead.

In this context, school administrators should organize training courses to promote and encourage a teacher's reflective skill and competency. As school administrators, it is significant to not only understand the importance of cultivating reflective teachers, but also to know strategies to encourage self-reflection automatically. This article will focus on the theories of reflection, what are reflective teachers and their features, how do teachers reflect, what factors will

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influence teacher reflection and what are the effective methods of training reflective teachers.

#### STATUS AND PROBLEMS

Nowadays, new teaching methods and educational philosophies are finding their way into the daily teaching work in primary and secondary school, which makes the current field of teaching show a thriving new atmosphere. Among them, the strong impact of teacher reflection is particularly prominent and visible. From the theoretical level, a large number of researchers have studied and analyzed the meaning, significance, specific methods and strategies and other issues of teacher reflection. Other teachers have combined their own teaching practice with reflective practice and have been carrying out reflective practice. As a result, reflective cases have sprung up like mushrooms. All in all, “reflective teaching” and “reflective teacher” have become a fashionable educational terms used with high regard. The topic is current and should be discussed thoroughly. Over-reflection, to reflect on reflection, formal modeling and stereotyped reflection are serious problems which should be focused upon. How can we carry out the effective reflection?

Teaching reflection for promoting professional development of teachers is an effective practice for teachers. Its necessity and importance are well known, but is difficult for many teachers to put in to practice. Gustafson and Bennett (1999) identified eleven variables that affected cadets’ lack of reflective behaviour. These eleven variables are divided into three main characteristics: learner, environment and reflection task. The eleven variables are:

1. Learner’s skill and experience in reflective thinking.
2. Breadth of learner’s knowledge of the content area.
3. Learner’s motivation to complete the reflection task.
4. Mental preparation for reflecting.
5. Degree of security felt in reporting actual reflections versus perceived desired responses.
6. Physical environment in which reflection occurs.
7. Interpersonal environment in which reflection occurs.
8. Nature of the stimulus questions, or probes.
9. Format required for reporting reflections.
10. Quality of the feedback provided following reflection.
11. Consequences of reflection.

Put into the context of teaching, the introduction or giving some instruction on how to reflect is necessary so that teachers have a clear understanding of their form or appearance. In Chinese administration, it is not difficult to find a large number of reflective formats and cases similar to others, moreover, some teachers have summarized the method on how to reflect as “first, write your inadequacies and then write an inspiration and at last, how to put it into use”, how brilliantly

concise! This kind of “eight-legged essay” applied format is undoubtedly wrong and harmful for the teachers’ professionalism.

*Coping with Inspection – a Mere Formality*

In teaching practice, there is a tendency to merely cope with inspection. A large number of teachers consider reflective practice as an additional burden, a waste of time, so, in order to cope with school leaders, they are reluctant to muddle through the completion of inspection. In this way, a reflective diary has become the tool for reflection and a mere formality, floating on the surface of thinking. As a result, the real value of effective reflection has not been embodied. It is true that the reasons for this phenomenon are also a multi-faceted.

*Comprehensive Rather than Deep*

Through examining a large number of reflective cases in my school, it is easy to identify that most of them are comprehensive, but mostly superficial and vague, overall but lacking the depth. It seems what everyone has said is almost similar and there is no difference. Obviously, they are too mechanized and stylized, lacking of specific, relevant, fresh and profoundness.

*Piecemeal Rather than Systematic*

At present, it appears that reflections are more scattered and fragmented; they are inconsistent and lack a systematic process. Some teachers often reflect upon an issue one time, but the next time they may change to another issue. The result is that teachers will talk about each issue, but they lack depth, coherence and systematic deep-thinking and understanding. As result, the effect of reflection is not very obvious and even more important; its effectiveness to improve the teaching behaviour of teachers may also be minimal. Many teachers are also suspicious of the effectiveness of this approach, which in turn affects the teacher’s enthusiasm and passion for reflection, forming a vicious circle.

*Emphasis on Teachers and Neglect Students*

The current reflection cases have shown a clear tendency; the focus of reflection is concentrated on teaching content, teaching methods and approaches, forms of teaching and teaching effectiveness, such as “how teachers teach”. The practice of “how students learn” is rare; it is limited and lacks long-term insight. Since the ultimate purpose of teachers’ work should focus on students’ life-long development, ignoring the analysis and reflection of students does not have value. At the same time, the essence of teaching activities, as a dynamic process, is a development process of interactions or exchange between teachers and student, in which the “teaching” and “study” itself is unified, complementary and organic,

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therefore, teaching reflection should include “teachers’ teaching” and “students’ learning”.

#### MORE NARRATIVE AND LESS ANALYSIS

There are many descriptions focused on the teaching process and an objective record about the class in the reflection, but they lack thorough analysis and deep thinking. For the core content of reflection, many teachers simply browse it. For example, one teachers’ first attempt at the reflective process limited his writing to the four dimensions of “preview-challenge-discussion-feedback” and his reflection is as follows:

Because I just tried this kind of model, after all, there are still many imperfections, such as the allocation of time, the time of each group is not balanced and the group differences in membership between the level of competence and so on, I will try my best to explore and perfect it.

It is obvious that this reflection is superficial, providing only a brief overview of several aspects of the imperfections, but it does not analyze the reasons why these problems exist or explore strategies of how to improve teaching practice. It seems that, from the theoretical to practical aspects, this kind of reflection fails to play its role in teaching activity.

#### REFLECTION AND REFLECTION PRACTICE

Reflection is a kind of mental activity; during the process of reflection people review their behaviours from the past and attempt to generate new ideas. Jennifer Moon (2002), the most recent researcher on reflective practice, provides the following definition:

Reflection is a form of mental processing – like a form of thinking – which we use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. It is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is largely based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding and possibly emotions that we already possess. (p. 2)

Moon also points out that one of the defining characteristics of surface learning is that it does not involve reflection (p. 123). Reflection is considered as a process or activity that is central to developing practices (Dewey 1933, 1938; Loughran, 1996). Lasley (1992, p. 24) believed that reflection...refers to the capacity of a teacher to think creatively, imaginatively and at times, self-critically about classroom practice. Donald A. Scion (1983) identified reflection as the following:

Through reflection, practitioners can surface and criticize the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialized practice and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he may allow himself to experience (p. 61).

Reflection can help people develop critical thinking skills and improve an individual’s thoughts and behaviours in their activities. As individuals, in order



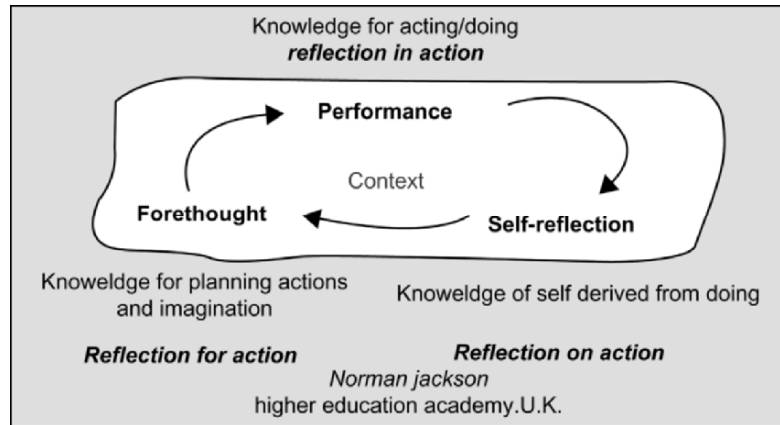
to deeply understand our practice and behaviours and have a self-correction and self-improvement, we should know what reflective thinking is and how to develop this particular skill. Reflective thinking should be a process of problem-raising, problem-inquiry and problem-solving. In this process, practitioners should first discover some triggers from their own practice, grasp some methods and finally transform and modify their former thoughts and ideas. Norton (1994) points out “[Reflective thinking] is a disciplined inquiry into the motives, methods, materials and consequences of educational practice. It enables practitioners to thoughtfully examine conditions and attitudes which impede or enhance student achievement” (p. 139). Dewey (1933) described reflective thinking systematically in his book *How do we think*. He supposed “reflective thinking is active, persistent and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” (p. 9). It can be shown then that reflection is not only a way of rethinking, but also an effective way to find disadvantages and problems and form transformative ideas and thoughts. Based on Schon’s theory of “reflection-in-action” and “reflection-on-action”, Killion and Todnem (1991) categorize reflection in three directions:

#### Three Reflective Directions

1. First, **reflection-on-action** requires looking back on what one has accomplished and reviewing the actions, thoughts and product.
2. The second form of reflection is **reflection-in-action**. In this activity, the individual is responsible for reflecting while in the act of carrying out the task. If, for example, the student is writing a story and has left out the setting, reflection-in-action could guide the correction of a major component of the story writing.
3. The final reflective form centers on **reflection-for-action**. This reflection form expects the participant to review what has been accomplished and identify constructive guidelines to follow to succeed in the given task in the future. (p. 15)

According to [Figure 1](#), Killion (1991) demonstrated the process of reflective practice as a spiral circle and practitioners first should have basic knowledge on how to reflect. After grasping the basic skills, they will focus on specific issues. Following this, practitioners should reflect on their own deeds and behaviours, making a new action plan. Thus, a new theory is being generated and experimented in another action.

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#### REFLECTIVE TEACHERS

Reflective teachers typically demonstrate that learning is a process of constructing new knowledge. They often suspect whether what they have learned fits the present learning context. Reflective teachers should question their teaching methods, teaching values and context and teaching curriculum. Kenneth and Daniel (1996) presented this view on the subject of reflective teaching:

If a teacher never questions the goals and the values that guides his or her work, the context in which he or she teaches, or never examines his or her assumptions, then it is our belief that this individual is not engaged in reflective teaching “ (p. 1).

Fosnot (1989) believed that “an empowered teacher is a reflective decision maker who finds joy in learning and in investigating the teaching/learning process—one who views learning as construction and teaching as a facilitating process to enhance and enrich development” (p. xi). According to the characteristics of reflective thinking, one can determine that a reflective teacher should be competent and able to critically analyze their own teaching practices, concepts and contexts, continuously strive to improve their own teaching skills and to become a research-oriented expert teacher instead of an experienced teacher. Henderson (1992) referred to the reflective teacher who approached teaching and learning as “uncertain” processes and understands that complex learning problems often require creative solutions rather than standardized techniques. He further explained that:

Reflective teachers are expert teachers and they demonstrate their expertise in a myriad of ways, at the same time, they must be experts in time management, discipline, psychology, instructional methods, interpersonal communication and

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learning theory- and they must practice these competencies under the watchful eyes of 20 to 30 demanding customers (p. 3).

A reflective teacher may have the following five qualities:

- Examines, frames and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice;
- Is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching;
- Is attentive to the institutional and cultural context in which he or she teaches;
- Takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change efforts; and
- Takes responsibility for his or her own professional development.

Becoming a reflective teacher is the final goal in one's professional development. Only when teachers become reflective practitioners can they motivate their students' reflective thinking; students can generate new transformative learning, which is a useful way of fostering the spirits of creative thinking. Reflective teachers can help their schools become more reflective by cultivating a reflective environment, which is the intention of education.

#### REFLECTIVE MODE

Based on Van Manen's theory (1977), there are three levels of reflective thinking: technical rationality, contextual level and critical reflectivity. In the first level, practitioners deal with methodological problems and theory development to achieve objectives. In this level, teachers deal with teaching competency, teaching skills and teaching content. The second level (Grimmett et al., 1990; Lasley, 1992; van Manen, 1977) involves reflection regarding clarification of underlying assumptions and predispositions of classroom practice as well as consequences of strategies used. Teachers should have clearly realized their natures of their job and have outlined their professional goals. Van Manen's third level of reflection deals with questions of moral and ethical issues related directly and indirectly to teaching practices. The third level is the highest level of reflection and the practitioners should address much more moral, ethical and socio-political issues. Taggart (1996) provided the Reflective Thinking Pyramid about the three levels (Figure 2).

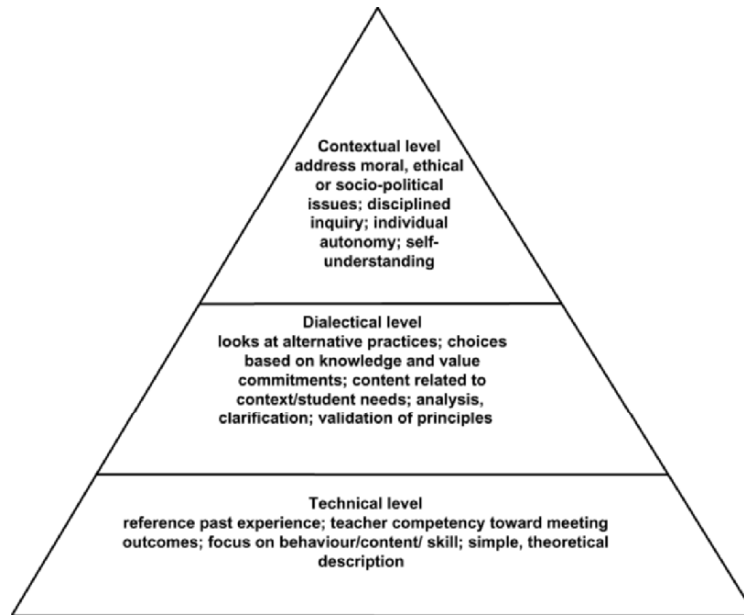


Figure 2. Taggart's reflective Thinking Pyramid (Germaine L. Taggart, Alfred P. Wilson p. 3).

#### REFLECTIVE METHODS

Although reflection is important component of teaching practice, it is difficult to involve learners in reflection. As a result, it is essential and important to design appropriate methods to motivate teachers' reflection. Researchers have introduced methods on how to foster reflective teachers: journal writing, keep of a diary, or writing a biography. The development of technology and society has allowed many new tools to be applied into the reflection practice.

##### *Writing Diary/Journal*

Writing can play an integral role in practitioners' efforts to construct new knowledge (Berthoff 1981; Emig 1977, 1983; Langer and Applebee 1987, Vygotsky 1978). One technique used for generating a better awareness of self and helping come to understand the nature of professional practice is journal writing (Brubacher et al., 1994; Boud, 2001; Zehm and Kottler 1993). In the process of writing, practitioners can make complex ideas more logical and clarified through the mental process. When reading and writing work interactively, one informs and reflects on the other, fostering, supporting and elaborating the learning process

(Berthoff 1981). There are a lot of writing methods to encourage reflection: biography writing, diary writing and journal writing. Biographies are narratives about the self; they cannot only reflect people's interests, values and goals, but also offer the appropriate circumstance to understand the self more clearly. When reflecting, he or she can connect the former experiences with the present situation.

Among the different types of journal writing, the double entry journal is more effective and it can be used for reflecting on assigned readings, note-taking in lectures, visual representation, or various other teaching activities (Herman Woodrow Hughes, Mary Kooy & Lannie Kanevshy 1997).

### *Web-log*

Another effective method of reflection is blogging. Blogging may be a more flexible and a convenient means for teachers to write his or her reflection. A weblog is a web page which presents entries according to the date of entry. It can keep track of a practitioner's records and reflections. A weblog may help a practitioner to understand their own learning process and they can update their reflection at their own convenience.

### *Wikis (Collaborative Web Pages)*

Wikis are online records which can be edited by anyone who gains access to the page; it is a useful tool for collaborative writing. A wiki is similar to an online study seminar and can be used in many of the same ways as a blog for reflection, however, it is better suited for group use (see: HYPERLINK <http://sites.google.com/site/reflection4learning/why-reflect>). They are particularly useful in schools because of their practicality. In the web-based stage, teachers in the same program can share review and provide feedback to each other regarding issues. Teachers can make their thinking and reflection much deeper in this format. It is good to fostering on-going community in a school and it is a convenient medium for teachers to update their information.

### *Multimedia (Digital Stories & Podcasts)*

Digital Storytelling is the modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling. Digital stories derive their power by weaving images, music, narrative and voice together, thereby giving deep dimension and vivid color to characters, situations, experiences and insights (see: <http://sites.google.com/site/reflection4learning/why-reflect> Multimedia, Para. 2). Using the first person, learners create a 2–4 minute digital video to demonstrate their performances. Even more, learners can illustrate their topics with the addition of music. Using this method, teachers can observe their own teaching behaviours, which they are not conscious of in real-life teaching practice. Through their own and others' observation, teachers can identify their shortcomings; they are able to take reasonable suggestions and apply them to improve themselves. This is a rising spiral in the reflection. In the reflection,

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multimedia is much more like a mirror, in which people can find that which is suitable or not suitable.

### *Narratives*

Narrative is a method that invites rather than dominates the listener and becomes a very accessible way of reaching students in meaning and powerful ways (Materials from Professor Alice Schutz's hand-out). Georgii-Hemming (2007) stated that through narrative we build and communicate our understanding of the world, ourselves and others. Narrative gives coherence and meaning to our experience and who we are. Narratives can encourage learners to inquire into their past experiences and teaching methods. Using this technique, the reflective practitioners may be more comfortable narrating their experiences than writing in journals. In this stage, practitioners can decide what they should reflect on and how to narrate their experience. Alice Schutz (2009) stated in her lecture: Narratives are stories that are used to convey a message that can be a moral or an example, generalize a situation, invite participation and reciprocation, convey a message without blaming and be enjoyable, adaptive and accessible. In this stage, there is no evaluation and face-to-face feedback and participants are more willing to be involved into it.

### *Case Study*

During the last several years, case studies have been used with increasing frequency in teacher education practices (Shulman, 1992; Barnett, 1998). Through case study, teachers can put theory into real practice. Shulman (1992) defined cases as narrative stories containing events that unfold over a period of time; it is a useful method of solving teaching problems and confusion, which can be used by individuals and groups. Using this style, teachers are encouraged to inspect and then reflect on their own and others' teaching experience from which they can acquire triggers to transfer their previous teaching into practice. In Alice's view in her 2009 lecture, "in order to encourage transformative learning or reflective practice, the case studies should be created to reflect the concepts with which the learners are concerned." For some teachers, the most difficult obstacles are what should be reflecting upon. As an administrator, setting up a school-based reflective formula would be a good starting point for individual teacher reflection.

### FUTURE RESEARCH

A teacher's reflective practice is a long-term process. Throughout a teacher's career, the content and level of skill involved in reflection are different. For example, new teachers should reflect on making sound teaching plans and classroom management strategies. Experienced teachers should reflect differently; they may wish to set up a life-long learning community for students, involve more students in the learning community and to cultivate students' reflective skills and characteristics. In this paper, I have addressed the problems and challenges

teachers are facing in the reflective practice; I also have identified the methods of reflective practice. Future research should be focused on helping teachers reflect step by step and establish practical strategies to promote the creation of a reflective community.

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PART II

**RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP**

## RESEARCH ON PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP

Research on the principals' leadership is a highly anticipated study for leaders in education. This segment introduces the theory and practice of how to enhance a school principal's leadership capacity, how to equip principals with theoretical knowledge and how a qualified principal can lead professional development, foster positive school culture, and implement change. Under the Chinese new curriculum reform, a principal ought to possess understanding of education to develop strategies to be able to lead.

Xiao Hongpu (a Vice Principal) presented 5 professional development strategies in his paper, which focuses on the importance of nurturing a principal's reflective practices. Li Jianping (a Principal) stated that, "no one occupies a more influential position from which to influence a school's culture than its principal" in his paper entitled *Leading Change in School Culture*. Li believed that school culture is one of the most important aspects in public school operation. Wu Zhiqiang (a Vice Principal) presented issues related to curriculum reform and expressed how important principals can be in coping with the new challenges and how effective leadership can build a cohesive team of teachers during the curriculum transition. From a moral standard angle, Fan Hong (a Vice Principal) believed that a trusted moral leader/principal is able to shape a positive learning environment and learning outcomes. Zhang Jinjun (a Vice Principal) investigated the trend of school mergers in the Chaoyang School District and how to manage the new trend effectively in his chapter *The Study of Multi-Site School Management*.

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## 4. DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

### INTRODUCTION

It is well known that a school principal must have six different abilities – management, analysis, decision making, collaboration, association and articulation. Many different skills and abilities can be trained and improved with continued practice; in fact, most principals evolved over time from excellent teachers. Principals are experts in teaching and classroom management, but they are not necessarily good at leading faculty or school management. Typically they will face most difficulties in their work during the beginning years; even principals with many years of service will face several challenges. It is for this reason it is important to encourage a principal's professional development.

This article will present five strategies that will help to develop school principals. They are a) study of theories, b) improve reflective thinking, c) improve creative thinking, d) improve critical thinking, and e) collaboration and sharing. Facing chaos, a complex social environment and the teacher's professional development, principals must learn more about leadership and improve themselves.

The article also focuses on the importance of nurturing a principal's reflective practices; it is the beginning of their development. Writing in a diary, journaling and case study research may improve a school principal's thinking habits. Principals will review their practices, scan their experiences and gain new perspectives on their work.

Most school principals aspire to greater levels of achievement, as such, the school principals need to improve themselves.

### BACKGROUND

China is a developing country. Since the 1980s, it has rapidly increased in economic, political, cultural and social growth. In order to accommodate the developing society, the new curriculum reform focused on fostering student's creative thinking and practice ability. This reform began in 1990s. Although there have been many accomplishments in the past years, such as teacher's educational idealism, curriculum development, pedagogical research and educational behaviour, there are still plenty of problems to be solved. As a result, principals will face many challenges in this period of development and change.

Attending university and becoming an administrator are traditional Chinese ideals. There is a large focus on education and it is difficult to change or reform. For example, the standard of educational evaluation has not changed radically with the new curriculum reform, although it is still the best way to select students for all kinds of schools in contemporary China. In this case, the 'mark' is still the standard of assessing all students and schools and it does not correspond with the new curriculum reform. With the mark-standard evaluation, teachers and principals work to improve student's marks however, they lack educational ideal, philosophy and purpose. It is a challenge for principals.

People want the educational system to develop as quickly as possible without concern of whether or not it is a scientific or continual process. The government focuses on the speed of development to show their achievement. Parents focus on the marks of their children and the school's rating of student success to university entrance; education is full of utilitarianism. In this case, what should principals do? It is challenge for them. Some principals still persist with their educational ideal, philosophy and purpose. A number of principals regard high student marks as their own personal achievement as well.

Currently in China every family has only one child. Although this policy has restrained an increase of the national population, it has had an effect on Chinese economic development and has produced several social problems. Parents now put a great deal of focus on their children and are afraid their child may fail in education. As such, they give their child more opportunities to learn, more time to study and more homework. With the evaluation standard, teachers talk more about student marks leaving students lonely, unmotivated, lacking independence, collaboration, practice and creativity. Facing the challenge, what will principals do?

No matter how severe the problems are, I definitely believe that the Chinese fundamental educational effect is strong and successful. The recent problems will be solved with the current process and development of the society.

Principals need to persist in their educational faith, study theory, reflect on practice and lead staff to understand the purpose of education and the development of their professional ability. Simply, principals need to enhance their professional growth.

#### THE PRINCIPAL'S DEVELOPMENT

Most principals evolved from excellent teachers. They are experts in teaching and classroom management, but they are not necessarily good at leading school faculty and management. They will face all kinds of difficulties in their work during the beginning years; even well seasoned principals will face many of the challenges suggested above. So it is important to promote principal's professional development.

Which kind of ability should a principal have? It is well known that a principal must have six kinds of ability - management theory, complex analysis, decision making, collaboration, association and articulate. All kinds of abilities will be

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trained and improved by practice. So the leadership of a principal is full of practice. The developing of principal's leadership begins with practice and ends in practice.

Which kinds of leadership should principals have? Sergiovanni (2007) showed management theories and four kinds of leadership in his article. Traditional management theories focus on control. The management is established on the basis of rule. The leadership form is command leadership and instructional leadership. The authority resource is bureaucratic and psychological. So the result of management is 'listen to me', 'do as I told you'. It is necessary, but not enough. A high-quality principal must cultivate an appropriate environment of trust to influence the staff's behaviour and their development. The new management theories focus on the sharing of goals and purposes. The leadership form is 'leader of leader' leadership and servant leadership. The authority resource is psychology, professional and moral. The result of management is 'follow me' and 'trust me'. When principals concentrate on the moral authority, care about their staff and establish a trusting climate, they will build moral leadership. Moral leadership is about nurturing relationships, team building and putting the 'we' before 'I'. Good principals know how to balance all kinds of leadership, when they need to say 'yes' and when they need to say 'no'. Good principals also have both the characters of 'lion' and 'lamb'. One can see how important it is that principals develop.

How about the principal's real situation in China? In school, most principals care about all types of issues—policy, legal, security, purpose, school climate, professional development, financial problems, facility, etc. They are more like managers and less like leaders. They most often deal with order and inspection arranged by their superiors, attending or holding meetings, evaluating teachers or students and improving students' marks. Principal's have no time to think about what they are doing, they have no time to read and write and they have no time to conduct academic research either. They may be good managers, but not necessarily good leaders. Moreover, some principals lack management experience and ability; their school is full of complaints and conflict.

All in all, principals need to study and think and reflect; principals need development. Once they can lead themselves, they can lead others.

## STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPALS

### *Studying Theories*

Many principals focus on day-to-day issues and attend all kinds of meetings. They have no time to go into the classroom and talk about academic research. They have no time to study knowledge, read books or think about their purpose and strategies. A principal's work is the implementation of government policy and it is not necessary to have educational ideals for political power. Their viewpoints are not comprehensive. Nevertheless, facing chaos and a complex social environment and the teacher's professional development, principals must learn more about

leadership and management. They must work to improve six different abilities: management theory, complex analysis, decision making, collaboration, association and expression.

Michael Fullan said in his book *Leading in a Culture of Change*:

There are five change themes that will allow leaders to lead effectively under messy conditions. And then produce more 'leaders of leaders'. They are moral purpose, understanding change developing relationships, knowledge building and coherence making".... "Leadership required in a culture of change, however, is not straightforward. We are living in chaotic conditions. Thus leader must be able to operate complex, uncertain circumstance" (2001, preface).

### *Reflective Thinking*

As stated above, the strategy of developing a principal's leadership should begin and end in practice. How do we improve a principal's ability to leader? The most effective method is reflective thinking. Julia Weber (1998) described reflective thinking as a thinking process that happens in act of doing and in the act of doing appropriate adjustments can be made to improve the process according to specific situations.

Schon (1983) stated:

When we go about the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life, we show ourselves to be knowledgeable in a special way. Often we cannot say what it is we know. When we try to describe we find ourselves at a loss, or we produce descriptions that are obviously inappropriate. Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action.

Henderson's (2007) work outlines four key characteristics of reflective practice:

(a) Reflection is a meaning-making cycle that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. (b) Reflection is a systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking, with its roots in scientific inquiry. (c) Reflection needs to happen in community, in interaction with others. (d) Reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of one self and of others.

Reflective thinking is one's understanding or comprehension of a past action. It is the beginning of the development process. How does a professional improve the reflective thinking process? This will be discussed in the next part.

### *Creative Thinking*

Weber (1998) stated, in her thesis, that creative thinking was a process of brainstorming new ideas and attempting to form new ideas with divergent thinking.

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Divergent thinking is processes of combining two or more different ideas and exploring new meanings of the ideas. Creative thinking is planning with futuristic outlook.

Creative thinking is open-ended thinking which makes one more thoughtful; it is a kind of group study. Group members can share the value, ideals, thoughts and experiment from the process of brainstorming. Creative thinking is a method used to cultivate the common purpose of a group.

### *Critical Thinking*

Critical thinking is making a judgment on past knowledge in order to critique the event. It requires analyzing the situations and making improvements in comparison to reflective thinking which involves no evaluation. It is the emerging from the creative thinking process (Weber, 1998).

Critical thinking consists of a mental process of analyzing or evaluating information, particularly statements or propositions that people have offered as true. It forms a process of reflecting upon the meaning of statements, examining the offered evidence and reasoning and forming judgments about the facts. A useful method for developing critical thinking is questioning and debating. It will improve principals' abilities of observing, judging, contemplating and decision making.

### *Collaborate and Share*

Everybody lives in a society which is full of relationships; we can do nothing without group work. From collaboration, we can get help from others, share values, information, experiences and thoughts with colleagues, compare discrepancies with each other and improve reflective thinking, creative thinking and critical thinking.

Typically, the motive for development is discrepancy. Sometimes people do not care about what they are, but they do care about how different they are. When compared with others, if they recognize inadequacies in knowledge and skills, they fall behind and they will make up their mind to improve themselves. This is the function of sharing; it is a more efficient way to inspire school principals' development.

## THE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

According to Schon (1987) and Butler (1996), there are three modalities of reflection: reflection-to-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action.

Weber said (1998):

Reflection-on-action is "thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our [knowledge] may have contributed to an unexpected outcome" (pp. 26). Reflection-to-action is a process the mind is engaged in

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over an indeterminate length of time. Reflection-to-action activates the creative element of thinking. Reflection-in-action is thinking on your feet. It is the thinking part of what one is doing while one is involved in the activity. Reflection may happen while in action without coconscious awareness. Our minds reconstruct our actions while enacting (Schon, 1987).

Weber stated (1998):

Reflection-on-action may happen during a lapse within the event, or after the event. Reflection-on-action is useful for evaluating actions. Through this process of linking new data to established understandings, new ideas and knowledge are generated. The culmination of new understandings and knowledge learned became linked to the reflection process of reflection-to-action (Butler, 1996, p. 273)

How does a school principal nurture reflective practice? Cooper, J. (1991) said:

[a] notebook, a diary or a journal is a form of narrative as well as a form of research, a way to tell our own story, a way to learn who we have been, who we are and who we are becoming....Journal writing allows us to rethink our past, our present and our future selves.... [Narratives] allow us to examine our own experience, to gain fresh perspective and [thus]....transform the experience themselves (pp. 98–99).

Principals may wonder whether they have time to write in a journal or a diary during their hectic work day. No matter how busy they are, it is essential for principals to write and reflect. They must know how to manage their time which depends on the principal's activity and autonomous development. Reflective practice requires both a conscious and voluntary effort, as stated by Dewey from the works of Henderson, (2007) and presented as a notion of active re-evaluation of the substances of any claimed form of knowledge. Furthermore, many principals require teachers to study more and reflect upon their teaching procedures. It is time for principals to lead the way.

## REFLECTION

I have talked about the reasons, the strategies and details of school principals' development. When I write the strategies I am thinking "what makes people so different?" Although two people are the same age, have the same courses, same educators and are in the same situation, they will develop differently. Why? I believe the answer lies in their education history, experience, emotion, attitude, spirit, faith and values. Moreover, the method of thinking will impact one's thoughts and behaviour. Changing one's method of thinking is difficult; it requires one's autonomy, initiative, activity and optimistic attitude. It is a kind of transformative learning.



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Every school principal wants to acquire achievement. Every school principal needs to improve themselves. Let's start from reflective practice and make a transformative learning work.

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LI JIANPING

## 5. LEADING CHANGE IN SCHOOL CULTURE

### INTRODUCTION

It is my belief that nothing is more important about a school than its culture. In this paper, I will demonstrate that no one occupies a more influential position from which to influence a school's culture than its principal. Every successful school leader knows that culture influences all aspects of the school's operations. As a school leader, one needs to know: What is the culture of the school now? What are the history, values and traditions? Are the school cultures healthy or toxic? How does the school culture affect the teachers and students? What can the principals do if they find the school culture is not very good? What can be done to strengthen aspects of the culture that already fit the principal's vision for the school? What can be done to change or reshape the culture when seeing a need for a new direction? As a school leader, one needs to lead the school culture in a healthy direction. One needs to know the school culture and what the key problems of the school are. What do teachers wish for? What are the non-discussables of the school? How many non-discussables does the school have? What are the reasons? How does the school culture affect the teachers and the students' behaviours and values?

By deepening their understanding of school culture, the principal can lead the teachers to focus in a healthy direction and reshape the values, beliefs and attitudes to provide a hospitable learning environment for students to help them improve their learning abilities including lifelong learning goals.

### WHAT IS SCHOOL CULTURE?

What is school culture? Most researchers' opinions lean toward accepting that school culture is what the organization has. Culture influences everything that happens in a school. One definition of school culture suggested by Phillips (1993) stated that the school philosophy and implementation of the philosophy shape a school culture. People in any healthy organization must have agreement on how to do things and what is worth doing. Wagner (2000) conceptualizes school culture as shared experiences both in school and out of school (traditions and celebrations). Terrence E. Deal and Kent D. Peterson (1990) note that the definition of culture includes historically embedded values, beliefs and traditions of a school. In simple terms, it is the way we do things around here. Culture "implies that rituals, climate, values and behaviours form a coherent whole. This patterning...is the essence of what we mean by 'culture'" (Schein, 1992, pp. 10–11, emphasis in original). Some

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people describe school culture as the behind-the-scenes context that reflects the values, beliefs, norms, traditions and rituals that build up over time as people in a school work together. It influences not only the actions of the school population, but also its motivations and spirit.

Every school has a unique culture, just like every person has a different character. Sometimes it is very easy to know what the school culture is by watching the behaviours of the teachers and students. I have visited many schools in China; having had the opportunity to walk around some schools, I found most teachers were friendly. They would greet, smile and would help visitors with any problems. The students in the schools are polite and friendly, too. Everything seems in order. On the other hand, while visiting other schools, I found the teachers to be cold and the students unfriendly. Even though they were aware that I needed help, no one offered assistance. Students were chasing each other in the corridors and everything seemed chaotic.

People will find it easy to identify the school culture by watching the teachers and the students' behaviours. Sometimes it is not very easy to know what the school culture is simply by observation. One needs to stay in the school for several weeks to discern the teachers and the students' beliefs, attitudes and values. School culture, like a mirror, can reflect all aspects of a school. Once the school's culture has formed, it is difficult to change. It is a vastly more difficult, lengthy undertaking than most people imagine (Robert Evans, 2001).

#### HOW DOES SCHOOL CULTURE AFFECT TEACHERS?

School culture can affect the way teachers relate to each other, students, parents, administrators and the community. School culture affects the teacher's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

Working in three different elementary schools in China, I found school culture was quite apparent to newcomers. I remember the first year I worked in a school; I stood up in a faculty meeting to express my views and suggestions for change and improvement with regard to teacher's performance evaluations. My words were received with cold stares, laughing and put-downs. Some experienced teachers expressed that they have been doing it one way for more than twenty years and who do you think you are? As I very quickly learned, the culture at this school showed that the attitude toward newcomers was disrespectful and change was resisted and not valued. New staff must not express opinions until they have experience for at least two or three years. Later I discovered in this school, although many newcomers wanted to work very hard, most of the long term teachers were playing games on the job, chatting online, were late for work and so on. This culture was quickly adopted from the experienced teachers as it was believed if we did not behave as they did, we would be isolated from our colleagues. That was the way in which the teachers conducted themselves.

Three years later I transferred to another school where I met some troubles in managing a class. I was very anxious since I had never taught such a challenging class before. To my surprise, within a few days the veteran teachers discovered my

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troubles and came to help me manage the class. Most of them gave me good advice in classroom management strategies. From this experience, I quickly learned that at this school whenever anyone encounters problems, I also need to help them as much as possible. This was the positive culture experienced at this school.

Every school has its own school culture. It is not formed in a short time since it is the complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, values, ceremonies and traditions that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organization. Some are hospitable, some are toxic. Principals need to be very careful, informed and strategic before they reform their school. In China, if principals move to a new school, they will not change anything in the first month or first semester. They need to be familiar with the school culture. What is the key problem of this school? How many taboos are there in this school? Principals need to do a lot of watching, observing and talking before taking action. Without knowledge of existing taboos, trouble could be the result.

Every school has its own taboos. Some are about the leader's promotion; some are about the school's decision; some are about the teacher's evaluation; some are about their bonuses and salaries. The teachers do not discuss these in public, but they will continue speaking in secret. If there are too many taboos in the school, the school culture cannot be healthy because the teachers' energies do not focus on their work and these discussions will influence each other very quickly.

## CHANGING CULTURE

Positive school culture offers an effective means of coordination and control and a center of shared purposes and values that provides "inspiration, meaning and significance" for members of the school community (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 222). On the contrary, negative school culture will influence everything in a school quickly. It can affect the way teachers relate with each other, students, parents, administrators and the community.

As a school leader, one needs to know what occurred in the past and what is currently wrong with the school. After identifying the key problem, the principal needs to develop a strategy to solve the problem. Change is not easy since one of the big issues with change is resistance. In most change efforts some people will appear to be resisting and some may be actively sabotaging the effort (Hall & Hord, 2006). When principals find their school culture is not healthy, they need to look for an opportunity to replace it with a healthy culture. They should lead their teachers to focus on something else. One must have something to hold onto. If not, we are as a large vine searching for something to grasp (White 1993). As school leaders, we need to build a trellis to encourage teachers and students to grow up towards the sunlight. What is the trellis in school? It is our major work: teaching and learning. If all of the teachers can focus on teaching and learning, they will have less time to focus on something else. Last year, we visited a local school in Canada, St. Catharines Collegiate Institute and Vocational School. Initially, there were a lot of problems in that school when the principal first arrived. After a lot of watching, observing and talking, the principal decided to focus on improving the

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writing skills of students in her school. With this focus on literacy, she positively changed her school culture little by little.

#### HOW DOES SCHOOL CULTURE AFFECT STUDENTS?

Unhealthy school cultures tend to beget “at-risk” students. Even if we focus on teaching and learning, can we say our school culture is healthy? In one school, the students burn their books together before graduation. At first people think maybe they are bad students who do not like studying, but actually most of them are good students. Why do they hate the books so much? The students said they do not want to be punished by the books any more. In their school, the culture was formed with negativity; if the students are not good at learning, they will be punished by the teachers. It went as follows, “Tony, if you can’t recite the poem, you must copy the poem 50 times.” “David, if you don’t improve your math, I will call your parents in.” “Mary, if you don’t finish your homework, you must stay behind in the class room for one hour after school.” In this situation, all students have to learn, but actually they hated learning. That was the reason why so many students burned their books together before graduation. The students who burn their books are really saying “You can’t hurt me anymore.”

It is very dangerous if the students lose interest in learning. As a teacher, our responsibility is to help the students to improve their learning abilities. If they hate learning because of our teaching, we need to think about our education system. What is wrong with our education? What is wrong with our school culture? We need to reassess our evaluation and learning. We need to encourage the students to continue to learn by our teaching. Our job is to help them to improve learning, not to stop learning. We also need to help them to be lifelong learners. Whether we are called teachers, principals, professors or parents, our primary responsibility is to promote learning in others and in ourselves. We need to help students discover the ability to learn from birth to death. The great purpose of school is to unlock, release and foster this wonderful capability.

We need to let the students know, even if they graduate from university, what they have learned is only 20%, 80% is yet to come. Acquiring the remaining 80% requires lifelong learning. On the other hand, knowledge in modern society changes quickly. We all know the figures; knowledge doubles every three years; computer technology changes in every year, even every month. When business leaders employ students, they also search for candidates who have the following skills and abilities: teamwork, problem solving, interpersonal and intercultural skills, oral communication, listening, personal development, creative thinking, reading and writing. Every one of these skills requires continued lifelong learning. If the first major purpose of school is to create and provide a culture hospitable to human learning, the second major purpose of school is to make it likely that students and educators will become and remain lifelong learners.

Schools should provide a healthy school culture to allow students to continue learning. This is the trellis of our profession. If all of the teachers know his or her responsibility to the students’ future and how their attitudes and behaviours will

affect each student's life, they can change the values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. They will spend most time on teaching and they will change their teaching methods and evaluation. They can also change the students' learning environment.

#### WHAT IS THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE?

The principal is the person most likely to be in a position to shape the organizational conditions necessary for success, such as the development of shared goals, collaborative work structures and climates and procedures for monitoring results (Fullan, 2007). The most effective change in school culture happens when principals, teachers and students model the values and beliefs important to the institution. The actions of the principal are noticed and interpreted by others as "what is important." A principal who acts with care and concern for others is more likely to develop a school culture with similar values. Likewise, the principal who has little time for others places an implicit stamp of approval on selfish behaviours and attitudes.

Besides modeling, Deal and Peterson (1990) suggest that principals should work to develop shared visions—rooted in history, values, beliefs—of what the school should be, hire compatible staff, face conflict rather than avoid it and use story-telling to illustrate shared values. The principal should also focus on the following areas: team-building, putting personal agenda second, knowing everyone has limitation, that there are unknowns and issues without answers, learning from students and staff and putting people before paper. Finally and most important, principals must nurture the traditions, ceremonies, rituals and symbols that already express and reinforce positive school culture.

The principal needs to read the school culture by watching, sensing, listening, interpreting, using all of one's senses and even employing intuition when necessary. The principal needs to know which cultures are good and which are toxic. Valuable aspects of the school's existing culture can be reinforced, problematic ones revitalized and toxic ones given strong antidotes. A principal also needs to act and speak carefully in school since people are always watching. The principal's educational philosophy, teaching reputation, demeanor, communication style and characteristics are important signals that will be read by teachers in different ways. The principal's behaviours are also watched by students, parents and members of community; before making a decision or speaking in public, reflection is important.

#### CONCLUSION

Nothing is more important about a school than its culture. No one occupies a more influential position from which to influence a school's culture than its principal. Every successful school leader knows that culture is everything. As school leaders, we need to know our school culture and question it. And we also need to lead the teachers to change school culture by focusing on teaching and learning. As

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principals, we still have a significant role and an important task to influence a positive school culture in order to create a learning environment in which all students can achieve success.

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WU ZHIQIANG

## **6. PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF CURRICULUM REFORM**

### INTRODUCTION

The new curriculum reform has been implemented in China for more than ten years. In the National Program for Basic Education Curriculum Reform (Trial) (1999), the goal of the reform is to improve quality education and enhance the overall quality of students. It requires teachers to change traditional teaching strategies and take different roles during class. This is also a long-term developmental process which requires teachers to focus on changing their own practice, but during the process of implementing the curriculum reform, many teachers are confused. They feel lost because they do not know how to teach or they think they are unqualified. On the other hand, principals always feel that they do not have enough time to learn more and they do not keep up with the pace of the curriculum reform. Furthermore, they have too many meetings to attend and they spend a great deal of time searching for more money to improve teachers' welfare so that teachers can concentrate on their work. It is a great challenge for principals to assume the roles which Trail (2000) explains, as psychologist, coach, mentor, philosopher and so on.

All of these problems motivate us to think about principals' roles in helping teachers improve their professional abilities. In the past, principals were expected to comply with district-level edicts, address personnel issues, order supplies, balance program budgets, keep hallways and playgrounds safe and put out fires that threatened tranquil public relations. Principals still need to do all these things, but they must do more. As principals, what do they want to learn or what do they focus on?

In Canada, the process of becoming a principal is: (1) become a certified teacher after graduation from university; (2) apply in the district in which you would like to teach; (3) volunteer to head up committees to prove your leadership abilities; (4) pursue a master's degree in some area of administration or secondary school management; (5) contact your school board and get information about the administration track; (6) further your own education as much as possible along the way. Pursue a Ph.D. or M.B.A. if time and finances permit. (Excerpt the conversation with Anthony Bozza<sup>[1]</sup>, October 15, 2009)

In Beijing, the process of choosing principals is: (1) become a certified teacher after graduation and obtain a bachelors degree from a university; (2) apply for a teaching position at a school you want to be hired by; (3) try to become an excellent teacher during your career; (4) at the right time, be selected by a superior



organization to learn to be prepared as a principal; (5) the superior organization will choose you to be a principal when they think you have the capacity to be a principal.

Comparing the procedure of becoming a principal between the west (United States and Canada) and China, there are some differences in the process, but we can see they have a similar focus points.

Gary Hopkins (2000) wrote that researchers at Seattle Pacific University surveyed 40 successful principals to learn why some schools succeed while others struggle to achieve. Among the questionnaire, 93% of the principals identified “the lack of leadership/vision” as the biggest impediment to implementing higher standards. This was followed by 88% of principals chose “planning time and/or funding of the reform efforts”; 58% of them chose “collective bargaining agreement, including seniority, transfer and accountability policies” ([http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_admin/admin/admin188.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin188.shtml)).

In 2006, Chen Li and Yang Xuemei, researchers of Beijing Institute of Education, surveyed 302 principals about what abilities they hoped most to improve through training. According to the data analysis, the top three were: the ability to plan school development; the ability to design a modern school system; and the ability to analyze and implement policy. This indicated that the principals were unwilling to be only managers but wanted to become leaders.

Through the above surveys of those successful principals, we can find all of them place a principal’s leadership as a priority. If this is the case, then which leadership styles should principals possess for the school’s continuous development? I believe there are three basic aspects which are: the principal’s philosophy for school development, the principal’s curriculum leadership in curriculum reform and the principal’s leadership in building professional learning communities/organizations.

#### THE PRINCIPAL’S PHILOSOPHY FOR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

The principal’s philosophy is very important for school development. Some researchers use “disposition” as values, beliefs and behaviours to define. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) described dispositions as “professional attitudes, values and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviours as educators interact with students, families, colleagues and communities; these positive behaviours support student learning and development” (<http://www.ncate.org/public/102407.asp?ch=148>). Effective principals understand the importance of focus and help ensure that all parts of the school community are aware of and in alignment with the school’s improvement efforts to improve student learning. They understand that all parts of the school and school district system are interconnected and that it is critical to align school goals with district and state standards and goals. Keeping the focus point continuous is the principal’s responsibility and even is the expression of the principal’s philosophy. There is an adage in west which is a group of sheep led by a lion can

defeat a group of lions led by a sheep. Similarly, within the field of education in China, there is a particular adage which states that a good principal symbolizes a good school. Both of them indicate the action of a leader in an organization and emphasize the importance of the principal during the process of school development. At the same time a principal's philosophy leads the direction of school development. What is the most serious problem currently in schools of China? For education itself, the problem is not the lack of money or the lack of school facilities, but the lack of "school soul". A school without its soul is only the factory for training students. It only fosters a learning machine and it will never become a paradise for students' all-round development. Principals play a key role during the process of building "school soul". Their philosophy, including their personality, wisdom, deep understanding of their school reality and their advanced awareness of educational development will help them to build "school soul". For instance, the No. 4 High School of Beijing, one of the best schools in Beijing and even all China, its mission is to foster excellent Chinese students. In fact, it is the expression of the principal's philosophy.

The culture of a school is an essential factor of an attractive school. A good school culture can inspire teachers and students to strive for great achievements. As a result, how to structure the school culture and how to institute the theme of school culture should be considered by principals. At the same time, how to make the ideas accepted by teachers and students and ensuring its implementation and continuation are also the factors which principals should consider. Fullan (2007) suggested that a principal can:

- (1) Get (their philosophy) embedded or built into the structure (through policy, budget, timetable, etc.);
- (2) [have], by the time of the institutionalization phase, generated a critical mass of administrators and teachers who are skilled in and committed to the change; and
- (3) [Have] established procedures for continuing assistance (such as a trained cadre of assisters), especially relative to supporting new teachers and administrators (p. 102).

For example, in Mary H. Wright Elementary School (Schram-Pate, Jeffries & D'Amico, 2006), Barbara Whitney, the principal of the school, wanted change because of the label of "low performing" or "below average" (p. 59). Her philosophy was "it is possible to have high expectations for all children and to reach even the most resistant learner through powerful curriculum, instruction and organization (Finnan & Hopfenberg, 1997, p. 489)". In 1996, her school became an Accelerated School in which the theme was high expectations could develop students' achievement. First, she insisted that her students were bright and wonderful and she hoped to give them a chance to show what they can do (p. 59). Second, she inspired her teachers to give students a smile of encouragement, to tough students' lives with a word of hope (p. 58). As a result of her hard work, the high expectations had been adopted as a part of the school culture.

#### THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP IN CURRICULUM REFORM

Some Western scholars like Macpherson (1996) defined the aim of curriculum leadership which is to improve the current status of the school curriculum, instruction and promotion of curriculum reform in school. It is an interaction of a constantly changing and a dynamic process. It not only improves the current situation of school curriculum, but also emphasizes teachers' attitudes and professions for curriculum and teaching. Some national scholars like Xiaopei, Shen (2004) believed that curriculum leadership is a kind of manner of curriculum practice. It is a generic term about leading curriculum development, curriculum experiment and curriculum evaluation. It combines curriculum and leadership.

For principals, as the key leader of a school, they should be equipped with advanced professional curriculum leadership which is to organize and instruct curriculum. They can use multiple methods to instruct teachers such as creating research seminars to train teachers; sending teachers to attend teacher development activities and so on. At the same time, principals should apply theories into teaching practice. Maybe some teachers insist that theories are only used to serve for research and they are useless for teaching practice. In fact, teachers' development cannot live without theories. In the same way, theories cannot be only theories, they must be applied into teaching practice and only in that way will have benefits for each other. Just like Fuming, Hu (1978) said, "practice is the unique standard to prove truth", the relationship is that theories are used to instruct practice and practice is used to consummate theories.

On the other hand, it is not enough for principals to know only these. Before principals instruct curriculum, they should ask themselves some questions (Mullen, 2007):

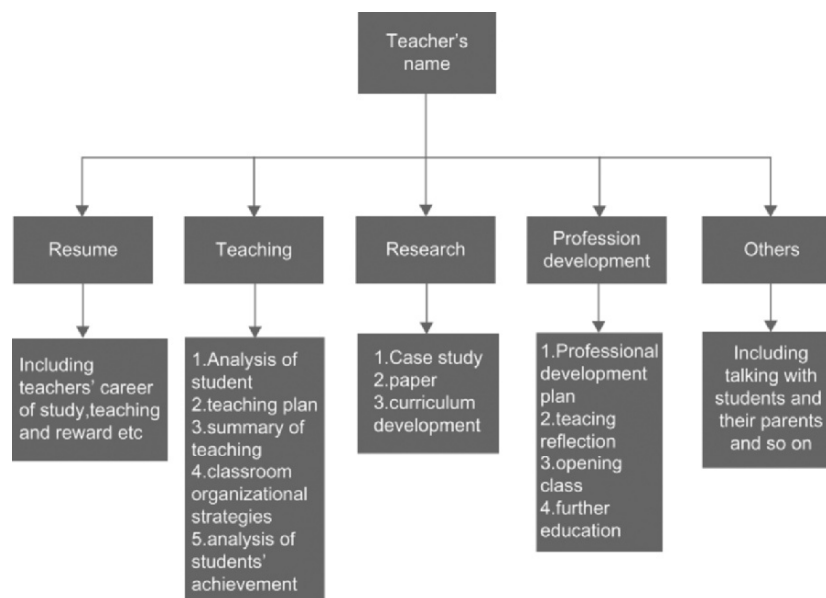
What does the concept of curriculum leadership mean to you and how do you make sense of it in practice as an action researcher? What do you believe are the flagship curricular questions and challenges facing schools and society today? What challenges in the role of curriculum leader most affect teachers and principals personally as well as professionally? (p. 5)

Furthermore, they should instruct and encourage teachers to think critically about curriculum reform and create a platform for the professional development of teachers. When it comes to developing a teacher's critical thinking, principals should (1) make themselves critical thinkers; (2) make teachers aware of how they learn critical thinking; (3) listen attentively to teachers; (4) affirm teachers' self-worth; (5) reflect and mirror teachers' ideas and actions; (6) show that they support teachers' efforts (Brookfield, 1987).

In addition, principals should build a platform for the profession development of a teacher. In addition to inviting curriculum experts to instruct, send teachers out to learn from other schools or universities and so on, I think that creating a portfolio is a good approach for profession development. For example, in our school, we are

undertaking an experiment involving the use of “electronic portfolios”. The framework is in the under.

Through the electronic portfolio, it not only encourages professional development, but it can also be used as a practical object of evaluation by principals



### *The Principal's Leadership in Building Professional Learning Communities/Organizations*

The term “professional learning community/organization” is much more popular in current society. In China, it is also a tendency for education development. It describes a collegial group of administrators and school staff who are united in their commitment to student learning. They share a vision, work and learn collaboratively, visit and review other classrooms and participate in decision making.

First, a principal's personal charisma is the key to attracting and inspiring teachers. A principal's personality includes a liberal education philosophy, surefooted spirit, democratic style of work and the sensitivity of school education and development. Only when teachers trust principals, will they accept their philosophy.

Second, principals should share their leadership with teachers. During the process of building professional learning communities/organizations, they may empower teachers, especially those who are subject chairs. At the same time, these chairs should take responsibility for the learning of their group.

Third, principals should build a platform for the professional development of teachers. They can create opportunities to send their teachers out to learn, to talk with teachers working in other schools, or to cooperate with universities. Simultaneously, they can also invite some experts to instruct teachers within their schools. For example, in the National Program for Basic Education Curriculum Reform (Trial) (1999), there are three levels of curriculum which are national curriculum, local curriculum and school-based curriculum. School-based curriculum allows a school to develop new curriculum based on that particular school's reality. In fact, it provides opportunity for teacher professional development. During the process of developing school-based curriculum, principals should motivate teachers. They can make policies and create budgets to support teachers. A principal's support is not stable, but dynamic. They should instruct and foster teachers according to the needs in different stages of schools' development, a teacher's profession and personality.

Fourth, they should build systems to ensure the continuation of the professional learning community/organization. In the past decade, teachers transferred from one school to another school frequently in China. This phenomenon greatly influenced the continuation of school development. Principals should work to create a harmonious environment for teacher professional development to reduce teacher transfers.

We cannot ignore the influence of the local government; they provide much more support for school development with budget and teaching resources. However, they also limit the principal's leadership. For example, for the national entrance examination, if the supervisors focus on the enrollment rate, then they will set up a series of regulations to evaluate schools. As a result, principals are under a great deal of pressure, they have to pay more attention to improving students' test marks. Principals then transfer the pressure to their teachers and the teachers transfer it to their students. The vicious circle negatively impacts student growth. At the same time, it also restricts the professional development of teachers. Balancing the influence from the government and school development is a huge challenge for principals.

In short, school development is a long-term task, teacher professional development is a long-term process and a principal's leadership is also a long-term mission. Only through continuous learning, absorbing, abstraction and internalization, will principals enhance their leadership and further develop their own management ability. Only in this way, they can dedicate themselves to accomplish the ultimate goal for student achievement.

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FAN HONG

## 7. BECOMING A TRUSTED LEADER IS MY GOAL

### INTRODUCTION

I have been working as a vice principal in my school for five years. I have worked very hard and I love contributing to the development of my school, pushing both teachers and students to improve their academic achievements. When I was in Beijing, I was busy dealing with daily work and rarely had time to think about the personal characteristics and qualities of good principals. These included enthusiasm, honesty, openness, commitment and competence. I also paid less attention to how these personal characteristics affected principals' performance in the school.

During my career, I strive to be a professional and successful leader. However, what is the first thing a successful school principal should strive to achieve? I think a principal needs to be a trusted leader and should show his/her high-quality moral and characteristics to the organization and individuals they work with.

Now I am studying at Brock, I have time to reflect on what I have done during the time at my school. I once asked myself, "Did I handled that student's behaviour problem properly?", "Was that the best way to speak with an angry parent?", "On the day my daughter earned a low test score, I ignored a colleague who asked a question of me. Why did I do that?"

I think that a principle plays the most important role in the school's community. Robbins and Alvy (1995) noted that the principal's role is that of learner, manager, creator of the learning organization and shaper of school culture. In other words, his/her characteristics and qualities relate directly to the development of a school. In this essay, I will focus on the following questions:

1. What are the general characteristics and qualities a principal should have?
2. What are the most essential characteristics and qualities that a principal should possess? And why?
3. How can principals obtain these important characteristics and qualities?
4. What challenges and problems may principals face during the process of becoming a trusted leader?

I will attempt to use my work experience and analyzing how a principal's personal characteristics have a great impact on successful school education.

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#### WHAT ARE THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITIES A PRINCIPAL SHOULD HAVE?

To begin with, a principal should have both moral qualities and a high degree of skill working with their colleagues. The former emphasizes the leader's ethics, whereas the latter highlights their level of management skills.

A school is not only an academic institution, but also a powerful place for an individual's life-long learning. As a leader, the principal deals with many specific things for the school's development such as setting school goals, promoting student learning, pushing teacher instruction, increasing enrolments each school year, developing the school's reputation and obtaining support from parents and communities. In other words, principals take responsibility of leading teachers and students forward. Principals are seen as the "core power" of a school's success.

When I became a vice principal five years ago, my advisor, an experienced, retired principal told me the following:

Position promoting means obligation increasing. You need to spend much more time in your workplace than before: getting to school very early and leaving school very late, walking around all over the school, knowing almost everything of the members in the school community. You become a part of your school, day and night. Remember one rule: you are not needed by your family but needed by all the teachers and students of the school.

Undertaking such important tasks require principals to possess certain characteristics and qualities. Gurr and Drysdale (2007) identified the common traits of principals as being passionate, enthusiastic and highly motivated towards helping children achieve their best. In my opinion, the personal characteristics of principals can be put into two categories: the moral-quality area and the skill-quality area.

On one hand, if we genuinely want the next generation to become moral, ethical and trustworthy beings, it is especially important for school leaders to model this behaviour. Principals need to possess honesty and integrity, passion and enthusiasm along with openness and tolerance.

Senge (1990) suggested that a characteristic of the successful leader is the ability to instill in others the desire to learn what is necessary to help the organization reach its mission. As such, a principal should also have excellent skills, for instance interpersonal and communication skills, "talk to talk" skills (Tschamen-Moran, 2007, p. 103) and teaching and learning skills, to lead teachers in all the tasks of the school. Kouzes and Posner (2007) suggested that leaders are pioneers who are willing to step into the unknown, so what they need is not only encouragement and beliefs but also abilities and capacities. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow and improve. They are skilled people.

#### WHAT ARE THE MOST ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITIES A PRINCIPAL MUST POSSESS AND WHY?

My former principal once gave a speech to all the administrators of our school. He said, "If you want to be a good administrator, you have to be a good human first."



His emphasis on the characteristics and qualities of the administrator were the moral qualities. He thought these were the most essential for all the successful school leaders. I do agree with his viewpoints, in this section I will illustrate my opinion.

Robbins and Alvy (1995) suggested that success in principalship depends on many factors, however, when we place all the factors in front of us we need to distinguish what are the most important for principals. Before I illustrate my position, I want to cite some significant words about a former principal of another high school in Chaoyang District in Beijing. These words were described by one of my good friends, an experienced Chinese teacher:

I have never trusted him after he became our school's leader, though he was a very capable person, because he has never taken other-centered view on us. I once told him many requests about developing Chinese learning of students and some other recommendations of building school capacity, he has never adopted them. What made me very angry was that he even forgot those suggestions I told him. No wonder he was relieved of his post finally.

Tschamen-Moran (2007) noted that if trust breaks down among any constituency of the school, it can spread like a cancer by eroding academic performance; ultimately undermining the tenure of the instructional leader. In this day and age, no leader can long survive the demise of trust. Consequently the former principal was sentenced to "death" due to the lack of trust.

Thereby, I view the moral qualities as the most essential characteristics and qualities a principal must possess. These qualities involve three aspects: honesty and integrity; passion and goodness; and openness and tolerance.

#### *Honesty and Integrity*

Honesty and integrity are the most fundamental consistencies between a human being's thoughts and their actions. They are the litmus tests of testing others. Kouzes and Posner (2007) stated that it is your behaviour that wins you respect. If a principal works with honesty, he will certainly get the same in return from others.

#### *Passion and Goodness*

Just as Tschamen-Moran (2007) noticed that the school leaders show genuine concern for both the task at hand and the welfare of those who have to accomplish that task, a principal should have a heart with others in it. They always hold high expectation of students and teachers, lead in a positive direction through energy and enthusiasm and engender a sense of confidence among students. Principals take people-oriented rather than things-oriented (Novak, 2002) viewpoints and they always pay more attention to all the members of school community. Just as Mrs. Sacco, the principal of St. Catharines Collegiate Institute and Vocational School, said to us:

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In my school, each boy or girl has his/her own story, we need to listen the story very carefully and try to do our best to help him/her. We have to do everything for our students.

### *Openness and Tolerance*

As a school leader, being open and tolerant is easy to say but hard to act, since a principal is also a person with diverse emotions. It is a fact that the principal remains an important and significant figure in determining the success of a school; to be a school leader with openness and tolerance is what a principal need to seek. Kouzes and Posner (2007) noted that it is part of the leader's job to show appreciation for people's contributions and to create a culture of celebration.

The core of all these moral qualities above is being trusted. Only a principal possessing all of these moral qualities first will be viewed as a trustworthy school leader. In this case, Tschamen-Moran (2007) suggested, high-trust principals, who have been successful in cultivating a high-trust culture in their schools, will find that they need fewer rules and rigid procedures to ensure that teachers are doing what they are supposed to be doing. (p. 106)

### HOW DO PRINCIPALS OBTAIN THESE IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITIES?

Previously I stated that the most important characteristics and qualities can be focused on one core idea – being trusted. In this section, I will analyze how principals can be trusted instead of how principals have these most important characteristics and qualities.

George MacDonald (2007) said, “To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved.” (p. 158). Achieving the former is more difficult than the latter. I have never forgotten what the experienced principal told me about being trusted:

You have to realize, trust is very hard to build but very easy to destroy. First of all, always do those you need others to do firstly and quietly; then open your heart to all the staffs and students, let them know your action is what you really think and believe; never ignore any individual around you, care and encourage each of them.

I believe the comments of my retired principal said may be summarized as Kouzes and Posner (2007) noted: leadership is not at all about personality; it's about practice. (p. 63)

Next, I want to respond to the facets of this question: setting an example, being open to all the school members and caring about others all the time.

### *Setting an Example*

An ancient Chinese proverb said, “You would never ask anyone to do anything you were unwilling to do first”. A trusted leader often wins the respect of their colleagues by leading quietly. The experienced principal, my advisor, was very

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well respected. When he retired from my school six years ago, many staff members had tears in their eyes. They loved him because they trusted him. He always did things first and lead by example. He was the first to be at school and the last one to leave each day; he asked all the administrators to visit classrooms frequently and he himself spent much more time walking around the four floors of the school building. “He always does everything first, he continues to be the model for the other person.” said a teacher, “He works so hard and we all respect him and believe him. Now we all find we have an exceptional school.”

### *Being Open to All Members of the School*

Here I would like to give you an example about a former student’s experience. Ten years ago, a student’s parents got divorced when he was in his first year at our school; no one noticed him. He hated going to school very much, but his class teacher spoke with him several times and showed she cared for him. The student ultimately told her about his feeling of his parents and his worries. One year later, he came to view his class as his family. He told me:

It is definitely a nice school and I have no idea why there are many students who don’t like coming to school. From my personal experience, all the teachers are open and kind and they would like listen to us and know our stories. When I meet some trouble things, I often ask help from them. I even can interview with the old principal, oh that guy is so nice and I love him.

Novak (2007) noted that in interpersonal relationships people have tendencies to communicate with those who are most like them. Leaders need to be open and connect with the school members to become aware of all the things of the school community. Fullan (2007) also noted that we are more likely to learn something from people who disagree with us than we are from people who agree. Grand dreams don’t become significant realities through the actions of single person (Kouzes and Posner, 2007) (p. 68). I believe that is why Bolman and Deal (2007) stated that a manager needs friends and allies to get things done. (p. 123)

The retired principal loved to talk with staff and students when he was the school leader. He received feedback regarding teaching and learning through communicating with students and knew the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers. Because of this, he was able to put the “right person” in the “right place”. He the people who were against him as unique and because of his effort, everyone can find his own uniqueness and can be successful.

### *Caring About Others All the Time*

Walking around, you would have noticed that there were clean floors, beautiful flowers, smiling faces and warm words all over the school. You could feel a deep concern from the environment surrounding you. I think that is what the school leader wants you feel. Kouzes and Posner (2007) stated that climbing to the top is arduous and long and people probably become exhausted, frustrated and

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disenchanted. As leaders, they must care and encourage the heart of their constituents to carry on. (p. 69)

Eight years ago my father died very suddenly of a heart attack. I was very sad and I left school for an isolated place to cherish his memory for three days. When I came back to school, I found a card with a few words handwritten on my desk, "We know how you're feeling and we are with you." I recognized the handwriting, it was written by my principal. I was moved so much that I recovered quickly and I spent much more time on working than before.

It is a school leader's job to let people know that you really appreciate their contributions, setting aside bias, prejudice and personal concerns. Taking a people-centered perspective is what a leader needs to deal with a school's daily work.

#### CHALLENGES OR PROBLEMS

Complex interactions can be multiplied based on previous experiences and anticipation for potential outcomes because no one is a piece of blank paper (Novak, 2007). For a school leader, to win the trust of others, they will face great challenges or problems while working with them.

One of these challenges might emerge from the principals themselves. Some principals consider moral qualities to be less important than professional skills. They think that they can run schools very well through strict principles and their own excellent managing skills. These principals probably forget a truth that dealing with people is ethically different from dealing with things, because people need to invest emotionally and morally in shared activity (Novak, 2007). Before I left for Canada, I was told that a young principal was forced to move from a large, key high school to a small middle school because of his unreasonable management style. Our superintendent commented his failure:

Obviously, he is a capable manager with high-standard skills. He has developed very perfect rules and regulations for the school, he also implemented them without any hesitation. His failure was his ignoring teachers' emotions as human beings. What we are dealing with are humans, not machines. I think people all respect who indeed cares and trusts them.

Another challenge also comes from leaders themselves. Because of different emotional intelligence, some central aspects of principals' leadership are innate and unteachable (Evans, 2007). On one hand, some leaders are so passionate, enthusiastic and energetic that they can be very accessible and approachable. They encourage people to engage in the school building. They also know how to "walk the talk" (Tschamen-Moran, 2007). People love to work with these leaders and open themselves to them. Acting in a similar manner, it will be possible to become a trusted leader. On the other hand, some other leaders internalize and say very little. They are even not good at "talking the talk" (Tschamen-Moran, 2007). They seldom interview teachers and students and it is not easy for them to enter into the hearts of others. They may fail to offer excellent leadership for the teachers and the students within the school.

## BECOMING A TRUSTED LEADER IS MY GOAL

### CONCLUSION

As a principal, he/she is the core or “engine room” of a successful school. Being a trusted leader and then cultivating trust between members of school community is the key to success. Tschamen-Moran (2007) suggested that although the building of trust in schools requires time, effort and leadership, the investment will bring lasting returns. To be a trusted leader is my goal, I will try my best to achieve it during my career.

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ZHANG JINJUN

## 8. THE STUDY OF MULTI-SITE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

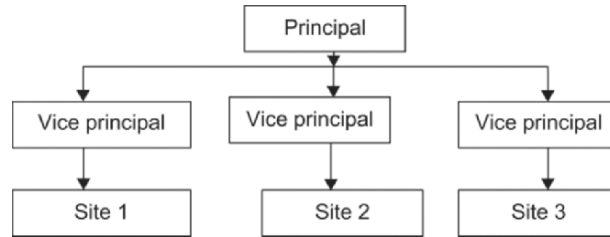
With the development of educational modernization, the number of schools that were combined or closed increased in the Chaoyang District of Beijing. At the end of 2008, two more schools were combined or closed. The total number of schools is decreasing, while other schools are expanding in size. Some of the key schools have four or more sites that are independent. Similarly, our school faces the same problem, it is increasing in size. Now we have two sites, one is an elementary school and the other is a senior school. Traditional management methods are facing the challenges of change, so how do you restructure the organization to adapt to the changes and how do you create a management system to ensure the education systems runs efficiently? These issues must be addressed by every principal who has two or more school sites to manage.

This article is based on the situation that our school is facing; the problem of multi-site management and as such, the aim of this article is to find an exemplary management style for multi-site schools. Based on my experience, I will study the possibility of building exemplary multi-site school management through organizational restructuring, creation of management systems and principals' role changing.

Organizational restructuring is an efficient way to adapt to the change of an organization. Organizations typically embark on that path when they feel compelled to respond to major problems or opportunities (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 89). The problems or opportunities may include environment shifts, technology changes, organization growth and leadership changes. These issues bring the organizations either increasing pressure or new opportunities. When the time for restructuring comes, principals need to take account for tension specific to each structural configuration. They cannot expect that one-best-system or one-size-fits-all mentality is a surefire solution to solve the problems or face the challenges. Mintzberg's five-sector model (2008, p. 78) described that each major component exerts its own pressures. The strategic apex-principals-tend to transfer pressures through commands, rules or less obtrusive means. In contrast, middle managers tend to pull the organization toward balkanization. In other words, they select to enhance their unit's parochial interests. The staff prefers adhocracy and minimizes influence from the other components. For example, our school had one site before 2008. But now, we have two sites: one is for grade 1 to grade 6; the other is for grade 7 to grade 9. The principal wants management integration, but the conditions have changed. We must face the difficulties of multi-site school

management; the effective approach may be to restructure the current organization.

To rebuild an organization that has site-centered management is necessary in solving the problem of multi-site management. This means the organizational structure turns from “one-boss” to “dual authority”. The model is shown in [Figure 1](#). In this model, the previous structure is divided into two site-centered organizations. Every site has one vice principal, who reports to the principal and is in charge of the management of this site. This forms parallel structures between the different school sites. The vice principal’s responsibilities include quality control of teaching, student discipline, managing of daily tasks and implementing the school plan.



*Figure 1. The structure of multi-site school management.*

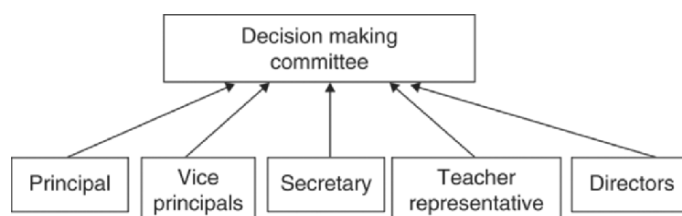
During the process of organization restructuring, one should pay attention to two points: how to empower and how to control. Any one site is not an independent school; rather, it is part of the whole school. As the responsible person, the vice principal should have the power to manage the divided schools. The principal has the authority to supervise or control the running of the divided school and rate the performance of the vice principal’s duties. The advantages of organization restructuring are efficiency, democracy and autonomy; the disadvantages are empowerment and they are difficult to control.

Organization restructuring is the first step of multi-site school management. There is a great deal of work required in the following steps. The most important task for principals is deciding how to manage and continue normal school development in the future.

Creating a management system based on a decentralized profile is an effective strategy to keep the school running smoothly. A school with two or more sites will face the management conflicts that come from each site. Some conflicts may be objective, such as human resources, the facilities of teaching, the environment of community and the history of culture. Some conflicts may be subjective, for example, misunderstanding the innovation, small group profiting and decision making. Facing these conflicts or confusing problems, the principal should create effective strategies to adapt the organizational changes through improving the

decision making system, enhancing the policy executing system and improving the evaluation system.

Building a perfect decision making system is necessary for running a school. Organization restructuring requires changes to the decision making system. This change viewed from one person to a group, from top-down to down-up and top-down. The principal has authority over others, but the others have power, too. The principal manages the school through empowering the vice principals and encouraging them to manage independently. To improve the decision making level or scientific, the principal should consider creating a committee. The members of decision making committee would include the Principal, Vice Principals, Secretary, the Chair of the Teacher's Union and Directors of every department. The structure is defined in [Figure 2](#).



*Figure 2. The decision making committee.*

[Figure 2](#) depicts that each member has the right to offer advice or make comments. From this, important policies or innovative strategies are decided upon by the decision making committee. This change brings the advantages listed below:

- 1) It creates a democratic environment for decision making;
- 2) It can avoid decision making bureaucracy;
- 3) It can improve the decision making scientifically and effectively;
- 4) It is beneficial to encourage the middle administrators to contribute to the school's development and push the decisions forward.

However, we must pay attention to formal decision making. This means every member should be responsible for his or her own decisions and use his or her rights appropriately. As the legal school leader, the principal has the final decision and should be willing to accept constructive suggestions. Moreover, the principal should foster the members' abilities to make decisions and allow them to implement them.

In order to build a system of execution, it is necessary to improve the management level. Efficient managers are able to put the decisions and strategies into practice. This not only needs guidelines to guarantee success, but also needs a system of execution to ensure the decisions are implemented. How does one build a system of execution? In our practice, we believe it is necessary to improve the efficiency of management centers, such as the center of curriculum management,



the center of human resource management, the center of student development, the center of teacher development, the center of public resource management and so on. The principal manages these centers directly and defines the center's abilities and rights by empowering the directors. The centers' functions are different with each decision making system; the centers' most important concern is execution. Its primary function is to ensure the running of the whole school. The leaders of each center comes from administrators; for example, the vice principal may be responsible for teacher development, but his or her own position of power is not same as his or her power as a vice principal. The execution system is represented by Figure 3 below.

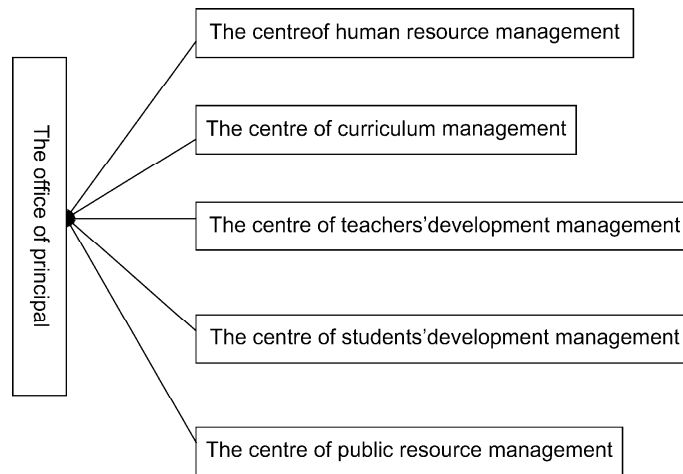


Figure 3. The execution system.

Every center has typical rules to ensure it runs well. There is no leadership between centers; they need to cooperate and support each other. For example, the functions of the center of curriculum management include textbooks, school-based course openings, course timetabling, and curriculum innovation. The director of this center is responsible for the students, teachers and services for the whole school. The principal manages the curriculum through the data or reports supported by the center of curriculum management. He or she need not to ask the directors who is responsible for each site one by one. This is a challenge for directors who are responsible for each center because they must cooperate with each other.

Building an objective evaluation system is another effective way to improve the quality of teaching and guarantee sustainable development. The largest challenge a principal may face is managing several sites and how to keep their development sustainable. Every divided school has its own specific problems and situations. Balancing the differences between multiple sites and encouraging participation in the process of development are difficult problems to be solved; therefore, it is

necessary to build an effective evaluation system to concur these problems. Figure 4 illustrates evaluation system.

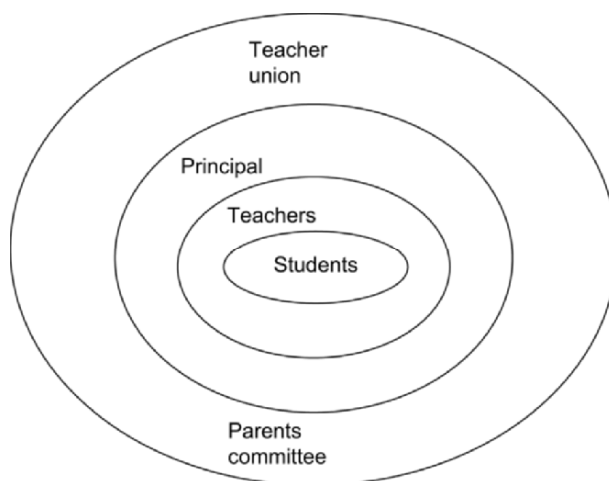


Figure 4. The evaluation system.

In this evaluation system, the students are the center. Every cycle is charged by the external cycle and they are mutually restrained. For example, when principals want to evaluate the teacher's work, they must know how efficiently that teacher taught and how their students evaluated them. Furthermore, principals should acquire data through questionnaires. Students and their parents may participate in this form of inquiry. This ensures that the outcomes are objective and real. Similarly, if we want to evaluate the principal's work, we can obtain the evaluation from the teacher's union and parents committee. This system is:

- 1) Student-centered. The basic aim of this system is for student development. Student development is the only standard by which a teacher's work is evaluated.
- 2) Objective. Principals, teachers and students are not only the subject, they are also the object. One supervises the other. Any judgment comes from the questionnaires.
- 3) Fair. As both the subjects and objects, they can evaluate each other. Therefore, they must be responsible for themselves.

Improving the principal's ability to manage multiple sites is necessary during organization restructuring. As the size of the school expands, principals face more and more conflicts that come from teachers or scarce resources. There are many complex problems that should be dealt with and a lot of decision making that should be done. Conflict management, human resource management, interpersonal relationship management and the organization restructuring are challenges to

principal; therefore principals should improve their management abilities to adapt to the challenges of organization restructuring.

It is important to improve one's ability to coordinate when dealing with complex interpersonal relationships. In different development stages, conflicts may occur on different levels or boundaries. In the structural frame, different views conflict and may impede effectiveness. Hierarchical conflict raises the possibility that lower levels will ignore or subvert management directives. More important than the amount of conflict is how it is managed. Conflict handled by bad management leads to fighting and destructive power struggles revealed in the Challenger and Columbia case. A well-handled conflict can stimulate creativity and innovation that make an organization a livelier, more adaptive and more effective place (Kotter, 1985). The principal's responsibilities are to manage the conflicts and create harmonious interpersonal relationships through reforming, optimizing and redistributing. The management challenge is to recognize and manage interface conflict.

Improvement in the ability of decision making also confronts the challenges of organization restructuring. Good decision making is an important element of being a principal. In an organization, the most important decisions involve allocating scarce resources - who gets what (Bolman & Deal 2008, p. 195). Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1954) states human needs are arranged from lowest to highest. He believed that once lower needs are fulfilled, individuals are motivated by social needs and ego needs. However, in a multiple organization, different people have different needs. The principal will face the dilemma of creating value and claiming value (Lax and Sebenius, 1986). Value creators believe that successful negotiators must be inventive and cooperative in searching for a win-win solution (p. 21). Therefore, when principals do make decision, they do so as a politician, he or she should use power carefully and consider the needs of different people, the values of individuals and the vision of the school's development.

The ability to be a creative guide for the school's sustainable development is crucial in management. As visionaries, school leaders need to identify a clear sense of what the school can become; a picture of a positive future (John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2007, chapter 14, p. 200). School leaders as politicians need four political skills: agenda-setting, mapping the political terrain, networking and forming coalitions and bargaining and negotiating (Bolman & Deal 2008, p. 205). An agenda outlines a goal and a schedule of activities. The effective leader creates an "agenda for change" with two major elements: a vision balancing the long-term interests of key parties and a strategy for achieving the vision while recognizing competing internal and external forces (Kotter, 1988). Drafting an attractive blueprint and creating a harmonious environment, the principal can guide sustainable school development.

In conclusion, a satisfactory system of roles and relationships is an ongoing, universal struggle (Bolman & Deal 2008, p. 205, p. 73). Principals rarely face well-defined problems with clear-cut solutions. In contrast, they confront enduring structural dilemmas, tough trade-offs without easy answers. An organization's structure at any moment represents its resolution of an enduring set of basic

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tensions or dilemmas (Bolman & Deal 2008, p. 205 p. 73). Reorganizing, or restructuring, is a powerful but high-risk approach towards improvement (Bolman & Deal 2008, p. 205, p. 73), therefore, opportunities and challenges coexist. As the trend that schools are combined or expanded continues to increase, principals will face more opportunities and challenges. The most effective way for principals to confront the opportunities and challenges is to improve their abilities to adapt the changes through sharing visions, enhancing cooperation and building trust.

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PART III

**RESEARCH ON SCHOOL REFORM**

## RESEARCH ON SCHOOL REFORM

School reform is a natural evolution as education strives to meet the needs of socio-cultural changes. Terms such as attractive, green, and creative schools came to be in order to accommodate the general social, political and economic paradigm shift. This segment depicts an ideal blueprint for crafting such schools.

*Building an Attractive School* by Zhao Peiyun (a Principal) explores the essential factors in a school that attract and retain teachers. Using change theories, Zhao suggests that deploying positive means inspire teachers' commitment to their school. Yu Ruili (a Vice Principal) devoted his paper on *Building a Green Eco-School (GES)*. Yu introduced concepts of how to build a GES, to form harmonious interpersonal and social relationships. Wang Wei (a Director) in *How to Implement Innovation in Schools* focused on the analysis of the reasons why many schools seldom succeed with innovative way of management and how effective interventions from principals can strengthen the success of innovation. Wang points out that the principal can ensure successful adoption of new knowledge and skills for success.

ZHAO PEIYUN

## 9. BUILDING AN ATTRACTIVE SCHOOL

### INTRODUCTION

It is a common belief that a first-class education is a prerequisite for cultivating high-quality personnel and building a great country. To obtain a satisfactory education, I assert that talented professionals, teachers, play the leading role among all the related elements, for they directly influence the next generation. As a veteran teacher and a school administrator, I have personally experienced the growth and the decline in teaching and administrative work in my school. This was the result of a group of excellent teachers and their transfer to other schools that they admired. Reflecting upon the situation, I am motivated to explore the elements that attracted our talented teachers to other schools. In this paper, I will attempt to explore the following questions: What are the essential elements a teacher looks for when deciding to serve a school, or what are the crucial factors in a school that attract teachers? Furthermore, rather than simply focusing on keeping teachers, I would like to go beyond responding to the immediate problem, to explore, by referring to the change theories, some more positive, “aggressive,” assertive, or ambitious ways to improve. These approaches would not only prevent good teachers from transferring, but also have an enormous appeal for them; consequently these ways would inspire teachers’ ongoing passionate commitment to their school. To do this, another question must be answered: How can we foster a change to make a “regular” school attractive?

### WHAT ARE THE CRUCIAL FACTORS IN A KEY SCHOOL THAT ATTRACT TEACHERS?

#### *The Concepts of Key Schools and Ordinary Schools*

In China, we have had about three decades of tradition to categorize schools into key schools and ordinary schools. Key schools have the privilege of recruiting quality students and teachers from the entire district or even across different districts and they have more adequate facilities. In contrast, regular schools receive students from nearby communities unconditionally, even though they are insufficiently equipped. An apparent problem triggered by the practice is that teachers are always trying to move into key schools from regular ones as soon as they become experienced and competent. My school is among the regular schools. As a result of the one-way transfer, my school is frequently under the pressure of lacking quality teachers, which has considerably

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hindered the running of my school, let alone its development in a globally changing context. What are the original driving forces that push these teachers to leave so resolutely? With some inquiry I have found that there are several key elements.

*Reputation.* Regardless of how the key schools achieve better performance, it is a reality that more talented young people graduate from key schools. On one hand, key schools cultivate excellent students. On the other hand, the outstanding minds and manners of these students are fed back to and shared by their former schools. In this way, the schools become or are labeled “cradles of talents.” Logically, it is natural to regard the individuals there, including both the staff members and the students, as an unusual group superior to their counterparts. Teaching in a key school brings teachers more pride and admiration and accordingly, a sense of higher social status is attached, which can satisfy a person’s sense of self-esteem.

*Accomplishment.* When considering whether something is worth doing or not, we may first calculate the potential outcomes of our actions and the values of said outcomes. For a number of people, their personal values are more dependent on the dominant social values rather than their inner judgment. In China, people are inclined to assess a teacher’s achievement by the rate of student promotion to university and the social status of the university. Students attending key schools are more likely to enter a well-known university, which may bring some teachers a sense of self-fulfillment. This is why when a student is admitted to a famous university, teachers who taught or take care of the student will proudly declare the admission of the student as their own personal accomplishment. By contrast, teachers in a regular school will have no chance to enjoy the same pride.

*Challenge.* What brings enthusiasm to a teacher’s work? I assert that one critical element is the extent of challenges teachers face in their daily work. As a result of selection, students in key schools are more knowledgeable and have better study habits which more likely generated from their intense curiosity about knowledge of the world in comparison with their peers in a regular school. Students tend to react more actively in response to their teacher’s teaching and more frequently challenge their teacher’s intelligence and expertise by questioning, their questions may be beyond what they are being taught. The questioning may threaten and challenge the teacher’s existing knowledge of their own disciplines and pedagogy. Consequently, it will greatly stimulate teachers’ enthusiasm in exploring deeper meanings in their disciplines and classroom teaching, which will significantly enhance their professional development.

*Opportunities.* Another crucial element attractive to teachers is that there are more chances for professional teacher development. Being viewed as “talent tanks”, key schools are favoured not only by the general public but also the educational administrative department, superintendents and discipline counsellors. Schools



have been the focus of the whole society by virtue of the current competitive examination-based context. Therefore, these schools have become the main sites of various district-wide or nation-wide field research activities. This means that teachers there have more opportunities to acquire professional instruction from experts, more chances to share other teachers' experiences and simultaneously more chances to show their own professional skills, which will bring them more recognition and new chances to develop.

*Material Benefits.* Teachers in a key school get higher salaries and enjoy more visible or invisible material benefits. In schools, a teacher's income consists of two parts: one portion is paid by the government and the other is through self-financing by the school itself. This may include leasing extra school buildings to other private companies and public organizations or running training classes after school. Owing to their privilege in schooling, key schools have more channels to collect more money, which will certainly benefit their teachers. Additionally, the enviable reputation of key schools bring teachers chances to be private tutors or train teachers after school or while on vacations; this may even be a more concrete benefit. In addition, key schools provide teachers with more comfortable working conditions and environments and more advanced modern teaching means. Furthermore, most of the key schools have made it a rule that the children of their teachers may be recruited, free of charge and without reference to the child's entrance examination scores, into their parent's schools. It may be more appealing and a significant element for attracting teachers.

#### HOW CAN WE FOSTER CHANGE TO MAKE REGULAR SCHOOLS ATTRACTIVE?

##### *Calling for a Great Change in Sociopolitical Context*

"In reality schools reflect society far more than they shape it; they are vulnerable to it far more than they influence it" (Evans, 1996, p. 155). Apparently, regular school teachers have considerably more reasons to quit considering the condition they are trapped in. In many cases, it is the sociopolitical context that "help(s) keep structural inequality in place" (Nieto, 2007, p. 300). "Taken-for-granted societal ideologies, assumptions and expectations which are often related to people's identities... work in tandem with the material and concrete conditions in a society to create barriers to educational progress" (p. 300). Reflecting on teacher turnover, I realized that it is not only the young children labelled "ordinary" but also their teachers who are labelled "ordinary" and marginalized. The problems mentioned above are caused by factors outside of the schools and consequently it is acceptable that the solutions will not be worked out only by individual schools.

Fortunately, the Chinese central and local governments have noticed these problems. "Education equity" and "balanced development of compulsory education" have been the common concepts seen in mass media and heard in public language. Relevant measures have been taken to improve teacher living and

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working conditions along with school utilities and facilities. Since June 2005, the Beijing municipal government launched a “Junior Secondary School Construction Project” (BJ Compulsory Ed, 2005), aiming to make up the deficiency in installments of material resources and improve the quality of schooling in all junior secondary schools; its first beneficiaries are the worst-equipped schools. Since 2009, Beijing has carried out another new policy which aims to reduce the differences in incomes between teachers in different schools. The policy emphasizes that all teacher’s incomes should be regulated by the government and all additional school profits should be handed in to and governed by local government or approved departments (Jia, 2009). Although we cannot expect that a swift and radical change will occur in the sociopolitical context, the new practice will undoubtedly contribute to solving the above mentioned problems. With the improvement in teachers’ material benefits and school conditions, principals can help overcome the handicaps existing in ordinary schools and make a difference via fostering an authentic change, in company with teachers, even in difficult situations.

#### *Keeping an Acute Awareness of Teacher Turnover*

Evans noted (1996) that “turnover and reassignment of personnel are among the greatest hazards to innovation...more devastating than being stuck with recalcitrants is to lose key members” (p. 127). In spite of being trapped in the unprecedented curriculum reform and endless daily routines, as principals we have to be keenly aware of the importance of maintaining teachers as the impetus for school development. We have to take immediate action for effective improvement rather than letting go. We have to be aware that teachers are not employing their freedom in choosing working places; rather, they are leaving with unmet needs, with grievance and disappointment. We have the duty to help improve the status quo and we now have more chances to make a difference.

#### *Challenging Conventional Beliefs and Building New Commitments to Children’s All-round Development*

As stated above, a person’s understanding and recognition of the values of what teachers are working at shapes teachers’ attitude towards their work and enhance or hinder their effort at work. The dominant practice that the whole society over values the rate of student promotion to prestigious universities has seriously frustrated the teachers in ordinary schools. Unfortunately, the belief that teachers’ values depend on their students’ academic achievements (mainly in the form of examination scores) has also been held deeply in the minds of the teachers. It is time for educators to question and challenge the validity of this belief. The value of teachers as professionals, in my view, builds heavily upon their occupation. It lies on the ends that education pursues. What is the purpose of education or schooling? “The primary aim of every educational institution and of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring”, stated Noddings

(1984, p. 172). Roland S. Barth (2007) argued that “if the first purpose of school is to create and provide a culture hospitable to human learning, the second major purpose of a school is to make it likely that students and educators will become and remain lifelong learners” (p. 167). Furman and Shields (2005) suggested that “...social justice and democratic community are not the only legitimate ‘moral purposes’ associated with schooling. ... in a pluralistic society various moral goods play out in schools” (p. 120). Citing the experts does not aim to help identify the ultimate goal of education, but to indicate that pursuing high scores and high rates of student promotion, representing high academic achievements, is definitely not the only goal of schooling. Teachers in ordinary schools contribute more to society in promoting social justice, in maintaining societal stability, in shaping the largest group of future citizens, in preparing children for future education and the civilized labour force. Educators in ordinary schools have to recognize their unique values in these aspects and rebuild their professional dignity.

It will not be an easy job to realize the shift in beliefs. “Culture - the deep, implicit, taken-for-granted assumptions that shape perception and govern behaviour... is conservative: it works to preserve the status quo” (Evans, 2001, pp. 11–17). We have to help teachers discover the unseen or unrecognized values and make meaning of their work, for “our lives cannot be meaningful unless we can construct and preserve a coherent, predictable pattern from events and relationships” (p. 28).

As difficult as it is, one can feel a great hope attached to the change, which is embedded in our teachers longing for their efforts to be recognized and respected. They have been oppressed and upset by the unfair belief for a long time. That is to say, the need for change is seeded in teacher’s hearts, simply waiting to be awakened. Now, it is time to bring our thinking about the belief together, to expose our ideas and foster a critical discussion about it, to build a new belief that encourages teacher commitment and to develop a school-wide shared vision: recognize and respect student diversity and work for student all-round development.

To sustain the change in beliefs, we need to get the change “embedded or built into the structure (through policy, budget, timetable, etc.)” (cited in Fullan, 2007, p. 102). I perceive that school policies and norms have played and will continue to play a crucial role in shaping beliefs. To realize the change, principals in ordinary schools need first to weaken the impacts of student scores or the rate of student promotion to universities in the professional appraisal of teachers. We need to develop a new holistic evaluation system that recognizes the validity and necessity of diversity among children, which is consistent with the moral purposes of education, as well as taking children’s need of receiving higher education into consideration. This method of assessment would allow teachers to strive for children’s all-round development without worrying about negative comments based solely on student scores. A piece of encouraging news is that the Ministry of Education of P.R.C. is collecting advice and suggestions from the entire nation on the internet about “The National Medium and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Program Outline (2010–2020)” (Xinhuashe, 2010).

In summary, reforming the evaluation system in education has been put forward as a burning issue and the establishment of a more holistic evaluation system is on the way. To nurture the new belief, we need not only to wait for new supportive policies to come into being but also to take the initiative for more support from communities, parents, authorities, experts, policymakers and the like. That is, as educators in ordinary schools, we have to voice our opinions and perspectives openly in various public forums, to articulate and share our advocacy and our vision.

### *Attending to Teachers' Needs*

Transformational leadership “speaks to a fundamental human need” (Evans, 1996, p. 168). However, to attend to teachers’ needs means far more than showing leaders’ visionary perspectives in leadership. It is a must to inspire teachers’ motivations to evoke their potential and commitment to their work.

When observing those who left us for a key school, I found most of them were in their fifth or sixth year after graduation from university. What characteristics do these young teachers possess? A person’s career, according to researchers, generally divides into three phases: entry, an initial period of up to five years in which one explores an occupation, struggles with its demands and learns to master them; midcareer, a period when one has learned the ropes and established their competence and position; and last phase, exit (Evans, 1996, p. 103). Our experience matches the statement. In our school, students belong to two stages: one is their junior stage (Grades 7–9) and the other is their senior stage (Grades 10–12). Accordingly, each teacher is assigned to teach in a certain stage. Generally, a teacher teaches two classes of students through their three years study. When necessary, a particular teacher, more likely one who is popular with his or her students and who has gained his or her peers’ recognition in terms of teaching outcomes (usually high student scores in the entrance examinations), will continue teaching the upcoming graduating grade students instead of an incompetent teacher. It is possible that teachers of this kind will continuously or repeatedly teach the third-year students, which accelerates their professional maturity leading them into their midcareer. As their professional experiences and reputation in the field accumulate, they will receive more offers from other schools. They may then begin to weigh their choices, between what they have and what they possibly want. This may lead them to their inner world and trigger their reconsideration about their personal and professional development. Their dissatisfaction with the status quo or simply their new ambitions may push them to go to a “new life”.

Evans noted that “all professionals in midcareer are prone to two kinds of tendencies...demotivation (boredom, a loss of enthusiasm...) and a leveling off of growth and performance, especially when they have remained five years or more in the same role” (cited in 1996, p. 103). Although these teachers are just in the early stage of their midcareer, some of the problems Evans mentioned do happen to them. I still remember what an excellent young teacher said to me when she decided to transfer: “I am so sorry but I have to leave. I appreciate that our school has helped me reach such a level, but I have taught Grade 12 students successively

for three years and teaching these dull students is really boring. I want to work in a key school to challenge myself”.

How can we make teaching in an ordinary school an adventurous experience? First, we need to help teachers redefine the meaning of professional development and rediscover more meaning in their work. I find there are prevailing theories in China about teachers’ professional knowledge structure, the core of the occupation; three elements are more commonly mentioned: a) discipline knowledge, b) pedagogical knowledge (general and specific) and c) psychological knowledge. Theories remind us that when teachers feel bored or lack challenge while teaching “dull” students, they are more likely focusing on subject matters which are under their control rather than exploring how to teach the children better or how they can adapt their teacher to their students, which will be a more challenging pursuit. Therefore, we can lead teachers to find a new point for growth in order to help them arrive at a higher understanding about their profession.

Secondly, we need to reduce repetition in their work and provide these teachers more chances to renew themselves. We may create some small-scale reform programs to allow them to explore their new ideas and pedagogy in practice. Besides, we can help build more channels of development to meet the different needs of different teachers; promotion to administrators, for instance.

Thirdly, we need to open our schools to the outside world to create more chances for teachers to show their intelligence and craft. And we can also invite experts to instruct our teachers to reinforce their professional development. What is more essential is that we can help establish a democratic learning community full of caring, respect, recognition and trust, which allows for teachers’ exploring their educational ideals and inspires commitment and teacher leadership.

## CONCLUSION

To meet the increasing needs of people and society for quality education, we need to foster and sustain changes in our schools. Whether a change can achieve a desirable goal relies heavily on its implementers, that is, teachers. Many reports have shown that there is a close connection between teacher job satisfaction and their morale, which will critically influence their efforts and subsequently their work outcomes. In this paper, I attempted to apply change theories to analyze teacher turnover in my school and to find ways to improve. I advocate the proposition generating from the strategic-systemic changing paradigm: only when we care about teacher needs and build an intrinsically attractive and rewarding work environment, can we inspire teacher commitment and loyalty and ultimately benefit our schools, our children, as well as the teachers themselves.

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## 10. BUILDING A GREEN ECO-SCHOOL

### INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on building a Green Eco-School (GES). After analyzing the reasons why my school's educational goals of fostering innovative talents cannot be achieved, I find that my school should be designed a GES. This article defines the GES and introduces how to rebuild a GES in five aspects. This five aspects include: excellent ideology, policy and school culture; secondly, improved school curriculum; a need to build environment, to form harmonious interpersonal relationships and social relationships and to improve educational conditions; to organize team learning and develop staff to become educational professionals; a need to design a coherent process which is like a ladder and a helix to develop the school. A ladder and a helix is a metaphor meaning there are some phases and a helix and school develops step by step.

### BACKGROUND

#### *Need of Country and Individual Development*

“In the great competitive era in which international competition is becoming increasingly severe... the creation of innovation by S&T, is essential. We hereafter introduce the current situation concerning science and technology” (International Correspondence School, 2008, p. 1). I believe that staff need innovative talents and individuals also need to have a meaningful life. People have the belief that it is the principal task of the staff to develop people who can adapt to society.

The educational goals in my school are primarily to fulfill individual need, to foster our students to have excellent personalities, rich knowledge and professional skills. These skills include learning, cooperation and life skills. With all of these skills the student will have a happy life.

Educational goals in my school are to fulfill social needs. For example, he or she should be a good family member, a good colleague, a good neighbour and a good citizen. I also hope that they have innovative spirits to improve their lives, to build our country and to develop the global community.

Because people's intelligences are multiple (Armstrong, 1994, p. 26), our goals should be multiple and our curriculum should also be multiform. Our pedagogical approaches should be multiple, and conditions can suffice all people and people's all aspects of people's development.

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#### GAP BETWEEN CURRENT SCHOOL AND THE GES

Following the new curriculum reform, my school is developing, but leaders and teachers are influenced by traditional culture, evaluation standard and universities' methods of choosing students. National educational goals are clear, but there is a large gap between leader and teachers' educational activities and national educational goals, or between Current School and the GES. The gap includes a leader's ideology, the curriculum of the school, interpersonal relationships and teachers' professional development. "With practice and the right process, executives can develop a core competence in strategic thinking" (Christenson, 1997, p. 141). We use Learning by Doing and presentations to improve our students. The strategies are not balanceable between meaningful reception learning and Inquiry Learning. The ways that our teachers and managers' think and behave have changed, but it is still near traditional. Our current education in school does not achieve the national educational goals and I also know that development need a process, which is a long-term process.

I think that principals must achieve the level of national educational goals and that he/she must have a systemic educational ideology for implementing new curriculum, teachers' professional development and forming harmonious interpersonal relationships.

I think that rebuilding the educational philosophy in my school, building an excellent GES school, is very important and essential. Through building a GES, we understand the new curriculum goals, analyze the actual situation of my school, design the goals of my school, rethink the ideology and form new systemic structures, rethink how to improve human resource management and form harmonious school culture.

#### WHAT IS GES?

A Green Eco-School (GES) is a metaphor. "Eco-" means there are some elements and there are relations of elements and elements balance to develop and change and system is a whole. "Green" means that the relationship is healthy, harmonious and happy. GES is an educational system of harmonious development and there is education of respecting life, education of scientific development and education of connecting with life.

#### HOW TO BUILD A GES

To build a GES, I think that a leader needs to have excellent ideologies and policies, perfect school curriculum, build environment, form harmonious interpersonal and social relationships, improve educational conditions, organize team learning, to develop the staff to become educational professionals and to design a coherent process of Culture Changing to develop the school step by step.



## EXCELLENT IDEOLOGY AND POLICY

To build a GES, leaders need to rethink a student's development goals, analyze current school and to form excellent ideologies and policies to develop a school. A leader will foster student's knowledge, skills, personality and foster them to become innovative talents with international views.

First, let us understand the quality standards of innovative talents and having an international view. Quality standards of innovative talents include systems of innovative knowledge, systems of innovative capacity and systems of innovative diathesis (Sun Zeping, 2004). Students in my school need to have a wide view; they break the boundaries of the country to learn from human experience. They serve their own country and human beings. Of course, we need to build their base and improve their cognition.

Secondly, let us understand the ideology of fostering. In the GES, there is an education of harmonious development, an education of respecting life, an education of scientific development and an education of connecting with life.

In an education of respecting life, leaders and staff should use their hearts to educate, to encourage students and educators to learn, to do something, to cooperate, to exist together, to emblaze their innovative fire, to foster an innovative spirit and capacity of practice, to let life be significant and people feel safe, warm and happy. It attaches importance to people's spirit. This is a kind of mental education.

In harmonious and scientific development, staff should foster all students' development in all aspects, such as staff fostering students' knowledge, skills and personality, including norm, attitude, belief, behaviours and value (Grauerholz, 2001). People have multiple intelligences and staff should develop their special capabilities. These needs rely on a curriculum system of schools and professionals. Secondly, staff members need to build a harmonious school culture, including a beautiful environment, harmonious interpersonal relationships, friendly relationships with society and attitudes, beliefs, values, ceremonies, traditions and myths. Thirdly, staff members still have scientific spirits and a scientific process of development, a coherent educational process. A leader needs multiple strategies, for example, training educators to improve their professional skills, perfecting curricular structure and conditions of school, using beautiful environments to edify people, establish correlative policy and form harmonious interpersonal relationships to influence people.

In education of connecting with life, staff members need to have multiple pedagogical approaches. Although our traditional education has a lot of advantages, its disadvantages are that it cannot best foster students' skills and innovative capacity; staff members need to balance it. Education in my school needs to reinforce learning in practicing, learning by doing and inquiry learning. Students need to learn in life. Through learning by doing, to combine multiple sense organs and brain, to blend listening, discussing, cooperating, exploring, self-learning, researching, to blend theory and practice, to integrate new into prior experience and experience in life (Fogarty, 1999, p. 78).

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Analyzing current educational goals, strategies, processes and outcomes in my school, I found that rebuilding the ideologies of the school is necessary, that ideology is a core to building a GES. Leader need to choose strategies, to design school policy, to implement strategies, to build the standard and to evaluate them.

#### PERFECT SCHOOL CURRICULUM

My school needs to reinforce school-based curriculum, to perfect school curriculum. School curriculum is based on the goals of the school to be built. It includes national curriculum, local curriculum and school-based curriculum. It also includes goals, books and data, teaching and learning and evaluation. National and local curriculums are clear. A leader organizes teachers to develop curriculum of learning by doing and complex curriculum. In learning, the following three aspects are important: learners establish structure of knowledge himself/herself (Zheng, 2003); “the brain makes the new connectors available for the processing of sensory data and for incorporating that data into prior knowledge constructions; the quality of the reassembly depends upon the quality of the original input” (Lawrence, 1998).

Teachers need to combine environment, enthusiasm and prior correlative experience. First, teachers need to reintegrate multiple experiences (Louis, 1980) and resource to solve “real-world” problem (Jacobson, Militello & Baveye, 2009). Secondly, teachers combine learner’s multiple sense organs in whole process of information transferring which includes getting, consolidating, applying sub-processes, such as eyes, ears, skin, nose, tongue, mouth, hand, brain, etc. Thirdly, teachers need to reintegrate individual and social enthusiasm to democratic thinking. In these processes, students can combine multiple sense organs and interact with the environment to get new information. New information is input into the brain and interacts with prior experience, through assimilating, accommodating, restructuring mechanism to establish new structure of experience. Through learning by doing, students obtain, integrate and differentiate, apply knowledge and exercise and train their own skills. In addition, through presentation, students can still restructure their frame of experience. These processes are very important. Through learning by doing, teachers not only combine multiple sense organs into getting, integrating and applying processes, but also encourage and mobilize students’ enthusiasm, because learning by doing can fulfill their needs of self-actualization.

Teachers need to reintegrate the curriculum of my school. Teachers need to analyze the current curriculum of my school and balance our curricular functions. The current national curriculum includes eight areas, including divided subjects and complex curriculum. It is an excellent ideology to integrate learning from theories and practice. Teachers should reify national curriculum to implement within my school. Leaders and teachers also need to integrate experiencing, feeling and thinking, researching and studying, creating and innovating, presentation and form a circular model of learning by doing some research, including experiencing,

exploring, researching and inventing. Teachers can also use this model to influence the approaches of teaching and learning of our divided subjects.

Teachers need to develop some school-based curriculum. They can build some complex curriculum to foster academics, for example, they can develop some curriculum for students to explore and experience, such as travel, astronomy, resource of water, resource soil (Covitt, Gunckel, & Anderson, 2009), weather (Lazaros & Spotts, 2009), population, economy, policy, environment, intergenerational program and so on. They can also build some leadership's curriculum, such as self-leadership, item-management, class-management, etc. They can also build some enterpriser's curriculum, such as economics, business, analyzing needs, production, advertising design, selling management, etc. They can also build some curriculum of technology, such as hairdressing, cooking, making automaton, servicing computer, servicing motorcar, designing system of election of circuit, intertexture, brushwork on computer, pottery, self-learning. Staff should build some actual or stimulant classrooms to support learning by doing, such as classroom of hairdressing, cooking, computer classrooms and pottery room.

Teachers should also reify national curriculum, complex activity of practice. For example, they need to get social support and build some didactical bases for students' experience. They also need to get the support of the community to implement a curriculum of serving community.

#### BUILD AN ENVIRONMENT TO FORM HARMONIOUS INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS

"Organizations need ideas, energy and talent; people need careers, salaries, opportunities" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 122). Theory Y's key proposition is that "the essential task of management is to arrange conditions so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing efforts toward organizational rewards" (McGregor, 1990, p. 61). GES need innovative people to work hard.

Firstly, a leader needs "systems thinking" (Senge, 2007, p. 6); thinking how to encourage and manage staff. A leader should invite leader educational leadership (Novak, 2002). In John M. Novak's theory, "LIVES", there are three interlocking foundations, "democratic ethos, perceptual tradition, self-concept" (Novak, 2002, pp. 22–25). A leader fosters staff to think and say "let us do it together", but do not say "I do it for you". Organizations believe that all people can meaningfully participate in their own self-rule. People should communicate, share information and regard each other and form organizational culture. Organizations provide opportunities to staff. When they are encouraged, they will be active at work. Staff members in organizations also understand each other well. Staff will befriend each other and have an easy time doing things together. Staff should have a better understanding of themselves, for example, who I am and how I fit into the world. These are the foundations of invitational education.

Five inviting stances include “Care, Trust, Respect, Intentionality, [and] Optimism” (Novak, 2002, pp. 70–73). All people have some needs, such as “basic needs for physical well-being and safety, social needs, ego needs, [and] self-actualization” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 124). A leader needs to full their needs and foster their personality. In my school, a leader uses a lot of strategies, mental and physical encouragement, to encourage teachers. Some of these strategies include professional presentations, value, model; individual growth and group goals; evenhanded evaluation in school; democratic right; using heart to communicate each other; investiture; celebrating staff’s birthday, teachers’ festival; prize, bonus, recreation. A leader still uses these and other strategies to encourage staff.

A leader may also resolve conflicts between people and organizations. These conflicts include three aspects; organizations do not satisfy people, people do not fit organizations and people are not happy with each other. When a leader meets conflict, he/she can use the six Cs, Concern, Confer, Consult, Confront, Combat and Conciliate, to resolve the conflict step by step, but he/she should solve them in a friendly manner. If after the leader has used a specific C and the conflict has ended, he or she will not use the next C (Novak, 2002, pp. 82–89). For example, the leader of my school attaches importance to safety and requires staff to turn lights off, when they go home. When our inspector found that lights were not turned off, they should not get angry and take the time to analyze reasoning behind that action. This is using the first C, Concern. When they thought to awake the staff, the staff was give notice with a message. This is using second C, Confer. If the questions have been solved the case ends. If the inspector still finds the lights on, they will talk to the staff member and listen to their interpretation and channel off of them. This is using third C, Consult. If it is not effective, the leader needs to make a decision and relay it to the staff; this is fourth C, Confront. If this is not effective, the leader will implement the decision. This is fifth C, Combat. After a leader uses fifth C and allows some time to pass, the leader needs to use sixth C, Conciliate to console the staff and hope that the staff is not our enemy. A leader may use the six Cs to resolve many problems.

Leaders need “personal mastery” (Senge, 2007, p. 7). Leaders need to research approaches of improvement from everything individual to team and organization. For example, when a leader and teachers need to improve a student’s efficiency of learning, they will need to know how to help them improve. If a leader is a professional, they are masters for education and management and become a coach to students and teachers; doing so teachers and students will admire, believe and follow them. Of course, a leader also needs to know how to manage their school. Leaders should have management skills, such as making goals and strategies of development and encouraging teachers and students. A leader is a master of management.

Leaders need “mental models” (Senge, 2007, p. 8). In team activities, leaders need models, especially mental models and harmonious models. People may also aspire to be a model too; it is to satisfy one’s own psychology need—“people’s top of the hierarchy, self-actualization” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 125). People believe

that mental models are achievable. Of course, people also have safety needs (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 124); so that they do not hope that they are last. Furthermore, if leader is ordinary, they are a bad model; the outcome is that teachers and students lack vigor and are unharmonious. Leaders should be metal models to lead and coach teachers and students.

Leaders need to “[build] shared vision” (Senge, 2007, p. 8) to improve efficiency of management. Leaders can use multiple strategies to share vision, such as meetings, communication, discussion, papers, and presentations. Leaders should also avoid information that is transferred mistakenly. Leaders need to clearly explain information for other managers, teachers, students or parents. For example, he/she can use metaphor (Linn, Sherman & Gill, 2007) to explain information. Moreover, symmetry of information is important. Leaders need to work in harmony with other managers, teachers, students or parents through discussing. They also need to receive feedback. In the process of transfer information, the information is transferred between leader and embracers; embracers were also encouraged and embracers were active. It is a way to avoid losing information. There is a function to increase lost information in the design process, so that a leader should not look upon it as an abrupt process. It is a beneficial process for both. In addition, leaders need to know the process and result implemented and to adjust the plan, to retransfer information and to control the process implemented.

When leaders build interpersonal relationships, he/she also needs to build their conditions. There are multiple green plants in my school and the staff feels that the school is like their own home, the staff is happy. The school is full of opuses of our students and staff on the walls. Leaders create an environment where people can be encouraged.

#### ORGANIZING “TEAM LEARNING” AND HELPING STAFF BECOME EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

Leaders organize staff team learning to develop their educational skills. Student development is the core of the GES. The teacher is an architect of the intellect, the leader or manager is a professional.

Leaders, managers and teachers must master correlative professional knowledge and theories. For example, “seven elements of the constructivist philosophy are a learner- and life-centered curriculum; enriched environments; interactive settings; differentiated instruction, inquiry, experimentation and investigation; mediation and facilitation; and metacognitive reflection” (Fogarty, 1999, p. 76).

Teachers need to design student development according to the school’s educational goals and correlative theories. Moreover, teachers mobilize student enthusiasm and foster their students’ personalities and capacity in practice. These capacities include self-learning, cooperative learning, research-based learning, transferring and practice. They can still be divided into integration and differentiation, such as learning by doing, experiencing, thinking, researching, making opuses, doing presentations, reviewing, finish machining, systematizing,

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demonstrating, imitating and internalizing (Fen, 2006) and so on. Teacher also trains student form their habits.

Leaders design multiple chances to foster teachers and exhibit their achievement. This may occur through presenting, self-learning, discussing, researching and so on. Teachers need to integrate theories into practice while researching. Staff leaders are able to encourage teachers by giving presentations and exhibiting their achievement in school, local or national professional meetings. Teachers also build harmonious conditions to mobilize students to think and discuss questions. In this environment, staff and students will work hard.

#### DESIGNING A COHERENT PROCESS TO CHANGE CULTURE

Changing culture step-by-step is essential. Changing culture is a process that takes a long time; it cannot abruptly change (Fullan, 2007, p. 178). Leaders need to think of the relationship between developing and inheriting. They should design a coherent process which is like a ladder and a helix to develop the school. Dr. Novak gives us a very good model (Novak, 2002, p. 136); the invitational helix has three phases with twelve steps. The primary step is our systemic thinking. The secondary step is personal mastery. The next step is mental models. The following step is building shared vision. The next step is organizing team learning. The last step is planning, implementing and evaluating. The leader then comes into the next circle.

#### CONCLUSION

The aim of building a GES is to achieve national and school specific educational goals. Through analyzing reasons which my school's educational goals of fostering innovative spirit cannot best be achieved, I have identified several problems and designed a metaphor, a GES, to solve these problems. This article has defined a GES and introduced the idea of how to rebuild a GES in five aspects. I hope to form a green culture within the school system. There are harmonious interpersonal relationships, social relationships and relationships between people and natural environment. This school culture can encourage people and let people feel happy. The students in my school will be able to develop in all aspects and special capacities.

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## 11. HOW TO IMPLEMENT INNOVATION IN SCHOOLS

### INTRODUCTION

In this case study, the author reflects on the process of implementing the accountabilities of directors of grade groups in her school. This paper focuses on the analysis of the reasons why many Chinese schools, including her school, have recently and frequently implemented innovations which seldom result in success. In this paper, the author emphasizes that innovations which were implemented in the school should suit the school context and be significantly necessary to the development of the school in order to be effective. Before implementing the innovation, the principal should pay attention to clarify the innovation. During the processes of implementing the innovation, the principal and his/her staff should continually revise and perfect the innovation. At the same time, the principal ought to help staff who are incompetent or unfamiliar with the innovation acquire new knowledge and skills. Effective interventions are key factors to guarantee the success of innovation. Finally, the author points out that the principal should treat innovation as a process of organization learning and system change. Only in this way, can the principal build a sustainable school.

### BACKGROUND

Currently, Chinese education is implementing large-scale and various types of reform in order to align with economic development and social progress. In reality, many school leaders were simply imitating others' successful methods and models in their own schools because they naively considered that importing and using these methods and models was a short-cut to improve their own work. In addition, there were many successful experiences, methods and models to choose from, so some school leaders would frequently change their foci on implementing different reforms which came from other schools causing further difficulties. This kind of short-period and unsystematic reform could not bring about positive influences and profound changes to schools and even seriously destroyed former stabilities of schools, produced new conflicts and made staff confused and depressed.



## THE CASE STUDY

Chinese schools have a traditional administrative structure. At the top of the school is the principal who is in charge of all the work of the school. Under the position of the principal, there are mainly two departments – the teaching department and the moral department. A vice principal and the director of the teaching department are responsible for the teaching performance within the school and students' achievements. Another vice principal and the director of the moral department are in charge of student discipline and the moral education of students. The third level of the administrative structure is the leaders of grade groups. A grade group is comprised of all the students in one particular grade and the teachers who teach that same grade. Each grade group has a leader who is in charge of the group's daily management of teachers and daily discipline of students. Every grade group leader is accountable to both the leaders of teaching department and the moral department.

From 2004 to 2007, the principal of my school advocated to implement a new administrative structure named the Accountability of Directors of Grade Groups in our school. This new administrative method had been successfully implemented in an advanced school (Chen Jinglun Secondary School) in our district.

The Accountability of Directors of Grade Groups only lasted three years in my school. It gradually vanished without leaving profound influences. It failed in my school for several reasons.

## ANALYSIS

Reflecting upon the process of implementing the Accountability of Directors of Grade Groups, I considered that some problems needed to be paid attention to and dealt with well in the initiation phase and the implementation phase.

### *The Initiation Phase*

*Assessing the necessity of innovation.* Walker (2007) suggested that “looking at what is happening in other schools, cities and countries... [can] trigger professional curiosity and professional dialogue about ‘better ways of doing things’ in schools” (p. 269). However, it can be dangerous and useless for principals to completely imitate others' methods and modes because “authentic leadership ... may better emerge through embedding learning within the contexts which frame schools and leaders' lives” (Walker, 2007, p. 267). The principal should first assess an innovation according to the context of his/her own school when they are going to initiate it.

“The ‘fit’ between a new program and district and/or school needs is essential” for successfully implementing an innovation (Fullan, 2007, p. 88). Generally, the innovation which can address the solution of the priority problem of the school can evoke the desirability and enthusiasm of staff to implement and continually explore it. Different schools have different priority problems and prominent

contradictions. The administrative method which was necessary and efficient for Chen Jinlun Secondary School may not have the same function in my school.

Before my principal could successfully imitate the innovation of Accountabilities of Directors of Grade Groups, she should have first understood why and how that method had been successful in the other schooling context. The Chinese traditional school structure did not allow for Chen Jinlun Secondary School to flexibly and effectively manage their school because of the large number of students (more than two thousand) and the complex composition of covering six grades. The principal of Chen Jinglun Secondary School changed the traditional administrative structure, employed special people outside the scale of vice principals and directors of the teaching department and the moral department to undertake directors of grade groups and simultaneously cancelled the position of grade group leader. Under this new model, the director of every grade group was full-time and responsible for the daily management of the grade, including the teachers who taught that grade and the discipline and achievement of students who studied in that grade of which he/she was in charge. The function of the teaching department and the moral department changed from leading and supervising every grade group to having less of a direct connection with each grade and acting in service for each grade group. Positive results proved to the principal of Chen Jinglun Secondary School that the innovation of a new accountability structure of grade group directors may be a better way and a necessary innovation for continued improvements in their school.

When the implementation of this new accountability structure was announced in my school, my principal's reasoning for imitating it was a desire for more and closer communication between the directors of departments, the teachers and students. She believed that this closer communication would allow for quicker and easier sharing of ideas, advice and/or emergency information. However, the two schooling contexts are very different. Compared with Chen Jinglun Secondary school, my school was a relatively small school which had about one thousand students and consisted of three grades (Grade 7 to Grade 9). In my school, vice principals and the two directors of the teaching and moral departments had enough energy and proper methods to effectively manage our school. So it was not necessary for us to imitate Chen Jinglun Secondary School to implement the innovation – the Accountability of Directors of Grade Groups.

*Clarifying the innovation.* In general, many leaders are use to simple innovation, yet the relationship between this innovation and former administrative system is not simple superimposition. The profound innovation which can bring about permanent and positive influences and make the organization really grow is often connected with restructure and renewal. The roles of the people involved with the innovation need be clarified. The responsibilities of every position and some procedures need to also be clarified. In order to support the innovation, some new policies should be made. In this way, the organization can assimilate the innovation into the former organizational structure and administrative system and make them harmonious.

Unfortunately, the principal of my school did not attempt clarify the innovation before implementing the Accountability of Directors of Grade Groups in our school. The principal only appointed three people from the current vice principals and directors of the teaching and moral departments to undertake the roles of director of the three different grade groups in a part-time capacity. These leaders of my school were now simultaneously in charge of both their former work and the new added work of being responsible for certain grade groups performances. The obligations and the authorities of both directors of departments and directors of grade groups were not sufficiently outlined and the hierarchical relationship between these positions was vague. Some procedures which involved teaching management and students' discipline were not newly formulated. Although the principal said that the school would evaluate the new directors of all grade groups according to every grade groups performances, this was hard to achieve because traditionally the people who evaluated all grade groups were, in fact, the vice principals and department directors. Within this new structure, this meant that as directors of grade groups, vice principals and department directors would essentially be evaluating themselves. This phenomenon is just like asking a judge to become an athlete and simultaneously judge their own performance. It is understandable that fair evaluation could not occur under this kind of situation. Because the series of problems mentioned above were never clarified, teachers in my school felt very confused and frustrated when they implemented the accountabilities of directors of grade groups in my school.

#### *The Implementation Phase*

*Try to become an implementer not only a policymaker.* Any plan of innovation is not a perfect solution, although plan makers have tried their best to think about the dynamic factors which will influence the innovation. Thus, when principals begin to implement an innovation in their schools, as implementation facilitators, they need to have the patience to work daily with the front-line implementers, help the front-line implementers figure out how to use the innovation, simultaneously clarify the actual but not imaginable functions of the innovation for the school and find defects and deficiencies of the innovation's plan. It is necessary for all implementers, including the advocator of the innovation – the principal of the school, to discuss how to revise and perfect the innovation if they want the innovation to result in profound and permanent effects on their school.

The process of revising and perfecting an innovation is the process of assimilating the innovation into the former organization and administrative system, which more or less equals the restructuring of the school. We can imagine how complex and hard it is, therefore, many leaders who do not have a clear vision; effective leadership strategies and strong innovative spirits become policymakers rather than implementers. Hall and Hord (2006) stated that "policymakers often lose interest once development is done and implementation begins. They are ready to move on to the next initiative which frequently leads to loss of support for the implementation of the first initiative" (p. 7). In fact, the Accountability of

Directors of Grade Groups which was implemented in my school was a short-lived and failed innovation. Although we found its defects and deficiencies, we did not continually work to revise and perfect it. Now that I recall my experiences, I regretfully recognize that the leaders of my school were used to being policymakers who advocated too many innovations in our school in recent years, but none of these innovations really succeeded.

*Dealing with incompetence.* Evans (2001) explained that “change often discredits [our former] experience and learning, challenging our purpose and identities and devaluing our skills” (p. 33). To some extent everyone will feel incompetent when he/she is required to act in new roles and undertake new responsibilities. The vice principal and the director who were in charge of the teaching department were not familiar with the policies and the regulations about student discipline. They did not know the situations of bad student behaviour and also lacked the experiences and skills of communicating with them and their parents. They did not have a close connection with social agencies that can help them carry out various student activities, such as travelling, visiting, holding parties and sports meets. They were less competent to be in charge of the moral education of certain grade groups than to be in charge of the teaching performances of the whole school. Similarly, the vice principal and the director of moral department were not good at managing the teaching performances of certain grade groups. They were not familiar with the policies about teaching. They did not know the syllabus of every course and the requirements of the new curriculum reform. They had no capabilities to play multiple roles, such as instructors, coaches, collaborators, implementers of new curriculum and designers of school-based curriculum, as required by the new curriculum reform. They also could not instruct students to understand the study laws and acquire effective study habits. Thus, they were not capable for being in charge of the teaching performances of certain grade groups. This phenomenon of incompetence could be changed through learning from each other and collaboration between colleagues. Regretfully, during the process of implementing the innovation in my school, there was neither proper policy nor effective intervention to create good climate which can facilitate colleagues to share their experiences, discuss the problems which concerned them and collaborate with each other.

*Intervention during the process of implementing innovation.* Evans (2001) suggested that change usually brings out the effect of more friction and less cooperation. In order to handle these conflicts, “interventions are the actions and events that are key to the success of the change process” (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 8). During the process of implementing the innovation, the main conflict that emerged in my school was the appearance of cliques and the consequent damage to the school culture. The appearance of cliques resulted from the negative influence of Eastern thought styles and Chinese culture. Easterners value harmony of the group and the achievement of a collective goal. Sometimes individuals easily give up one’s own beliefs, interests and even principles of life in order to pursue collective

interests to the maximum extent. It is understandable that “Easterners [often] feel embedded in their in-groups and distant from their out-groups” (Nisbett, 2004, p. 51). Although, more than two thousand years ago, Confucius claimed that “men of virtue keep harmonious relations with each other but they never form cliques; men without virtue do the opposite things” (as cited by Guo, 2006, p. 174). In reality, only a few people can become Junzis (a person who has virtue). More people who do not have virtue and the breadth of mind are easy to form cliques. In the past several years when we implemented the Accountabilities of Directors of Grade Groups in our school, every grade group gradually became a clique because all people connected with it would be evaluated together. Sometimes the people who belonged to the same grade group concealed and did not report the problems which emerged in their group. Sometimes, they agreed to solve problems using unreasonable measures which slightly breached policies. Sometimes they compelled the director of a grade group, who was simultaneously a vice principal or a director of a department, to strive for extra benefits for their group from the principal through an irregular way. At the beginning of the appearance of such problems, the principal should prevent the emergence of cliques through all kinds of intervention methods, for example sharing the common goal of the school, holding conferences, clarifying policies again, holding private conversations, implementing effective supervision and publicly praising or criticizing. But my principal did not pay attention to intervening and solving these conflicts, so the innovation did not last in our school.

#### *My Understandings about Innovation*

Reflecting on the process of implementing the innovation mentioned above in my school, I found that the leaders should not think separately about every innovation.

In fact, every innovation should not simply be a process of implementing it. Innovation should be defined as a process of going “beyond individual and team learning to organizational learning and system change” (Fullan, 2006, p. 121). Leaders of schools should not blindly imitate the reform models of other schools. Innovation plans need to be designed around the vision of the school and fit the context of the individual school. The main factor which determines the success of innovations is school culture. In order to create good school culture, leaders should pay more attention to sharing their visions and beliefs, forming common goals and fostering an open-minded staff and the habit of cooperation in their schools at any time. The process of implementing the innovation is simultaneously the process that more and more staff study new knowledge and improve their skills. At the same time, there must be more and more people who are capable of becoming teacher-leaders in certain fields. The final goal of a principal should be to build a sustainable school. It is important to remember that “when learning is continuous and participation in that learning is broad-based and skillful, we [can] find the potential and the reality of sustainable, lasting school improvement” (Lamber, 2007, p. 322).

### CONCLUSION

The principal should understand that both innovation and stability are important for the development of the school and properly use them. As wise principals, they should be good at thinking problems in the whole system and engage in building sustainable schools rather than blindly implement inefficient innovations in their schools. Before implementing an innovation in the school, the principals should seriously assess the necessity of the innovation according to the context of their schools, carefully plan the innovation and clarify it to their staff. Usually, the process of implementing an innovation is so complex that the innovation needs to be continually revised and perfected in the implementation phase. Successfully dealing with the incompetence of the staff and effectively intervening in all kinds of conflicts are the important factors to guarantee the success of the innovation.

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PART IV

**RESEARCH OF CURRICULUM REFORM**

## RESEARCH ON CURRICULUM REFORM

The segment focuses on the vigorous Chinese curriculum reform and research on the Eastern and Western cultural differences and integration of Western ideas into Chinese school system. It also recognizes a number of new issues in the process of curriculum change, achievement, and resistance in the curriculum reform. The collection of papers identifies issues in practice and integrates an international perspective and pedagogy, by using change theory to promote success in educational reform.

Tang Mingying (a Director) discusses the integration of Chinese and Western educational philosophies in *The New Curriculum in China: A Blend of East and West*. In the *Chinese Curriculum Reform: Chinese Tradition and Western Educational Theory*, Deng Heng (a Vice Principal) states that the rapid social and economic development in China calls for education reform to prepare students for the future. Ba Zhidong (a Vice Principal) presents how to cope with teacher's resistance to curriculum reform and intends to provide a solution for the resistance to curriculum change. Xu Zhihui (a Director) in his chapter – *The New Curriculum in China: Reflecting on the Integration of Chinese and Western Cultures* analyses this new phenomena in Chinese curriculum reform. Li Jun (a Vice Principal) explored the changing role of principals in the curriculum reform and described a number of changes in principals' roles in the processes.



TANG MINGYING

## 12. THE NEW CURRICULUM IN CHINA

### *A Blend of East and West*

#### INTRODUCTION

Since the importation of philosophies formulated elsewhere under different economic, political and cultural conditions present challenges for the new host cultures (Dimmock & Walker, 2005), the argument for greater culture sensitivity in a globalizing educational context is robust. In China, since the new curriculum reform began, some researchers and educators have believed the theory that new curriculum comes from the West, so it represents Western culture; some experts and teachers think that due to the entrance examination in China, the new curriculum in China is wearing new shoes to walk on the old path, so it is still the Eastern style; others believe that although the curriculum reform comes from the West, it is implemented in China, so it is a blend of Eastern and Western culture. I take the latter position.

To defend my idea, in the first section, I will give an introduction of the reality of the new curriculum implemented in China and the differences of the main philosophies, epistemologies and ideologies between East and West. In the second part, I will present the three different opinions. In the third part, I will state my own opinion: the new curriculum implemented in China is a blend of the Eastern and the Western cultures in the following four aspects: the objectives, the three-level curriculum management system, the student management system and the evaluation system. At last, I will conclude that having a clear understanding of the characteristics of the Western culture and the Eastern culture will help teachers implement the new curriculum well. How to help teachers understand the culture differences and how to help them interpret these differences to students during class are our further research directions on this topic.

#### THE NEW CURRICULUM REFORM IN CHINA

“To improve the educational system and quality as well as to prepare its citizens for an increasingly global society, the Ministry of Education in China released the Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline (pilot version) in June 2001 and officially started the new round of nationwide curriculum reform for grades 1–12” (Guo, 2009, p. 16).

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The essence of this curriculum reform was to establish a new curriculum system for basic education to meet the requirement of the twenty first century, which fully reflects the essence of basic education and spirit of education for all-round development and secures students to become true masters of learning. The content covers: (a) general plan; (b) goals/objectives of curriculum; (c) standards of curriculum; (d) structure of curriculum; (e) compiling and management of teaching materials; (f) implementation of curriculum; (g) evaluation of curriculum; and (h) curriculum management (Guan,& Meng, 2007, p. 585).

The philosophical foundation of the new curriculum is to look after each student's development. The philosophy underpinning the new curriculum is "or each student's development" (Zhong, Cui, & Zhang, 2001) and it calls for transformative changes in many aspects of Chinese basic education, including curricula structure, curricula standards and content, pedagogy, the development and use of textbooks and resources, curricula assessment and evaluation, curricula administration and teacher education and development.

#### THE CULTURE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST

Nisbett (2003) stated that Western history originated from Greece. Their epistemology is logical, categorical and simplistic and they emphasize individual, independent and free-will, so they educate their younger generation with creativity, merit and analysis. The Eastern history originating from China is dialectical, complex and contextual. The outstanding features of Chinese epistemology emphasize collectivity, harmony and self-control, so they respect teachers and education. Meanwhile, basic knowledge memorizing and test-taking skills are highlighted. According to Nisbett (2003):

Americans on average found it harder to detect changes in the background of scenes and Japanese found it harder to detect changes in objects in the foreground. Americans in general failed to recognize the role of situational constraints on a speaker's behaviour whereas Koreans were able to. The majority of Koreans judged an object to be more similar to a group with which it shared a close family resemblance, whereas an even greater majority of Americans judged the object to be more similar to a group to which it would be assigned by a deterministic rule. When confronted with two apparently contradictory propositions, Americans tended to polarize their beliefs whereas Chinese moved toward equal acceptance of the two propositions. When shown a thing, Japanese are twice as likely to regard it as a substance than as an object and Americans are twice as likely to regard it as an object than as a substance (Nisbett, 2003).

#### THREE OPINIONS

##### *Some Experts Believe the New Curriculum is Mostly Western Culture*

In this round of curriculum reform, various Western philosophies of education – Progressive Education, Behaviourism, Cognitivism, Constructivism, and

Post-structuralism – were introduced to China. These foreign educational philosophies are reportedly highly influential (Su, 1995). Scholars who take this stand believe that the curriculum implemented in China now embodies Western values.

*Some Experts Believe the New Curriculum is Still Grounded in Eastern Culture*

Although the new curriculum has granted teachers more space to interpret curriculum based on local contexts and their students' situations, teachers still feel obligated to follow the textbooks and view the curriculum standards as changed versions of subject syllabi (Guo, 2009). In other words, the education inheritance distinguished by examinations, text-focused teaching and learning and authoritative pedagogies is still pervasive in Chinese schools today (Guo, 2009). Meanwhile, according to Guo (2009), teachers are the implementers of the new curriculum; it is hard for teachers to implement the new curriculum in class because of their conventional curriculum orientation, habitual teaching and learning styles. That is why the scholars who take this stand still think the new curriculum implemented in China is still embodies Eastern culture. Because of college entrance examinations, the importance of text is still highlighted and the teachers' authority is still being emphasized, which is a Chinese style for the most part.

*Others Believe that the New Curriculum is a Blend of Eastern and Western Culture*

Most of the experts still believe the philosophies of the new curriculum are from the Western world, but it must be implemented in China. Chinese context should be a consideration, so it is of course the blend of the East and the West culture value.

MY STAND

I took this last stand. I believe the new curriculum implemented in China is a combination of the East and the West cultures for the following reasons:

*The Curriculum Objectives*

The governmental policy Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline (pilot version) specifies the following six objectives of this new round national curriculum reform (Zhong, Cui, & Zhang, 2001):

1. Develop a comprehensive and harmonious basic education system and change the function of curriculum from knowledge transmission to helping students become active lifelong learners;
2. Construct new curriculum structure. Change the subject-centered curriculum structure into a balanced, integrated and optional curriculum structure to meet the diverse needs of schools and students;

3. Reflect modern curriculum content. Reduce the difficulty and complexity of the old curriculum content and reflect the new essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that students need to be lifelong learners. Strengthen the relevance of the curriculum content to students' lives;
4. Promote constructivist learning. Change the passive learning and rote learning styles into active and problem-solving learning styles to improve students' overall abilities of information processing, knowledge acquisition, problem solving and cooperative learning;
5. Form appropriate assessment and evaluation rationales. Curriculum assessment and evaluation shifts from its selective purpose to improving the quality of teaching and learning. A combination of formative and summative evaluation approaches is required in the new curriculum; and
6. Promote curriculum democracy and adaptation. Curriculum administration is decentralized toward a joint effort of central government, local governments and schools to strengthen the relevance of the curriculum to local situations (Guo, 2009, pp. 18–19).

These six objectives indicate the scope and complexity of this reform and represent a radical departure from traditional Chinese education. From the objectives, we can see that the apparent characteristic of this curricular restructuring is the emphasis placed on creativity, problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills. This embodies Western culture. According to Dimmock and Walker (2005), “societies such as the USA have cultures conducive to creativity – they are what we call ‘generative’-some in East Asia are more renowned for their replication and rote learning...they are less likely to cultivate creativity in their young people” (p. 19)

Objective 1 (Guo, 2009, p. 18) embodies Eastern culture, because Easterners emphasize “harmony and comprehension”, hoping the students to be lifelong learners as a way of holistic thought, looking at the entire life of a student as a whole, which is also Eastern style. Objective 2 (Guo, 2009, p. 18) embodies Western culture since optional curriculum aims at the needs of individual student. Objective 3 (Guo, 2009, p. 18) mainly embodies the culture of the East because “knowledge, skills and attitudes that students need to be lifelong learners” look at students' life as a whole and “strengthen the relevance of the curriculum content to students' lives” as well. Objective 4 (Guo, 2009) embodies Western culture. According to Nisbett (2003), problem solving is a method that Western teachers use in terms of causal attribution. Objective 5 (Guo, 2009) mainly embodies Eastern culture, because “a combination of formative and summative evaluation approaches” (Guo, 2009) is a way the East envisions the world. According to Nisbett (2003) the ancient Chinese philosophers saw the world as consisting of continuous substances, that's what the objective emphasizes on formative evaluation here. Objective 6 (Guo, 2009) apparently embodies Western style because democracy is what Westerners emphasize because of what Dimmock and Walker (2005) stated. These six objectives really embody a combination of both the Eastern and Western culture.

### *The Course Management System*

In the past, the curriculum standards were mandatory. The curriculum structure is the same, at the same time of the year for all the same level of schools in the country (Guan & Meng, 2007). Now it is the three-level curriculum: national level, local level and school level (Guan & Meng, 2007). The three-level curriculum management model can be described like this: the state is responsible for establishing a macro plan for curriculum development, deciding on categories of subject courses and their periods, issuing national standards for each course and providing macro directions to the implementation (Guan & Meng, 2007).

Because of the three-level hierarchical control, from the whole view, the basic power of determining curriculum is still concentrated on the state, which embodies Eastern culture (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Meanwhile, in each of these three levels, it is still based on group oriented or collectivism rather than individualism, so the culture is Eastern. To this aspect, it is still mostly an Eastern style since it focuses on the whole situation of the country and the entire development of the nation.

Local (provincial and lower levels) educational administrations, under the direction of national curriculum, lay out the project of implementation of curriculum to match the needs of local areas, for instance, localizing national curriculum, selecting teaching materials, building local instructional resource databases, inspecting the process and assessing the result of curriculum reform (Guan & Meng, 2007, pp. 595–596). Schools are encouraged to explore and/or select curriculum and textbooks suitable for their own characteristics or needs (Guan & Meng, 2007, p. 596). “What is more, they are entitled to design their own school-based curriculum and compile textbooks” (Guan & Meng, 2007, p. 596). The three-level curriculum management in curriculum implementation is an intelligent strategy to meet the specific needs of social, economic and cultural development among different areas in China.

The local level still embodies Eastern culture because it asks the local educational bureaucracy to take the local context into consideration. According to Nisbett (2003), Easterners are capable of taking context into consideration when solving problems. School level courses actually embody Western culture because they focus on students’ individual needs, according to Nisbett (2003), individualism is characterized as Western culture.

The three-level course management system is also a combination of the East and West.

### *The Student Management System*

Just as Wang (1997) stated in *Homeroom Teacher Role in China*, today in China, Homeroom teachers still take the task of managing student behaviour. This kind of student management system is very popular in China. In this system, students do not move from room to room for instruction as children do in America; they only move when it is necessary to use special facilities such as a science laboratory, a

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language laboratory, or a gymnasium. Most student daily instruction takes place in their room, where teachers come to teach (Rhodes, 1994). Each classroom has a homeroom teacher from primary school until secondary school. Homeroom teachers arrive at school 30 minutes earlier each morning and stay at school later than those who are not homeroom teachers (Liu, 1997). Some of them still have to visit parents during weekend or at night and speak with parents on the telephone. During the day, they remain in their offices for students may visit them at any time or during the interval between classes; they always go to class and make sure everything goes well in their classes. They will not leave the classroom until the bell rings or the subject teacher comes in. In this traditional student management system, it affords more stability in the relationship between teachers and students. Because most of the students stay with same classmates for three to six years, this aspect cultivates student collectivism and also helps them to emphasize the harmony of the whole class, which are all characteristics of Eastern culture.

In the new curriculum system, we also let students choose their own school-based courses. They transfer from one class to another to take optional courses and there is no homeroom teacher in these courses. Without a homeroom teacher, students must take care of themselves. They should choose their own classes and even if they have trouble, they should learn to find the proper place or person to solve problems, which will cultivate their independence and problem solving skills. According to Nisbett (2003), independence is the epistemology of the Western culture.

### *The Evaluation System*

CNNCR aims to propose much more effective strategies and concrete evaluation instruments. The evaluation focusing on student learning procedures facilitates student all-round harmonious development. In the past, only the homeroom teacher evaluated students. Due to the Eastern culture, where more holistic considerations of relationship hold sway, personnel decisions may be made on the basis of connections (Dimmock & Walker, 2005, p. 19). In the new curriculum system, the evaluation system is multi-person and multi-angles. It is a kind of democracy and empowerment, both of which are characteristic of Western culture.

### CONCLUSION

The new curriculum implemented in China is now a blend of Eastern and Western cultures. Because of this blend of culture, teachers in China face a greater challenge when implementing the new curriculum at the school level. Having a clear understanding of the characteristics of Western culture and Eastern culture will help teachers implement the new curriculum effectively. How to help teachers understand the cultural differences and how to help them interpret these differences during class are our further research directions on this topic.

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DENG HENG

## 13. CHINESE CURRICULUM REFORM

### *Chinese Tradition and Western Educational Theory*

#### INTRODUCTION

“Education develops and innovates under given political and economic circumstances” (Zhu, 2007, p. 224). With the continuous progress of social and economic development in China which is based on the Open Policy, Chinese social and economic environments called for reforming current education to meet “the need for education to prepare each and every student for society and the future” (Zhu, 2007, p. 224). Based upon this situation, the Ministry of Education announced the Programme on the Reform of the Basic Education Curriculum (Experimental) in June 2001. The announcement indicated the beginning of this round of Chinese curriculum reform.

In recent years, with further advancing, the new curriculum reform encountered many difficulties and problems and there are an increasing number of comments and controversies about it (Wang, 2006; Wu, 2009). Meanwhile, some education reformers “have attempted to learn from and borrow from Western educational methodologies” (Dello-Iacovo, 2009, p. 243). Therefore, some scholars doubt that the theoretical foundation of the reform which is based on Western educational theories can adapt to the national situation in China (Wang, 2006; Wu, 2009). This paper will explore the main conflicts in the new curriculum reform and make suggestions for the current Chinese curriculum reform to combine Chinese wisdom traditions with Western educational theories.

#### THE CHANGING CURRICULUM

For decades, Chinese basic education curriculum has been dominated by knowledge-centered elitist education which neglects students’ social practices (Guo, 2009, p. 15). “The previous curriculum was based on examination-oriented educational system which has been generally blamed for” (Guo, 2009, p. 16). The examination-oriented educational system forces teachers to focus on students’ mastery of knowledge to improve student test scores to become “good teachers”. Accordingly, “to achieve high scores, schools went so far as to drill their students time and again in test skills suitable for examinations” (Zhu, 2007, p. 225). In current Chinese education, “cultivation of servility instead of individuality, emphasis on outcome instead of process and stress on rote learning instead of understanding still have an impact on today’s schooling” (Guo, 2006, p. 180–181).



On the other hand, in order to obtain entrance into an ideal university, students have to go all out to train their own examination skills which are to memorize knowledge and problem-solving skills for a variety of tests. However, “academic excellence alone is not enough to fulfill a person in reality and in society” (Zhu, 2007, p. 225). Thereby, the examination-oriented education system, “which enslaves students and devastates talented students, is outdated and should be abolished” (Zhong, 2006, p. 370). Society called for the change to education and the new curriculum reform was initiated.

The current curriculum reform in China is attempting to expand educational goals, which is to free “basic education from subservience to elitist culture” (Zhu, 2007, p. 225) and to shift its focus from “only memorization and examination scores” to “developing well-rounded individuals” (Dello-Iacovo, 2009, p.241). There is agreement for the necessity of Chinese education to undergo transformation, voices supporting and protesting the reform all are increasing with the progress of implementation. Consequently, Zhong (2006) stated, “on the one hand, education reform, especially curriculum reform, is imperative; on the other hand, a lot of confusion came out during the process of reform: the ideas, systems and mechanism are all in conflict with the reform. Consequently, curriculum reform faces a lot of difficulties” (p. 371).

#### THE MAIN CONFLICTS

In recent years, though Chinese curriculum reform has achieved fruitful improvements in Chinese education in both theory and practice, there are still many problems needed for further studying (Shi, 2005; Li, 2009). Wu (2009) stated many scholars expanded the depth and sustained discussions on the direction and value orientation of the current curriculum reform in China. One of the main divergences is how to treat the discrepancies between the national situation and the conceptions of the reform which are based on Western educational theories (Wu, 2009). Both supporters and opponents of the reform researched this divergence and made their own announcements.

Some scholars criticized the theoretical basis of the reform which is based on Western theories such as postmodernism and multiple intelligence theory (Wu, 2009). These opponents question whether these Western-based educational theories may be able to meet China’s national situation. Wang (2006) criticized that theoretical experts of the new curriculum reform admit that the reform is divorced from China’s national situation which has been ignored by the reform. However, these experts believe that meeting with the national situation is an outdated concept for educational change because the situation can be changed. They stress that the reform should adapt to global trends and truth rather than meeting national conditions (Wang, 2006). Wu (2009) also stated, other scholars who support the reform have given a response to these criticisms. Some experts point out that the exotic experiences and theories in the reform move far beyond the simple copy. Other supporters argue that we should pay attention to the truth and feasibility of an exotic theory rather than its “birthplace” (Wu, 2009).

Another related argument is that the reform is the reasonable inheritance or the severance of traditions. Opponents believe that the reform takes no account of and makes a clean break with tradition (Wu, 2009). Shi (2005) argued that the reform is the need to overcome the shortcomings of traditional education and sublimate traditional education. If simply being considered as a contradiction and fragmentation with tradition, the reform may lose the social foundation of survival and enter a crisis (Shi, 2005). However, supporters of the reform clearly refute these points of view. Zhong and You (2004) argued that the reform is attempting to learn from and has found theoretical support from Chinese wisdom traditions.

Accordingly, the main theoretical conflicts of the new curriculum reform focus on two issues. The first is how to treat the introduction of Western educational theories; the second is how to utilize the inheritance of traditional Chinese education philosophy.

#### REFERENCE AND INHERITANCE

In contemporary China's education system, we recognize more Western modes rather than our own modes of education inherited from our traditional education system (Zhong & You, 2004; Zhao & Li, 2007). Both China's theories and practices of modern education are less advanced than Western ones which require us to continuously learn from them (Zhao & Li, 2007; Tang & Mou, 2009). Therefore, for the new curriculum reform, supporters and opponents reached an agreement that the reform should refer to Western theories and practices (Rong & Liu, 2005; Wang, 2006; Wu, 2009).

Education is the transmission and development of a country's culture, which is rooted in and closely related with the basic characteristics of the country (Rong & Liu, 2005). A different culture from a different country may lead to different education and related needs for change. After a comparative study of curriculum reform among the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and China, Cheng and Long (2006) stated that the curriculum reform of these countries was concerned with different foci and undertaken in different ways because of different national conditions and cultural backgrounds; thereby, we must consider the differences between Eastern and Western cultures when we introduce Western theories of education into the new curriculum reform in China.

In fact, there are very real differences between Chinese and Western culture and patterns of thought. "Westerners have an analytic view focusing on salient objects and their attributes, whereas Easterners have a holistic view focusing on continuities in substances and relationships in the environment" (Nisbett, 2003, p. 82). These differences may "result in very different ways of making inferences" (Nisbett, 2003, p. 163) and strikingly impact the field of education. Nisbett (2003) provided the following example:

Americans are inclined to believe that skills are qualities you do or don't have, so there's not much point in trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Asians tend to believe that everyone, under the right circumstances and with enough hard work, can learn to do math. (p. 189)

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According to this example, we clearly recognize apparent different educational philosophies between China and the United States if we acknowledge Chinese are typical Asians.

As a result, we need to, but at the same time should be cautious to apply Western educational theories and experiences into Chinese education as well as the new curriculum reform. Although these theories and experiences may be successful in Western countries, they are based on a Western social-cultural background and a criterion of success which may be different from the Chinese context. We should deliberate about these new concepts based on the Chinese national situation and cultural environment.

On the other hand, although modern education has been established for a shorter time in China than in the West, the Chinese educational practice has a wealth of experiences and Chinese educational philosophy has a long history. Many insights of traditional Chinese wisdom nourish and motivate the educational development in China (Zhong & You, 2004; Wang, 2009). Examination-centered education and rote learning cannot represent all of the China's traditional education. Actually, many important educational philosophies in ancient China were applied to the new curriculum reform and became the theoretical basis (Zhong & You, 2004).

For instance, Confucius has a famous quotation, "education for all without discrimination". The educational proposition states that educators should understand and respect students' individual differences and personality developments to promote and stimulate the development of students. "Teaching for every student's development" is one of new teaching philosophies demanded by the new curriculum reform (Guo, 2009, p. 216). Apparently, it is just another kind of explanation of the Confucius proposition. Therefore, the new curriculum is a re-interpretation of some Chinese traditional educational philosophy rather than an opposition.

#### DISCUSSION

Although there are some divergences of the theoretical foundations of the ongoing Chinese curriculum reform (Wu, 2009), the reform is changing and improving Chinese education (Shi, 2005; Li, 2009). The main divergence of the reform is about its fundamental theories which are imported from the West. As a developing country, China needs to learn from advanced educational concepts and methods of developed Western countries. Nevertheless, these Western theories are proven and effective in the background of the West rather than the East. As a result, we should carefully consider these new education conceptions based on the comparisons between the different situations of the East and the West. Only after going through a localization transition, can these imported theories meet the need of local cultural background (Cheng and Long, 2006).

As Chinese educators, we should think primarily about the current curriculum reform in the context of Chinese modern and traditional culture to find "connections between Chinese wisdoms traditions and curriculum understanding" (Guo, 2009, p. 234). Furthermore, we should recognize the strengths of both

Western and Chinese educational systems to find a balance in integrating these strengths to benefit the current curriculum reform and Chinese education (Guo, 2009, pp. 234–235). There is a typical pattern of Chinese thought originating from Confucius’ “The Doctrine of the Mean (中庸之道)”, which means the ideal moderate position between two extremes. Personally I believe the current Chinese curriculum reform should combine Chinese wisdoms traditions and Western prosperous experiences in modern science and technology education.

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## **14. AN EXPLORATION OF THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND TEACHER RESISTANCE TO CURRICULUM CHANGE**

### INTRODUCTION

“There is general agreement among psychological and sociological theorists that change is fundamental to the growth and survival of human and social systems” (Armstrong, 2009, p. 13). Similarly, the educational change acts as the vital roles for students’ learning and their future lives. However, why have most of the curriculum changes ended in failure? Teacher resistance is the main reason that the curriculum change is a failure or only accomplished surface changes. Therefore, the question remains of how to influence teachers to accept the change; this has become an important topic for curriculum reform. Elimination of the resistance of teachers and the relevant varieties of adversity is usually thought to be the best way to manage the change - use a variety of powerful media, offensive, administrative pressure, expert influence, so that teachers accept and understand the concepts or norms of curriculum reform. These ways seem to recognize the importance of teachers in curriculum change, but it cannot often reach the desired effects. Curriculum changes are often rejected outside the classroom by teachers. The resistance of teachers is an inevitable result of change rather than the question needed to be overcome. Look at resistance as a matter that must be overcome is actually wrong and controversial (Britzma, 1992). Resistance is the primary precondition for teachers’ learning, because this indicates that they lack the knowledge and competence needed by the change. Teachers and the education system itself need time to adapt to the change.

Some critical theorists have analyzed the same problems encountered in the implementation of some social programs. They believe that the reason that many social programs are unsuccessful is because the implementers do not truly understand the client’s points of view and attitudes. This analysis reminds us of another issue - understanding why teachers resist the curriculum change. When the subjectivity and objectivity of teacher resistance are recognized, the right strategies can be developed to reduce teacher resistance. This article discusses what kinds of resistance are helpful to the curriculum reform and tries to explore some strategies to solve these resistances.

### RESISTANCE, BARRIERS AND DRIVING FORCES

In the past, teacher resistance was mainly looked upon as the barrier to curriculum change. As time continued, the concept of barrier was gradually replaced by the concept of change's information, the driving force of change, the protection mechanism of organization, the sensible disappointment of teachers and the reasonable abreaction of individual emotion. The multiple meanings of the barriers have broken through the dimension of the original "barrier". The negative image of resistance was gradually reversed. Neutral or even positive images of resistance began to take shape. This series of images enriched the meaning of resistance and brought more thoughts for policy makers and researchers. For example, in practice, I had discovered that teachers can develop a series of individual strategies to shift the curriculum change from the designers' original intentions based on their own understanding. From the point of view of the policy's implementation, it is the resistance to the change. However, from the teachers' view, their approach is not only is very reasonable, but also is protection for their own classroom teaching.

How does an administration influence teachers to accept the change? How do we understand why teachers resist the change? The former question indicates that teachers as a party accept and implement the programs. They have no choice in whether or not to select the change and have no chance to negotiate with the superior or school board. Their resistance is considered unreasonable and is the obstacle to curriculum change. However, the agents of change may overcome the resistance through management techniques used to make teachers accept the change. In the latter question, the study perspective has changed. Why do teachers resist the change? How about the nature of teacher resistance? What are its rational and irrational factors? How about the relationships between the teachers' resistance and the school atmosphere, the local education administration, the operation of the whole education system and even the era we live in? From these questions, we can conclude that teachers have the right to accept or resist the change due to various reasons. The legitimacy of resistance has been established.

### THE INTERACTION BETWEEN TEACHER RESISTANCE AND THE CURRICULUM CHANGE

Figure 1 indicates that different resistance has different effects to curriculum change. Gross (1971) also reached similar conclusions in his research about teachers' resistance to curriculum reform. In figure 1, the first situation is that teachers understand and accept the change. The second situation is that teachers resist the curriculum change based on the understanding to the curriculum change. The third situation is that teachers do not understand the change, but still accept the change. The fourth situation is that teachers not only do not understand the change, but also do not accept the change.

## THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND TEACHER RESISTANCE

		Understand	
		Yes	No
Accept	Yes	I Advisably accept (deeply change)	III Blindly accept (superficial change)
	No	II Advisably resist (possibly implement)	IV Blindly resist (impossibly implement)

Figure 1

The third and the fourth situation are most likely to occur in practice. It also needs to be paid more careful attention to during the process of change. In the fourth situation, teachers' blind resistance will snuff out the change. This is also the case in the third situation. In this case, even if the change is implemented, it would be superficial (Fullan, 2007). The first situation is the most ideal model. It implies that the change has value to teachers and is acceptable and useful for teachers. The second situation is still the expectation we want to see. In this case, there is the possibility to further improve the change because teacher resistance can be regarded as a kind of driving force of change.

From the preceding analysis, the precondition of the success of curriculum change is that the resistance of teachers needs to be established on the basis of understanding. Lack of clarity about the innovation is a big problem for teachers to implement the change (Fullan, 2007; Gross, 1971). Resistance based on understanding is wise resistance and it will be beneficial to the change. But how can we make teachers understand the change? Teachers' understanding to change is not entirely dependent on the previous qualities and competences of themselves. It is nearly impossible to make teachers prepare for curriculum change in advance under the condition that teaching is isolated from the concepts advocated by the new curriculum. Many studies also show that teachers' understanding to the change mainly comes from the development of the capacities of learning, reflecting and criticizing during the process of the change. Dalin (1998, p. 202) provided a model of how teachers learn in the process of change. In the model's core, the challenging task is the source of learning. This is the reason why teachers feel that they can gain many things from the open class, because the open class provides teachers with the considerable challenge.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, only when teachers do not merely act as the implementers and take the process of implementation as a learning process which provides the opportunities for teachers' learning, teachers will get the possibility of deeply understanding the change. Not learning new ways and means (i.e. - change attitude, sense of worth, norms and behaviours), it is difficult for people to obtain the development in the new environment - new curriculum environment (Evans, 1996).

A great deal of research about change indicates that the innovation which is closest to the core of teaching is most vulnerable to meeting teacher resistance.

However, some technical changes that take place at the surface are more easily accepted by teachers. Teachers who are more senior and rich in their teaching experiences more easily change their behaviour norms but not their epistemological norms. Those norms about epistemology, namely the more fundamental changes about teaching and knowledge, are often strongly resisted by teachers. Therefore, the policy makers and designers should not only guide teachers to focus and read the instructions of the curriculum reform, but also help teachers better understand the meaning and the significance of the reform. Teachers must understand the intentions of the change through re-learning. If teachers are not clear about the complexity of the implementation, they would hold negative attitudes towards the requirements from the agents of the curriculum reform. They also cannot completely change their existing working methods and beliefs. Change will be superficial (Fullan, 2007).

#### SOLUTION STRATEGIES TO TEACHER RESISTANCE

Lack of clarity about the innovation, lack of capability to perform the new role, the unavailability of instructional materials, failure to adjust organizational arrangements and the decline in staff motivation to implement the innovation are the main obstacles encountered by teachers (Gross, 1971). Fullan (2007) also mentioned some factors influencing the implementation of school change: the characteristics of change, the local characteristics and the external factors. Consequently, the implementation of change is a complex process (Fullan, 2007; Gross, 1971; Hall & Hord, 2006).

In practice, no fixed rules can be adopted in coping with teacher resistance. The managers should make decisions according to the dynamic situation.

##### *Improve the Quality of the Change Design*

In many cases, the generation of teachers' resistance to change is just because of the problems of the change itself - the quality keeps in the low level. The characteristics of the need, clarity, complexity and the quality/practicality are considered as the criteria of quality for a change (Fullan, 2007). The designing of the change with high quality generally requires many participants be involved, such as experts, scholars, principals, teachers, parents, students and the social communities. Both the internal and external environments have influence on the implementation of change. A successful design for curriculum reform should pay attention to the voice from many aspects of society.

##### *Establish the Concept of Teacher-Participation*

Curriculum reform requires that decision makers update their thinking to establish the concept of relying on teachers. The managers of reform should not only look at teachers as the implementers, but also make teachers the main body of reform. In practice, teacher subjectivity should be fully played out. In the process of



implementing curriculum reform, we not only reform the curriculum, but also reform the teachers.

*Build the Multilateral Interaction Decision Making Mechanism*

The multilateral interaction decision making mechanism should be established in which the curriculum policy-makers, curriculum specialists, teachers, parents and the representatives of community groups are involved. In the decision making process of curriculum reform, the decision makers should not only absorb the opinions of experts, but also listen to the voices of teachers and collect suggestions from parents and other representatives of various social groups. In this way, the formation of the curriculum reform program will conform more to the realities and obtain more understanding and supports from people.

*Establish the Motivation Mechanism for Curriculum Reform*

It is nearly impossible to obtain a consensus from every teacher and every representative of social groups. Appropriate incentives of motivation will provide the driving force for teachers to be involved in reform. The incentive considers not only the physical factors (such as wages, benefits, working conditions, etc.), but also teachers' sense of responsibility for society and the students (Evans, 1996). In the meantime, the incentive should also meet teacher needs as much as possible to allow them to experience the joy of success. Curriculum reform needs to take some risks; because of this, teachers should be encouraged to participate in the curriculum reform. Even if it fails, teacher enthusiasm and pioneering spirit should also be protected.

*Shift the Training Model from Emphasizing on Skills*

In order to meet the challenges of social change in education, strengthening teacher training programs and improving the professional qualities of teachers can help them to understand, participate in the curriculum reform and achieve effective results. Teacher training should not just focus on enhancing the knowledge and skills needed by new curriculum, but also pay attention to the renewal of the attitude and the concept of the new curriculum. Only the knowledge and skills building on new ideas and attitudes will generate the effective effects for the curriculum reform.

*Change the Management Approach*

“Just as change is elusive, so too is leadership” (Evans, 1996, p. 146). School leaders should adopt the efficient management strategies according to teachers' behaviours at different levels of change. “Most of the talk and writing about organizational leadership emphasizes the new (as I have done) – new problems and the need for new solution” (Evans, 1996, p. 148). The managers of innovation need

to understand the behaviours of teachers in order to reach the real implementation of innovation. The principal's role must shift from a top-down supervisor to a facilitator, architect, steward, instructional leader, coach and strategic teacher (Senge, 1990). School leaders must learn to overcome barriers and cope with the chaos that naturally exists during the complex process of change (Fullan & Miles, 1992). School leaders should carefully analyze teacher behaviours at different stages of curriculum reform to design different intervention strategies. A Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin & Hall, 1987) was built two decades ago which was used to identify and monitor change efforts. The CBAM is a model for individual levels, however, it can develop into the institution level. "It takes 3 to 5 years for complex changes to move from initiation to institutionalization" (Fullan, 1991, para. 1). In this model, the leaders of curriculum reform must identify and deal with the concerns encountered by teachers. The concerns of teachers can be divided into four stages along with the implementation of change:

*Stage 1 Unrelated Concerns.* At this level, teachers are not aware of the connections between themselves and the curriculum reform. For example, a science course program is produced in school. A teacher might put her effort into the program at this stage, but she does not consider that she will be affected by the program and must be concerned about such a program. At this level, teachers will not refuse to reform because they do not really realize that the reform will affect their personal lives or professional fields.

*Stage 2 Self Concerns.* This stage most frequently appears prior to initiating a new innovation. Self concerns reflect a need for more information and answers. For example, what is this all about? How does this affect me?

*Stage 3 Task-related Concerns.* At this stage, teacher concerns are related to the implementation of the reform. The concerns reflect the need to know how to manage the innovation. For example, how do I find time to do all of this? How do I manage the material? How do I group the students?

*Stage 4 Impact-related Concerns.* This stage most frequently appears once the person feels comfortable managing and implementing the new innovation. At this stage, teachers are more concerned with the impact of reform on student learning. How does one improve the reform? How does one efficiently collaborate with colleagues? How does one improve student performance?

School leaders should guide teachers to deal with the concerns of stages 2 through 4 in time; otherwise, teachers would fall into confusion and resist the reform. School leaders often call all members together to share concerns which can reduce the resistance of teachers. The following five strategies are considered effective to decreasing resistance.

#### THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND TEACHER RESISTANCE

1. Make all members clearly understand the curriculum reform programs (Fullan, 2007).
2. Provide each member with the knowledge and skills needed by the curriculum reform through teacher training programs (Evans, 1996).
3. Provide the necessary materials and equipment for the implementation of curriculum reform (Gross, 1971).
4. Adjust the structure of the school organization to meet the needs of curriculum reform (Gross, 1971).
5. Make all members have the motivation to participate in the curriculum reform (Gross, 1971).

This means that the leaders of curriculum reform are not only responsible for eliminating the resistance at the initial stage, but also in charge of creating a variety of conditions for the implementation of the curriculum reform.

#### *Find Strategies from both Internal and External Environments to Reduce Teacher Resistance*

The implementation of the curriculum reform is very complex; the resistance is affected by many factors. Fullan (2007) stated that some factors are closely connected to the implementation of the change, namely, the characteristics of change, local characteristics and the external factors. Four factors were included in the characteristics of change: need, clarity, complexity and quality. The local characteristics include the district, community, principal and teacher. The government and other agencies are the external factors. Each of these factors contains several sub-factors. We can find a large number of strategies to solve the problem of teacher resistance from these factors and the relationships among them, such as, enhancing the clarity of the reform, establishing the learning organization and absorbing the majority of teachers to participate in the designing process of the change. However, because “the same program is often successful in one school system and a disaster in another” (Fullan, 2007, p. 93), the contingency theory should be applied according to the different situation.

#### *Improve School Culture – Building Learning Organization*

“Rosenholz (1989) first brought teachers’ workplace factors into the discussion of teaching quality by maintaining that teachers who felt supported in their own ongoing learning and classroom practice were more committed and effective than those who were not supported” (Hall & Hord, 2006). These supports can be adequately obtained from the learning organization in which teachers can freely learn from each other and collaborate on issues of concerns to them. In the atmosphere of learning organization, teachers’ efficacy of implementing innovation is increasingly efficiently. The learning organization makes teachers continually reflect and realize that life-long learning is very important. It can make teachers and staff keenly aware of their ignorance, the lack of the capacities, the

growth limits and make them face the truth to see the obstacles of the actual situation. In the learning organization, teachers can continue to challenge their own assumptions and prejudices to see the essence of the structural conflict and establish a shared vision. A gap may exist in between the shared vision and the realities. It might produce a creative tension (Senge, 1990). Therefore, teachers should often experience the process of self-reflection and personal mastery and scan their own teaching behaviours to reform them with courage.

Senge (1990) described the definition of the learning organization:

...organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning to see the whole together. (p. 3)

Senge thought that the establishment of a learning organization was like building a house. At first, you must prepare all the necessary building materials. Second, you should have the right tools to start your work, and then you must determine what kind of house you will build. Finally, you take action and build the house. The architecture of the learning organization is constituted by three parts of the “guiding ideas”, “innovation in infrastructure” and “the theory, methods and tools”. The guiding ideas are formed by the interaction of the vision, values and the purpose. The core of the organization is not only a tool for profit-maximization, but also a living organism. It advocates the ideas of the priority of the collectivity, the people-oriented and the learning community. The innovation in infrastructure refers to the working mechanisms, ways and channels which are used to support members’ work by the organization through running many kinds of available resources. The theory, methods and tools refer to the connecting bridge between the ideas and the practical works. It makes the abstract ideas become highly realistic and practical.

## CONCLUSION

Teachers not only are the source of the driving force to educational reform, but also may become the source of resistance. This is determined by the characteristics of the teaching profession, the school culture, the policy environment and teachers’ pursuing self-interest. However, the teachers’ resistance to change is not entirely a bad thing. On the contrary, it can encourage the designers of curriculum reform to treat the educational problem more comprehensively and realistically; it may be an important guarantee for the healthy development of school education. In this article, several main causes of resistance are mentioned and it indicates the objectivity of teacher resistance. It means that the designers and managers of educational reform must pay more attention to these issues.

## THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND TEACHER RESISTANCE

### NOTE

- <sup>1</sup> In many districts of China, every teacher is required to give an open class every semester or every school year. Many other teachers, school leaders, administrators and even the experts from the school board also participate in the class. After class, they will give some comments for the class to help the teacher to improve teaching qualities. In order to make the effect much better, the teacher will exert his/her biggest effort to prepare for the open class.

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XU ZHIHUI

## 15. REFLECTING ON THE INTEGRATION OF CHINESE AND WESTERN CULTURES

*The New Curriculum in China*

### INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will take advantage of a number of theories gleaned from the book, *The Geography of Thought*, written by Nisbett (2003), to describe and analyze the guidelines and behaviours which China's new curriculum reform reflects. This analysis is based on the implementation of the new curriculum and my own work experience. I believe this new curriculum reform in China is an integration of Chinese and Western cultures. The main purpose of this paper is for education administrators and teachers to further understand the new curriculum reform and the reform guidelines and the goals pursued. I hope that this paper can provide some help and advice for promoting the better implementation of the new curriculum.

This paper has three parts: The first part introduces the background of China's new curriculum reform against the background of theories from Nisbett's (2003) book, *The Geography of Thought*. In the second part, I will introduce the overall goals and specific objectives of the new curriculum reform in China, and Chinese and Western thought and culture that these goals reflect. The third part of the paper is the conclusion. I believe that Chinese and Western thought and culture will move toward integration. Perhaps, the best of education in the future will produce the point of integration between Chinese and Western education.

### BACKGROUND

The shortcomings of traditional Chinese education have been unable to meet the development of time and have even been impeding the progress of society. In the context of the turn of the century, China began the enormous scale of basic education curriculum reform.

First, China organized a large number of educational experts to carefully analyze and sum up the advantages of traditional education and the disadvantages embodied with the development over time. Second, experts researched a great deal of curriculum reform that had been done in other developed countries and absorbed a lot of good experiences, content and methods from curriculum reform in advanced countries. The Ministry of

Education of China then developed the new curriculum reform plan according to the actual situation in China. At the beginning of the reform program, new Chinese curriculum reform had taken advantage of the education in the world and combined Chinese and Western culture. Moreover, it highlighted the localization of international experience. That is the embodiment of China's national conditions and characteristics.

What are the fundamental differences between Chinese and Western culture? I want to answer this question with some basic theoretical knowledge learned from the book, *The Geography of Thought*. Nisbett (2003) stated that the differences of the most primitive way of life of people resulted in the different way of thinking between the East and West. And then the differences in ways of thinking resulted in the differences in people's behaviours. These huge differences in ways of thinking and actions resulted in a different world view and values. That is, there are different perceptions about the nature of the world and a different culture between the East and West.

Nisbett (2003) suggested the following opinions on the cultural differences between East and West. Eastern people pay more attention to the whole and harmony, emphasizing collectivism and human relationships; they think the world is constantly changing and interrelated and they believe that the world is full of contradictions and dialectics, so they are willing to find out a middle way from the contradictions, that's why Asians pay attention to the background of substance and think the world is complex (Nisbett, 2003). Westerners pay more attention to personal values, freedom and personality development; they think that the world is fundamentally unchanging and static and the object is isolated (Nisbett, 2003). Westerners invented debate and reasoning and they believe they must come to the duality conclusion either right or wrong from the debate; they pay attention to rules and reasoning and draw attention to form and abstract forming logic and categories (Nisbett, 2003). In short, Easterners emphasize collectivism, harmony and mutual assistance, while Westerners emphasize the individual, freedom and independence (Nisbett, 2003). These different perspectives are the main culture differences between the East and West.

How does the new curriculum reform in China reflect the combination of Chinese and Western cultures? Based on the above theory as the fundamental basis, I will analyze and explain that the new curriculum mirrors the integration between Chinese and Western cultures with its overall goals and six specific objectives.

## ANALYSIS

### *Overall Goals*

The overall educational goals of the new curriculum are the following (Guan and Meng, 2007, p. 585):

Developing patriotic and collective spirit, that is, to love their country; carrying on the fine cultural traditions handed from history; helping students stick to the

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socialist democratic system and strengthen the socialist legal system; helping students abide by the law of China and social public ethics; helping students foster the morally sound values and outlook on the world and life; helping students develop a sense of social responsibility and serve the people; cultivating students' spirit of innovation and creativity, practical ability and environmental awareness; helping students grasp basic knowledge and promote lifelong learning; protecting physical and mental health of students; promoting students to become civilians who are moral and disciplined.

The overall objective fully reflects the integration of Chinese and Western culture. Developing the responsibility for student's family, community, society and country is core value (Feng, 2006). Everyone is a member of one or several collectives. Everyone should love socialism, their country and their family. Everyone must serve the nation and the people. Everyone should improve their own qualities and abilities in order to better serve national and social development. This embodies China's traditional cultural inheritance and development. This is consistent with Nisbett's argument that "every Chinese was first and foremost a member of a collective, or rather of several collectives—the clan, the village and especially the family" (Nisbett, 2003). At the same time, the overall goal mirrors Western culture. Cultivating individual student spirit of innovation, practical ability, healthy lifestyle and student-centered classroom fully embody the core concept of Western culture. This also reflects the individual's development and freedom (Nisbett, 2003) suggested that the Western people "had a remarkable sense of personal agency – the sense that they were in charge of their own lives and free to act as they chose" (p. 2).

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The new curriculum also mirrors the integration between Chinese and Western culture with six specific objectives.

The governmental policy Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline (pilot version) specifies the following six objectives of this new round national curriculum reform (Zhong, Cui, & Zhang, 2001):

1. Develop a comprehensive and harmonious basic education system. Change the function of curriculum from knowledge transmission to helping students become active lifelong learners;
2. Construct new curriculum structure. Change the subject-centered curriculum structure into a balanced, integrated and optional curriculum structure to meet the diverse needs of schools and students;
3. Reflect modern curriculum content. Reduce the difficulty and complexity of the old curriculum content and reflect the new essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that students need to be lifelong learners. Strengthen the relevance of the curriculum content to students' lives;
4. Promote constructivist learning. Change the passive learning and rote learning styles into active and problem-solving learning styles to improve students'



- overall abilities of information processing, knowledge acquisition, problem solving and cooperative learning;
5. Form appropriate assessment and evaluation rationales. Curriculum assessment and evaluation shifts from its selective purpose to improving the quality of teaching and learning. A combination of formative and summative evaluation approaches is required in the new curriculum; and
  6. Promote curriculum democracy and adaptation. Curriculum administration is decentralized toward a joint effort of central government, local governments and schools to strengthen the relevance of the curriculum to local situations (Guo, 2009, p. 19).

The first objective (Guo, 2009) deals with building harmonious basic education system which embodies traditional Chinese culture. Nisbett (2003) suggested that “Chinese social life was interdependent and it was not liberty but harmony that was the watchword the harmony of humans and nature for the Taoists and the harmony of humans with other humans for the Confucians” (p. 19). The new curriculum emphasizes harmony. One very important aspect is the harmonious relationships between teachers and students, however, in traditional Chinese education, the “teacher’s role was that of expert and lecturer, giving definitive interpretations of the texts” (Guo, 2009, p. 3). This embodied teacher-centered relationships between teachers and students. The new curriculum seeks to build a new democracy and equal teacher-student relationships. Each individual is equal in the relationship. This also embodies the Western view.

In the second objective (Guo, 2009), “balanced” (Guo, 2009) and “integrated” (Guo, 2009) fully reflect the traditional Chinese culture and thought. “Health is the result of a balance of favorable forces in the body; illness is due to a complex interaction of forces” (Nisbett, 2003, p. 193). “Westerners have an analytic view focusing on salient objects and their attributes, whereas Easterners have a holistic view focusing on continuities in substances and relationships in the environment” (Nisbett, 2003, p. 82). The new nine-year compulsory education curriculum is designed overall. Subject curriculum and comprehensive curriculum have a balanced arrangement. Compulsory courses and elective courses are coordinated. These achieve balance and integration of the curriculum.

Optional courses express Western culture and thought. Westerners like to freely and independently choose their own way of life and learning (Nisbett, 2003). Building optional courses is mainly based on student interest and need, taking the individual student’s needs into consideration. Optional courses in high school have diversity and quality; they are welcomed and loved by students.

The third objective reflects Eastern culture. “Students’ lifelong learner” (Guo, 2009) reflects the Eastern culture. According to Nisbett (2003), Easterners place an emphasis on holism, while the lifelong learner is actually looking at the student’s whole life. “The relevance of the curriculum content to students’ lives” also reflects Eastern culture because Easterners pay special attention to relationships with each other (Nisbett, 2003) in their life and here this objective focuses on the relationship between the content and the student’s real life, which is also a context based idea.

The fourth objective reflects Western culture. Chinese people like to take the middle ground with contradictions (Nisbett, 2003). The style is useful for conflict resolution, but it also may be the reason that Chinese lose curiosity for things. “The relative insensitivity of Easterners to contradiction makes it less likely that they will have sufficient curiosity to become scientists” (p. 208). At the same time, in the past, a teacher’s identity with a high degree of authority meant students could not have different views and understanding than their teacher (Guo, 2009). However, Westerners are good at simple, linear ways of thinking (Nisbett, 2003) and they pursue independence and freedom of debate. These lead closer to science (Nisbett, 2003). According to this comparison, this goal shows more Western thought. Research learning, a course added in new curriculum, provides an explorative, discussion-based, experimental, debate environment for students.

The fifth objective embodies Western culture. In the past, the traditional Chinese evaluation for students was decided by examination results. That is, the grades of a college entrance examination were the student’s final evaluation. However, the new curriculum requires implementing formative assessment and summative evaluation approaches for students. Formative assessment and summative evaluation pay attention to processes and evidence and emphasize the value of the development of students. This type of assessment is developmental evaluation and people can see the development of students. This is consistent with Western ideas. Westerners emphasize reasoning and evidence (Nisbett, 2003), they evaluate student reasoning and evidence which is basic logic. In Western education, the evaluation for teachers and students is very detailed with written evidence.

In the new curriculum in China, all schools have begun to put the important behaviours of students into the final evaluation; additionally the usual test scores are included in the final score. Curriculum evaluation systems adopt the credit system and every student must obtain 144 credits in order to graduate (Zhong, Cui, & Zhang, 2001). This system is reflected in the process of evaluating students and comes from schools in the West.

The sixth objective is the integration of Eastern and Western cultures. Three levels of course management and implementation are in line with China’s national conditions. China covers a relatively large area and has a large population; each region has different characteristics. Three level courses have a direct relationship with which Chinese people attach great importance to the implementation of the background. Nisbett (2003) argued that Easterners are more concerned about the background than Westerners.

An important objective of three-level curriculum is to promote education and local economic development closely. For example, our school is located in Chaoyang District in Beijing. Chaoyang District sets up two local courses which are the Olympic Games and Chaoyang. In 2008 the Olympic Games were held in Beijing and the main venue was in the Chaoyang District. The course, Chaoyang, reflects the culture, geography, population and economic development of Chaoyang District. These two courses are the products of the social background

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and geographical backgrounds of the area, they are fit for the students in Chaoyang District.

This three-level curriculum is very consistent with the ideas of shared leadership in the West. It empowers the local level and school level with the authority of choosing educational material and resources and compiles the school-based curriculum text-books (Zhong, Cui, & Zhang, 2001).

#### CONCLUSION

The culture, way of thinking and way of life are very different between the East and West. Separately they have their own advantages, as such, the people in these two areas can learn from each other. The new curriculum reform is an educational reform with Chinese characteristics and international perspectives. Perhaps education in the future will appear as a combination of points from both the West and East. Much of the content and methods will be moving toward integration. In fact, I think that integration itself is a compromise.

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## 16. THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN CURRICULUM REFORM

### INTRODUCTION

Today's principals are constantly multi-tasking and shifting roles in curriculum reform. Effective principals are especially important for leading a school in the process of implementing a reform program. The principal has many roles, but what changes do a principal need to make according to the new curriculum reform? This paper introduces the case of my personal experience, the background of the curriculum reform and then uses change theories to analyze the reasons for the problems. What role does the principal need to play in the new curriculum reform? What challenges are faced by the principal? What strategies will assist the principal to cope with the challenges?

### BACKGROUND

#### *Internal Background: Social and Political*

Since 1985, China's economic system has been transitioning from a planned economy to a market one. China's political system has been initiating progress from a centralized state power to local democracy and autonomy diversification. These economic and political system changes have created an ideal climate for educational reform from a traditionally rigid and closed system to a flexible and more open one. The reform in education, from theory to practice, has been accelerated. As a key component of the ongoing social reform in China, the importance of education reform has been recognized by both Chinese scholars and policy makers. A widely accepted belief is that the outcomes of education reform are likely to contribute to tackling these roadblocks and are closely related to the future development of China in a global setting. Deng (1995) said, "particularly, education reform will play a decisive role in guiding China's social transition toward an open and democratic prospect" (p. 12). This is a historic mission that not only requires the support of material resources, but also, at a deeper level, calls for the devotion of intellectuals who have innovative yet realistic visions.

#### *External Background: The Globalization and Diversity of Education*

In 1937, Dewey emphasized the secular character of education, arguing "the main objective of education is to prepare the young for future responsibility and for

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success in life” (Wang, 2006, p. 4). We can study a great deal of advanced thought and vision from all over the world. The following trends for the diversification of education provide a context for Chinese educational reform. Meng (2007) stated, “Diversity of education includes educational democracy, multiplication, socialization, internalization, decentralization and lifelong learning” (pp. 583–584). Those thoughts provide the theoretical support for Chinese educational reform.

#### CASE

This is a real case of my personal experience that took place in the sharing sessions of the new curriculum reform. I asked my teachers to talk about their experiences with curriculum change. When asked “What changes do you need to make according to the new curriculum?”, a mathematics teacher responded, “What on earth does the new curriculum ask me to change? I did not want to change”. I asked, “Why?” The following was our conversation:

Teacher: Although the content and structure of the textbooks changed and they are very different from the former textbooks, the evaluation system does not change. I could use different strategies to evaluate students’ progress, but their exam scores are the only official measure evaluating their learning and performance. This deep-rooted tradition definitely constrains learning.

Me: Could you compare your current understanding about teaching compared to the understanding you held before curriculum change?

Teacher: In the past, as a teacher I had the absolute authority in teaching and learning and I always felt superior to students. I needed to strictly control students to make sure they followed the learning objectives and content I planned. Since we adopted the new curriculum, I was required to get rid of these deeply-rooted ideas. I attended training workshops, self-studied materials on the new curriculum. I am striving to have an equal relationship with students and hope they might accept my teaching easier.

Me: Might? Does it mean you are not sure if students would accept the new way of teaching?

Teacher: I am not sure. I’ve been trying to change since we adopted the new curriculum three years ago, but changes are not obvious. Accepting the new curriculum and the new rationales are very difficult because I’ve been teaching in the traditional way for a long time. It is difficult to make the change, (because) I don’t have a good understanding of the new curriculum. I am trying to make some changes, but both students and I felt changes only occurred at surface. We didn’t know how to make it happen in a deeper sense. This is also why I didn’t want to change.

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### ANALYSIS

#### *Analysis of the Teacher*

As principal of Tom Elementary in Oklahoma, Kathy Anderson (as cited in Trail, 2000) commented, “I really do think that a principal’s role changes depending on the number of people you are dealing with, the experience and background of the teachers and the setting in which you are talking with them” (p. 5). I wanted teachers to talk about their experience in curriculum change. The mathematics teacher said he was not clear about the demanded changes by the new curriculum. He did not feel prepared to change because all of his preparation was for the final test. His sense of curriculum change came from his notice of the changes of the required textbooks. He felt forced to change because of the top-down approach in administering teacher training related to the new curriculum. His resistance to curriculum implementation and lack of ownership in the new curriculum was clearly implied in his word. Evans (2001) wrote that:

Change means different things to different people; in fact, it usually means something different to each and every individual. The key factor in change is what it means to those who must implement it and that its primary meanings resistance: it provokes loss, challenges competence, creates confusion and causes conflict. (p. 21)

The teacher’s unsettling sense of confusion in curriculum change was obvious. This led to very little change in practice because of the loss in changing direction. His beliefs and perceptions on teaching and learning were being compelled to change through certain training sessions and techniques, which he believed were required. “In China the teacher’s teaching practice is constructed through the process of being a student, becoming a teacher and being a teacher in a very traditional teacher-centered and exam-based educational environment” (Zhong, 2006, p. 375). This type of teaching and learning has long been supported by the school structure and valued by the community. It is natural for teachers like him to follow preordained paths, especially when the educational environment and structure has not been changed much.

#### *Description of My Experience*

I recalled the feeling of confusion when I was going through curriculum change as a teacher. I want to talk about my experience in curriculum reform. In 2001, I began the new curriculum reform when the Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline was released by the Ministry of Education in China. To cope with changes prescribed in the new curriculum, I was required to attend many professional development sessions and workshops provided by local curriculum consultants and university professors. Many of these sessions were organized in the form of lectures on why and how it was important to change both teaching and learning styles. Based on the new educational thoughts I learned from these workshops, I made some changes to my teaching at once. However, I always felt these changes were superficial. These workshops did not help me make the transformative

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changes described in the new curriculum outline. I was confused. Guo (2009) wrote:

I often felt trapped in the pressure of covering the textbook content, the tensions between demonstrating a teacher's authority and facilitating students' active learning, the constraints of the exam-based evaluation system and the unclear boundary of being an expert or facilitator in students' learning (p. 13).

I want to change; "change is everywhere. No one can escape change in his or her work or personal life" (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 3). At the same time, change has to hurt; it is never easy. I had some confusion in curriculum reform also. What are relationships among the new curriculum, the students and the teacher? What was meaningful learning and teaching? Did students really learn something if I did not cover the textbook content? What were alternative ways to evaluate student learning other than tests and exams? What were the meanings of inquiry and collaborative learning? Calabrese (2002) argued that "change is essentially a two-fold process that consists of both personal and organizational layers and suggests that change agents need to clearly understand that the path to effective and sustainable organizational change is through personal change" (p. 5). So, I understand if we want to implement the reform, we need to change teachers.

#### THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN THE CURRICULUM REFORM

The school is the unit or center of change. School effectiveness shows that the principal strongly influences the likelihood of change. As a principal, the first task of facing the dramatic changes was to understand why the teachers needed to change and what the expected changes were. The disconnect between the rationale of the new curriculum and the practice in reality enforced teacher resistance towards change.

Change is essential and important for any person. Change is a useful method of innovation. For a person, if he/she wants to absorb some new ideas and thoughts, first and foremost, he/she must change himself/herself. The teacher needs to change. The principal needs to change also. I reflected upon my management of the school in this case. What role does the principal have in the new curriculum reform? How are the changes? What changes does a principal need to make according to the new curriculum? The principal may have many roles in the school. Trail (2000) stated,

Research tells us that principals are the linchpins in the enormously complex workings, both physical and human, of a school. The job calls for a staggering range of roles: psychologist, teacher, facilities manager, philosopher, police officer, diplomat, social worker, mentor, PR director, coach and cheerleader. The principal ship is both lowly and lofty. In one morning, you might deal with a broken window and a broken home; a bruised knee and a bruised ego; a rusty pipe and a rusty teacher (p. 1).

First, the principal should become a collaborator in the Curriculum Reform. Trail (2000) said:

If the principal is as collaborator, there are many benefits of sharing the responsibility and the rewards of leadership with teachers, administrators, students, parents and community members. The most immediate benefit of leadership as a collaborator effort is that principals not only share the lead, but shared the load. (p. 4)

In the collaboration process, principals do not turn decisions over to individuals or groups. Instead, they remain active in the decision making process, giving themselves one vote when the decision is made. "By taking a collective responsibility for leadership, the school's staff can help prevent a collapse of the reform program in the face of shifting personnel, even through a change of principal" (Trail, 2000, p. 4). Becoming a collaborator is very important for the principal in the curriculum reform.

Second, the principal should share leadership in the curriculum reform. Liz Melson, a principal at Jefferson High School in San Antonio, recognized both the value and challenge involved in shared leadership: "It is the key to building the capacity of the group to implement change. But it takes a lot of effort and work to be successful at true collaboration" (Trail, 2000, p. 5). Teachers and the principal plan, design, research, evaluate and prepare teaching materials together. "By joint work on materials, teachers and the principal share the considerable burden of development required by long-term improvement and make rising standards for their work attainable by them and by their students" (Fullan, 2007, p. 98). How can a principal encourage shared leadership? Trail (2000) wrote,

The principal typically takes a particularly strong leadership role when initiating shared leadership within a school. Although implementing shared leadership takes effort and planning, spending time discussing how to accomplish this goal may not make much sense to busy teachers. Frequently, it is more effective to let teachers see the value of sharing leadership firsthand by identifying an issue or a problem and using a collaborative approach to solve it. (p. 5)

Trail (as cited in Trousdale, 2000) said, "My reward is watching others apply these newfound skills with confidence and success and in the process, my own work load is lessened" (p. 5). In this case, implementing shared leadership is very important for the principal in the curriculum reform.

Third, mobilizing the enthusiasm of teachers is the role of the principal in the new curriculum reform. "Both individual teacher characteristics and collective or collegial factors play roles in determining implementation" (Fullan, 2007, p. 96). Teachers are the direct participants and practices in the process of implementing the new curriculum. Teachers will eventually determine the trend of curriculum reform because the change of teaching philosophy, teaching and learning methods in the new curriculum reform, which requires teachers to have the self-giving devotion and creative work. First of all, principals should understand and care about the hardships of creative work of teachers. In order to mobilize the enthusiasm of teachers in the curriculum reform, the principal's role needs to change from past command instruction to service for teachers. The principal



should respect teachers, take into account the benefit of teachers, supply the service for teachers and do not say “no” to teachers. The principal should allow teachers to reduce other tasks other than teaching; the principal needs to try his/her best to satisfy the reasonable demands of teachers and solve the confusion and problems of teachers in the curriculum reform. I do not solve the confusion and problems of teachers in this case; the teacher does not want to change. Second, the principal should set up the bridge of family life and work for teachers. Understanding the working conditions of teachers and their family life through regular conversations, especially the various difficulties teachers encounter, the principal needs to help them by all means. In the end, the principal should emphasize the consciousness of ownership of teachers, continue to encourage teachers, establish the confidence of teachers and let teachers actively participate in the new curriculum reform. If the principal can correctly deal with the change of roles, the new curriculum reform will be successfully implemented. Mobilizing the enthusiasm of teachers in the new curriculum reform is the role of the principal.

Fourth, resolving doubts of teachers is the role of the principal in the new curriculum reform. The principal should let teachers understand the perspectives of the curriculum reform, avoiding one extreme or the other. For example, the teaching method of the new curriculum makes many excellent traditional teachers feel embarrassed. In effect, some of the traditional teaching methods are effective. But many methods are no longer appreciated. It becomes the responsibility of the principal to let teachers understand the perspectives of the curriculum reform and help teachers combine traditional and modern teaching methods. With the evaluation systems of the new curriculum, some teachers are unsure whether to pay attention to students’ academic records or all-round development. The assessment of the curriculum reform is adopted, opposing traditional closed tests. In fact, closed testing is still an efficient measurement to evaluate the mastery of descriptive knowledge, but the old evaluation system is no longer fit for the needs of new curriculum because of its weaknesses. The reform of the evaluation system has become the first item in the future curriculum reform. This is a challenge for the principal, allowing teachers to combine the evaluation of the traditional and the new curriculum. “New meanings, new behaviours, new skills and new beliefs depend significantly on whether teachers are working as isolated individuals or are exchanging ideas, support and positive feelings about their work” (Fullan, 2007, p. 97). Some thoughts of the curriculum reform are distorted by teachers. As a principal, it is a challenge for me to try and turn a teacher’s conception. Resolving doubts of teachers in the new curriculum reform is the role of the principal.

Fifth, correctly understand and implement the curriculum reform is the role of the principal. The policy of the new curriculum reform was passed in 2001. The principal has to understand and implement it. Why is the principal necessary for effective implementation? How does the principal effectively implement the policy? “The principal is the person most likely to be in a position to shape the organizational conditions necessary for success” (Fullan, 2007, p. 96). In the process of implementing the curriculum reform the principal plays a key role.

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There are many factors affecting implementation. “The more factors supporting implementation, the more change in practice will be accomplished” (Fullan, 2007, p. 86). To correctly understand and implement the curriculum reform is the role of the principal.

## MYPOINT OF VIEW

When I faced the problems and confusion of teachers, I reflected upon the curriculum reform. I think China’s New National Curriculum Reform wants to achieve better results. It needs the cooperation and efforts of all departments. Only one department will not be able to resolve these problems. From a social level, we must establish a good social atmosphere of public opinion and promote the social environment of the reform development and success. People should establish a correct conception of talent; they should recognize what kinds of people are successful. What kind of teacher is a good teacher? What kind of students are good students? What kind of school is a good school? What kind of person is most happy? When a person has wealth, money, power, will he/she be happy?

The entire society must establish a correct evaluation of the concept. From the national level, the government must provide the necessary policy support and guidance. At the same time, the Ministry of Education should actively reform the university entrance exam. The government requires all provinces and all schools to strictly implement the curriculum reform. The State Education Commission should inspect and monitor the implementation of the curriculum reform. From the school level, it is an important task to actively promote the curriculum reform. Curriculum reform needs all the teachers and students to attend, but the principal is the first responsible person; the principal should lead the whole school faculty and staff to seriously study the spirit of curriculum reform, change concepts and pay attention to practice. The principal needs understand how to implement the students’ comprehensive quality education. At the same time, the principal should establish a reasonable and objective evaluation system. If the assessment system does not change, curriculum reform is difficult to implement and it is only a superficial change. The principal’s role should change accordingly in the curriculum reform.

As a teacher, one should care about every student and develop school-based curriculum. “A teacher has an obligation to care about every student; good teachers care and good teaching is inextricably linked to specific acts of caring” (Lisa & Debra, 2003). Teachers’ teaching conception and idea decides the aspect of curriculum reform. It is very important for the success of the curriculum reform. From the parental level, parents want their children to have a bright future. But what is the children’s greatest need and what kind of child is successful? Is it at the expense of the health and happiness in exchange for a textbook on the ready-made knowledge? Textbook knowledge is important, but the most important thing is whether a child has a happy life, whether he /she is happy facing life? This is my opinion.

## CONCLUSION

The design and implementation of a new curriculum is entrusted as the mission by people and government. It is the right and duty of the principal to design and implement the curriculum reform. The principal should play a key role in the curriculum reform. At the same time, it is a challenge for the principal and their leadership. When the principal is faced with confusion and challenges, what strategies will the principal use to cope with the challenges? Nevertheless, the curriculum reform has deeply impressed numerous families, schools and the public. They began to become more concerned with the existence and values of students as human beings. What is success for people? What is true happiness? Values are based not only on wealth, power and happiness that are obtained through the mastery of book knowledge or through examination competition. Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living. It is a big challenge for the principal's leadership to ensure students achieve a fabulous future of happiness in everyday life while at school.

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PART V

**RESEARCH ON TEACHER PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

## RESEARCH ON TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This segment focuses on research and addresses the professional development of teachers and affirms that teachers' professionalism is the core factor affecting quality of education. The challenge facing teachers is the mismatch of that which society demands as teachers assume new roles with little preparation. On one hand, education leaders train teachers with reflective and critical thinking tools and transformational learning theories to promote professional development of teachers and improve teacher education capacity; on the other hand, educational administrators must also be cognizant of the transitional needs in daily teaching and learning practices. It is essential for teachers to have the time necessary for ongoing hands-on practice.

Wang Jinghong, (a Vice Principal) wrote in *Approaches To Promoting The Professional Development Of Teachers: A Case Study of a Classroom Teaching Improvement Project* that professional practice and reflection can foster a school environment for teachers' professional development with shared vision, that enables and promotes the professional development of teachers; Lu Yanhui (a Director) in *Vocational Teacher Training In The New Curriculum System* presented strategies for three levels of national, regional and school professional development. Lu intended to further explore professional development methods for vocational teachers and strategies used in his school.

WANG JINGHONG

## **17. APPROACHES TO PROMOTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS**

### *A Case Study of a Classroom Teaching Improvement Project*

#### INTRODUCTION

Based on the case of “Classroom Teaching Improvement Project,” which is carried out in a secondary school, this paper demonstrates that the key in promoting teachers’ professional development lies in action and reflection. It proves that their classroom teaching has been improved in the process of the new curriculum reform. It also shows that it is more important to pay attention to the practicality of the program according to the schools’ context in the course of change.

Hall (2006) said, “no one can escape change in his or her work or personal life” (p. 3). In a sense, stability is relative and change is eternal, especially in the current situation of curriculum reform. Teachers are facing rare opportunities to improve their approaches, as well as serious challenges. This paper approaches the context, process and impact of a project from a realistic perspective in which it displays the effective implementation that enhances the quality of teachers’ professional development in their practical work. In addition, this paper will offer some other solutions according to the case study.

#### CASE

I work at a key school in Beijing including junior and senior high schools, which has three campuses with 48 teaching classes, over 2,000 students and 200 teachers. Most of the teachers have abundant teaching experience and large responsibilities. A few years ago, our school faced three major problems. First, many teachers focused on lecture-style teaching in the classroom, while they paid less attention to independent students learning ability. Second, they ignored the effectiveness of classroom teaching. Third, many students had difficulty in their studies in our school because of enrollment expansion. As a result, these issues all caused classroom teaching to become challenging.

As a result, the principal established the “Classroom Teaching Improvement Project” from 2005 to 2009. At first, he gave a lecture to introduce its importance and necessity to teachers in order to raise their awareness of the problems. He also suggested we focus on a common vision to ensure all teachers were aware of what to do and how to do it. In the second phase, each teacher analyzed his or her own teaching strengths and weaknesses as well as improving goals and measures

through reflection. After communicating with teacher in each subject department, they created their own personal improvement plans. In the third phase, each subject department was regarded as a unit to build a study community. Teachers took various approaches such as lectures, discussions and questionnaire surveys to improve further teaching strategies and methods in order to optimize classroom teaching. The subject department heads took charge of inspection and supervision of the implementation. They guided relevant student work in the term of the project. Through the project, teachers completely examined the ideas they taught and thought, reflected critically on their teaching practices and improved their strategies of teaching and learning. To a great extent, the project promoted teacher professional development in our school.

#### ANALYSIS

Too often there are many changes in the process of school development. Under the new circumstance of curriculum reform and enrollment expansion, teachers are required to update their concepts and transform their pedagogies otherwise they cannot meet the educational reform trend. Faced with these challenges, the principal made positive changes. He put the project into practice and motivated teachers to improve their teaching attitudes and actions in order to influence student learning outcomes. Meanwhile, he demanded that teachers focus on classroom teaching and reflect seriously and in a timely manner on each lesson. Generally, teacher professional development was promoted with continuous improvement. Subsequently, the teaching quality of the whole school was enhanced.

#### *Clarifying Priorities*

When a change occurs, “everyone involved must be clear about its purpose, policies and procedures. Communication about these subjects needs to be lucid, vigorous and repeated” (Evans, 1996, p. 77). For the “Classroom Teaching Improvement Project,” it was likely to be successful because teachers knew why the reform was being undertaken, what its content was and how it was to be carried out. If school leaders wanted to engage teachers in professional development, they had to ensure that teachers clarified their own advantages and disadvantages. In this way, teachers could have a specific orientation of improvement.

Fullan (2007) said, “many changes...required a sophisticated array of activities, structures, diagnoses, teaching strategies and philosophical understanding if effective implementation is to be achieved” (p. 91). A vice principal of our school designed a set of worksheets and let teachers fill them out in timely manner so that teachers could keep them as records of daily improvement; to compare with and reflect on individually. Therefore, as leaders, they must clarify what might need to change for the school and teachers in the process of teacher professional development.

The following factors are necessary to help recognize these opportunities in advance:

prior recognition of a professional-development need, perhaps as a result of appraisal; agreement that engaging in a particular activity will provide a learning opportunity relevant to that need; planning for an experiential learning cycle of setting targets, providing support, self-evaluation and feedback from others (Eraut, 1995, p. 625).

In this case, the principal had a clear understanding about the problems of classroom teaching in the school that he would undertake to improve. He recognized that it not enough for teachers to only give students lectures instead of fostering their self-directed learning abilities. He advocated that teachers should be facilitators that inspire students to use collaborative, creative and inquiry-based learning styles. The key of the issue was to have an upswing in teacher actions. When teachers were exactly aware of what happened prior, they made an individual plan and took proper measures to make changes. As a result, teacher professional development had been conducted effectively.

### *Creating an Atmosphere of Desiring Change*

Evans (1996) stated, “desirability depends crucially upon dissatisfaction and relevance. ...Innovation, in other words, must meet a perceived need in a promising way” (p. 77). Reform must be to mobilize teacher enthusiasm so that they want to do so. In this case, because of the enrollment expansion, most teachers faced more difficulty in teaching. Only through exploring classroom teaching and changing their own behaviours, could they overcome the crisis. Teachers wanted to solve the problem in order to be competent in their jobs. Their self-reflection was used as a push to improve teacher professional development. Each teacher researched his or her own teaching methods and strategies and reflected on his teaching philosophy, behaviours and effectiveness. Reflection can encourage teachers to find their own merits and demerits, have a more rational understanding of themselves and students and take more effective ways to encourage students learning.

Fullan (2007) argued, “both individual teacher characteristics and collective or collegial factors play roles in determining implementation. ...a teacher’s psychological state can make him or her more or less predisposed toward considering and acting on improvement” (p. 96). Only teachers can change their teaching ideas and behaviours as well as deploy real performance and fully play their roles in the project.

### *Is There Relevance and Feasibility?*

“Desirability’s close companion is feasibility. Teachers must not only want to implement a change, they must feel that they can achieve it” (Evans, 1996, p. 85). Fullan (2007) stated, “success is about one-quarter having the right ideas and



three-quarters establishing effective process that sort out and develop the right solution suited to the context in question” (p. 104). These points indicate that implementation is more important.

In the project, the principal took the analysis of example-based lessons as a breakthrough to improve classroom teaching. In this analysis, teachers can reproduce the real situation of classroom teaching. Constantly improving the strategies of the classroom, they can expedite advancement in their teaching.

Case analysis, lesson plans or teaching narratives are all records of the teaching process. They are the typical aspects of reflecting upon educational theory and teaching skills. These records can include vivid stories of the student learning process, interesting designs or issues in teaching practice including unexpected events in the classroom. Through analyzing, refining and concluding, teachers can constantly improve and become thoughtfully aware.

It is significant to have more practicability and operability for teachers in the process of implementation. To be practical, changes must not only address important perceived needs, they must also come with useful how-to-do-it measure (Fullan, p. 72). Leithwood (1992) recommended that programs that promote professional development of survival skills, the basic teaching skills, instructional flexibility and expertise, collegiality and leadership and participatory decision making. Specific requirements and concrete approaches can effectively accelerate teacher professional development.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

From this case, we gain many helpful ideas. As school leaders, we must pay more attention to professional development and construct more platforms so as to provide adequate quality and availability of materials and other resources for teachers in the process of professional development. As we know, any change is a process, which is full of conflicts, complexity and unpredictability, especially in school.

Evant (1996) explained, “if anything, such change is even harder in schools than in corporations, since schools are by their very nature less entrepreneurial and more bureaucratic and since most are mature rather than new institutions” (p. 50). As a result, school leaders should think over some important factors at the beginning of implementation, especially teacher professional development.

#### *Build Shared Vision with Teachers*

Developing a shared vision for the school can motivate students, staff and community alike. It is not simply for the leaders; it is for the common good (Deal & Peterson, 1994). First of all, teachers cannot form a common vision in the school unless leaders have a clear development plan. Furthermore, every teacher should make a personal progress project, such as the “Zone of Proximal Development,” which Vygotsky put forward as part of his theory. He believed that student development has two levels: one is the current level; the other is potential

development level. The gap between the two levels is the zone of proximal development. In the process of teaching, teachers should focus on the students' zone of proximal development, mobilizing student enthusiasm and potential, exceeding the gap and achieving the next development level. In fact, I believe teachers also need to have such a "Zone of Proximal Development." Each teacher has different abilities and characters. Everyone wants to enjoy the happiness of success; however, the task cannot be too hard to achieve it. Moreover, schools should build a platform for everyone through carrying out various activities to help them achieve their goals. Besides personal plans, teachers need to have visions and dreams of what could be in the next three to five years. A clear image of individual professional development and the school's goal will pull them forward, such as the aim of model high schools.

If there is a common vision in an organization such as aspirations, ideals and goals, people will learn and work hard in their pursuit of excellence. In such an organization, no one is forced to work but they do with sincerity. A common vision will provide the school with a strong cohesive and united force. "Professional development is conceived of as a collaborative process" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

#### *Distribute Leadership and Empower Teachers*

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) argued, "distributing a large proportion of leadership activity to teachers has a positive influence on teacher effectiveness and student engagement" (p. 342). I consider that it is significant to promote teacher professional development.

Schools need to construct organizational platforms to support teacher leadership from several important aspects. First, teachers must arrange time to cooperate with others so that they can improve their professional knowledge and skills. With sufficient collaborative time, they can communicate with others and have a good relationship with each other. Secondly, school leaders should give teachers opportunities to enhance their professional capabilities. Many studies have shown that if teachers want to have effective leadership, they must have some key skills including improving their own teaching skills, participating in school decision making more often and guiding the professional development of others. More importantly, through empowering teachers, they feel confident to clarify their own roles and have a clear orientation such as leading a team, taking charge of a seminar, or supervising a program. In addition, it is an essential condition for distributing leadership that principals should give proper inspiration and encouragement to motivate teacher enthusiasm.

Hall (2006) said, "when a mandate is accompanied by continuing communication, ongoing training, on-site coaching and time for implementation, it can work" (p. 12). Therefore, mandating can promote teacher professional development autonomously.

*Create the Proper System in School Culture*

School culture is an important part of a school which is shaped in the process of a school's construction and development by both staff and students. It is a school's spirit and material form that indicates the civilization level. An excellent school culture plays a decisive role in a harmonious campus. If school leaders want to promote teacher professional development, they should regard enhancing teaching quality as the uppermost goal. Evans (1996) stated, "excellent organizations, those that achieve and sustain high levels of performance, do so in part because of their members' unswerving commitment to their goals" (p. 46). A positive system produces benefits. Teacher professional development should be a system to build. School leaders should consider many factors which influence teacher professional development. Villegas-Renmers proposed (2003), "... the goals, objectives and purposes of professional development; the context in which professional development is to take place; ... the models, techniques and procedures to be implemented; the costs and benefits of professional development; ... a process to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of professional development on different constituencies; a determination of infrastructure support for professional development" (p. 16).

Hall and Hord (2006) stated, "the context of the school influences the process of change" (p. 14). As school leaders, we should focus on both equipment and human resources to drive teacher professional development. Additionally, we should always plant hope in the hearts of both teachers and students. With a positive attitude, we can work hard and encourage schools to develop. School culture can provide teacher professional development to sustain improvement and competitiveness.

CONCLUSION

"Teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (Glatthorn, 1995, p. 41). As school leaders, they should pay more attention to teacher developmental process. Through studying this case, we find that principals need to figure out how to clarify what is the priority, create a desired atmosphere and provide much more pertinence and feasibility in the process of promoting teacher professional development. It gives us some solutions such as shaping a shared vision, distributing leadership and creating the appropriate system in the school culture in order to achieve sustainable teacher development.

"Simple changes may be easier to carry out, but they may not make much of a difference. Complex changes promise to accomplish more, but they also demand more effort and failure takes a greater toll" (Fullan, 2007, p. 91). Under the circumstances, teacher professional development is not only complicated but also inevitable; however, teacher growth can facilitate sustainable school improvement.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

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LU YANHUI

## 18. VOCATIONAL TEACHER TRAINING IN THE NEW CURRICULUM SYSTEM

A good schooling needs a good curriculum, a good curriculum needs effective implementation and effective implementation needs a high quality teaching team. The work-process-oriented curriculum is a challenge not only to the students but also to the teachers and administrators. The curriculum, the teaching environment and the teaching method and strategies are very different from the current curriculum. The current vocational teachers and teacher professional development does not match the new curriculum well. The vocational teacher's professional development becomes a challenge to educational administrators. In this paper, I will use some theories to analyze some effective vocational teacher professional development methods and strategies in my school and explore some new vocational teacher professional development methods and strategies.

### BACKGROUND

With the development of the market economy, the improvement of science and technology, the adjustment of industrial restructuring and the changes of the labour market, vocational education is facing a new task. The General Office of the State Council suggested that "the purpose of vocational education is to serve the socialist modernization, to cultivate hundreds of millions of high-quality workers and tens of millions of highly skilled specialists" (General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2005).

With the rapid modernization process occurring in Beijing, the economic and social development put forth new and higher demands on vocational education. The vocational school's primary goal is personnel training. To a certain extent, curriculum determines the quality of personnel training, the viability and the development value of vocational schools (Wang, 2001); therefore, secondary vocational schools must continue to develop curriculum, in order to adapt to the capital's economic and social development and the requirements of personnel training.

Curriculum reform in the vocational schools mainly refers to curriculum development, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation and curriculum management (Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, 2009). This new curriculum reform is a big change and it "is a process, not an event" (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 4). Since February 2008, we have spent more than one year to develop the work-process-oriented curriculum. The new curriculum emphasizes that vocational education should stem from real work; the learners obtain knowledge through

L. YANHUI

work. It integrates the learning process, working process and the ability and personality development of students (Yang, 2009). It aims to cultivate the professional skills of the students so that they can be successfully employed after graduation. It can also adapt to new technological progress and development in professional positions.

From the fall semester of 2009, the new work-process-oriented curriculum began to be implemented in some secondary vocational schools as an experimentation program. As mentioned above, the new curriculum is a challenge to not only the students but also the teachers - the educational philosophy, the teaching content, the teaching environment, the teaching methods and strategies are very different from the traditional curriculum we use now. The new curriculum requires the vocational teacher to have not only a solid theoretical foundation, but also practical skills and adaptive teaching methods and strategies. Most of the vocational teachers have university degrees but little work experience because they were trained in local universities with poor practical facilities. As pioneers of the new curriculum reform, teachers, especially the vocational teachers, are some of the most important factors of successful implementation. How to train qualified teachers has become to be a challenge to vocational schools administrators.

#### THE STATUS QUO OF VOCATIONAL TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN BEIJING

Professional development, which is also called in-service training or “continuing education” (Bolam, 1986), is a term used to cover a broad range of activities designed to contribute to the learning of teachers, who have completed their initial training. It sometimes used to describe moving teachers forward in knowledge and skills (Craft, 1996, p. 6).

In 1995, the Beijing Municipal Congress Standing Committee released a policy: The Continuing Education Requirements of Professional and Technical Personnel. According to this policy, all professional and technical personnel should participate in no less than 72 hours of continuing education each year on new theories, technologies, knowledge and methods. Participants can take refresher courses, seminars, academic lectures, academic exchanges, visits, self-assessment and other forms of self-study. Many types of courses and programs were coming forth to meet the needs of the continuing education.

In 2007, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education released the views of the primary and secondary school teacher’s continuing education during the “Eleventh Five-Year” period. This document first analyzes the current situations and problems which educators are facing and then brings forward the requirements for continuing education during this period. It emphasizes that all teachers should participate in the public required and elective courses and professional required and elective courses. According to this document, the purpose of public required courses is to strengthen the awareness of the teaching profession and to improve teacher educational professionalism. It includes two courses: the basic skills of teaching and the educational technological capabilities of primary and secondary

teachers. The main purpose of professional required courses is to consolidate teacher academic knowledge and to improve teacher professionalism of subjects. It should be carried out according to the teachers' growth stage, levels of professional and technical position, the subject of distribution and different needs of teachers at all levels. The main task of public elective courses is to meet the requirements of teachers and to improve teacher educational professional standards. The content of this part is universal and can update knowledge, expand vision and encourage thinking. The main task of professional elective courses is to develop expertise and to improve the teaching ability of teachers. It can broaden professional knowledge, enhance the teachers' understanding of a particular subject, update subject knowledge and improve teaching skills.

In order to implement this policy, there are four levels of training programs: national, provincial and municipal, district-level and school-based. In 2007, the guidance of organizing and implementing the secondary vocational schools key teacher professional training was released by the Office of Ministry of Education and the Office of Ministry of Finance. The national training programs are conducted in different teacher colleges. Each training term lasts for two months and not less than 260 hours. It covers three major aspects. The first is "teaching theories and methods" (about 20% of the total training hours), including the current policy of vocational education, the advanced theory and methods of vocational education and teaching and the advanced technical means of education. It emphasizes that training should be combined with teaching practice and focus on the teaching strategies and curriculum development. The second is "professional knowledge and skills" (about 30% of the total training hours), including the latest professional and theoretical knowledge, cutting-edge technologies and key skills and professional skills training. The third is "industry and business practical activity" (about 50% of the total training hours), including advanced technology, production processes, management systems and culture, job specifications and personnel requirements. After training, the trainees pass the relevant examination and obtain the professional qualification certificates. The effect of this level training is welcomed widely by trained teachers; however, only the backbone of the vocational teachers can participate and the number of participants is limited. Due to the long training duration, many schools are not willing to send their teachers to participate in such a training program, which may affect regular teaching. Sometimes there is "no linkage to the needs of departments or schools" (Craft, 1996, p. 8).

Most of the provincial and municipal training programs adopt "training in the training base", "industries and business practice" or the combination of both, including characteristic lectures, simulated teaching, discussion, field observation and skills training. In Beijing, this training is undertaken on weekends for a whole semester, so it has less impact on normal schooling and is welcomed by the school administrators. However, this type of training mainly focuses on the new philosophies and theories of the vocational education and "it has limited impact on practice with little or no dissemination or follow-up" (Craft, 1996, p. 8). As a result, many teachers' passion for participation is not very high.

At present, the district-level training programs are undertaken in the teacher colleges and are mainly for the academic teachers, such as Math, Chinese Arts and English. It focuses on the new national curriculum reform and some public elective courses. They rarely address the training of vocational teachers for the secondary vocational schools. Even if vocational teacher training is involved, it is only the training of the new philosophies and theories; it is not very useful for the work-process-oriented curriculum and the teaching practice. Most of all, “courses are random in terms of participation and content in relation to the needs of individual schools” (Craft, 1996, p. 8).

School-based training program should be responsible for all teachers, including the academic teachers and vocational teachers. It should pay more attention to vocational teacher training. Due to factors such as the restrictions on outstanding teachers, the limitation of equipment and the numerous and scattered specialties, vocational teacher training is very difficult to get everyone involved in the same program. On the other hand, “it attempts to cater for people at different starting points and, therefore, is unable to satisfy all participants equally well” (Craft, 1996, p. 8). The training is not effective.

#### EXAMPLES OF VOCATIONAL TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES

Joyce and Showers (1988), two American experts in professional development, emphasized that the most effective training activities should combine theory, modeling, practice, feedback and coaching for application. They presented the professional development model as the following: presentation/theory impact on awareness; demonstration impacts on awareness and knowledge; practice in simulated settings impacts on awareness and knowledge; feedback on performance impacts on awareness, knowledge, skills and application; assistance in the classroom impacts on awareness, knowledge, skill and application. Craft (1996) provided other methods, including “action research, working group discussion, planning activities, visits to other schools, visits to museums/galleries, teacher placements and job-shadowing or rotation” (p. 22).

Axmann (2002) stated that the strategy and three components of in-service vocational teacher training (including self-organization, combining theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and teamwork) are in line with current best practice in Germany. Teacher training takes place in different training venues and is divided into four categories: teaching and training in the schools; the accompanying program set up by the schools; cooperative training sessions between the institute and the schools; peer group work.

In the province of Quebec, a proposed training plan has 120 credits, divided into two blocks: the first 90-credit block leads to a special teaching license and the second 30-credit block leads to a teaching diploma. The activities offered as part of the training program are: “an introduction to teaching; psychopedagogical and andragogical training; practical training during teaching placements in the school



system; professional development activities in the trade to be taught or the teaching” (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2002).

#### THE METHODS OF VOCATIONAL TEACHER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

In view of the existing training system in China and successful vocational teacher training in Western countries, as well as my own practice, I believe vocational teacher training in secondary vocational schools may adopt the following forms and methods.

First of all, as the highest level of the vocational teacher training program, the national-level professional backbone teacher training should be well maintained. There are some difficulties in conducting this type of training. On one hand, trainees are at different levels. On the other hand, departments with the same or similar names may be very different in professionalism. Therefore, training at this level should focus on professional theories, new teaching methods and basic professional skills. Additionally, an evaluation and tracing mechanism should be established to ensure the effectiveness of training.

Secondly, vocational teacher training at the provincial and municipal level can be addressed by means of the improving the quality of vocational school teachers. This is a big project, including nine sub-projects, such as young backbone teacher programs, innovative professional team programs, training base programs, part-time teachers funded programs and encouragement of obtaining professional qualification certificates funded programs. Vocational teacher training also can be addressed as the experimental projects of work-process-oriented curriculum reform. This is a huge change for Chinese vocational schools. In this process, principals should play different roles such as psychologist, teacher, facilities manager, philosopher, police officer, diplomat, social worker, mentor, PR director, coach and cheerleader (Trail, 2000, p. 1). Teachers will have new roles that require working in groups and teamwork: not only as teachers but also as counsellors in vocational education, inventors, educators, organizers and administrators (Axmann, 2002).

“What teachers know and what they do are the most important influences on what students learn” (Nieto, 2007, p. 303). I believe the new educational philosophies and new strategies must be expanded among teachers. On the other hand, although the academic scores are not very good when the students enrolled, we should let our teachers know what Schramm-Pate, et al. (2006) suggested that “the power of positive thinking can cause the impossible to come true” (p. 45), “focusing on weaknesses will not bring out potential” (p. 49), “by communicating in a manner that will enable them to be their best, we impact students and it does not matter if the child is actually ‘smart’ “ (p. 50). If we have confidence in our students, all of them can be successful. Secondly, taking full advantage of the improvement project of the quality of the vocational school teachers, organize all the vocational teachers and mandate participation in different training programs to improve their professional knowledge and skills. Thirdly, vocational teachers who participate in national-level training should be good at summarizing experience

and sharing it with other vocational teachers so as to achieve improvement together. Fourthly, vocational teacher development can be addressed in the development of the innovative professional team, the development of department and the development of the practice and class environment. During these processes, they can learn from the experts of equipment companies, the curriculum experts and other professional experts. Furthermore, schools should create opportunities for vocational teachers to participate in real work so that they can learn new skills and methods directly. This is what they need most because many vocational teachers lack real work experience. Communication among teachers and different schools is also an important method of vocational teacher training. Finally, a shared research program is also a very effective vocational teacher training method. During this process, all of the researchers can improve their professional knowledge and skills and a mutual spirit of cooperation can be developed. Of course there are other methods, such as action research, working group discussion, planning activities, visits to other schools and teacher placements.

#### THE STRATEGIES OF VOCATIONAL TEACHER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Vocational teacher training is not an individual thing but a school business. The individual needs of vocational teachers should conform to the needs of the development of departments and vocational schools. First of all, school leaders should pay more attention in vocational teacher professional development. "Administrator leadership is essential to long-term change success" (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 10). They should know how vocational teacher professional development affects the development of departments and schools. They should have their own beliefs and values on teacher professional development, following the gateway to learning: "what I believe is important; what I am dealing with now; what ideas are out there; what others think about me" (Walker, 2007, p. 267). "The leadership needs to be distributed to those who have, or can develop, the knowledge or expertise required to carry out the leadership tasks expected of them" (Harris, et al., 2007, p. 343).

Every teacher should have their own professional development programs. All teachers, especially vocational teachers, should clarify their own professional goals according to the development of departments and schools; otherwise they will lose their way in their professional and lack the inducement of development. "An organization does not change until the individuals within it change" (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 7). Educational administrators should help vocational teachers build their development goals in order to reserve human resources for the long-term development of schools and professionals.

Furthermore, corresponding policy support for teacher professional development should be supplied; "interventions are the actions and event that are key to the success of the change process" (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 8). Policy is a supporter to guarantee the opportunities, time and funds of vocational teacher training. Policy is also a guide to lead the direction of vocational teacher

professional development by evaluation and encouragement systems. Moreover, educational administrators should cultivate the professional learning community in schools from following dimensions: “shared values and vision, collective learning and application, supportive and shared leadership, supportive conditions and share personal practice” (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 26).

## CONCLUSION

The work-process-oriented curriculum reform is a big change for secondary vocational schools. The effect of vocational teacher training will ultimately determine the success or failure of the new curriculum reform. In order to implement the change smoothly and successfully, we need a transformational leadership, a distributed leadership, a shared leadership and an interactive leadership. I believe that if we foster an effective professional learning community, our schools will become sustainable and the new curriculum reform will be successful.

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