School Curriculum Leadership and Development under Transformation in Taiwan

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Abstract

School-based curriculum has been the main theme since Taiwan’s 1-9 curriculum reform in 2001. The second round of curriculum reform, 12-Year Basic Education Curricula, will be implemented in 2019, between 2014 and 2019, is the “period of the post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum reform”. According to the New National Curriculum, schools gradually adjust their curricula and reform their teaching. Through interviews and literature analysis, this study first explores the changes from 2001 to the present and clarifies the context of curriculum development in Taiwan. Second, it probes into the expectations of teachers regarding the New National Curriculum. Third, it describes how the leaders of two elementary schools led their members to conduct reform and transformation, while maintaining school-based curriculum development during the period of the post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum. Finally, it analyzes the characteristics in curriculum leadership and the school-based curriculum development of the two schools during the period of the post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum. This study finds that the starting points of curriculum leadership of the two schools are different due to their different school cultures; however, both schools lead teachers to become learners, care about the studies of students, provide resources and support, maintain flexibility, and embrace diversified voices. In terms of the school-based curriculum, while both schools have their respective characteristics, both observe the changes in environment and current affairs, return to the cultivation of student quality, gradually adjust teaching based on their existing experiences, and jointly construct school curricula through cooperation.

Key Words: curriculum reform, curriculum leadership, national curriculum, school-based curriculum, Taiwan
1. Introduction

Taiwan has initiated two major curriculum reforms since 2000. First, it implemented the Grade 1-9 Curriculum in 2001, while the national curriculum shifted its attention from knowledge and concept to student ability. Second, it issued the 12-Year Basic Education Curricula (New National Curriculum) in 2014, which is to be implemented in 2019. The key points of reform lie in literacy-based education, which integrates knowledge, ability, attitude, and value, as well as curriculum exploration on integrated subjects/special topic/theme, and transformation of the school-based curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2014).

The school-based curriculum has been the main theme since Taiwan's curriculum reform in 2001. The second round of curriculum reform, between 2014 and 2019, is the "period of post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum" of Taiwan's curriculum reform. According to the New National Curriculum, schools gradually adjust their curricula and reform their teaching. School-based curriculum planning and development require leadership and collaboration. How can curriculum leadership be reformed during the transition period? What are the thinking, strategies, and methods? What patterns does curriculum have? What are the differences and similarities, as compared with the school-based curriculum development during the period of Grade 1-9 Curriculum?

In the above context, this paper aimed to describe and offer temporary annotation for curriculum development and curriculum leadership. This study first analyzes the changes from 2001 to the present and clarifies the context of curriculum development in Taiwan. Second, it probes into the expectations of primary teachers for the New National Curriculum. Third, it describes how the leaders of two primary schools led their members to conduct reform and transformation, while maintaining school-based curriculum development. Finally, it analyzes the characteristics of curriculum leadership and the school-based curriculum development of the two schools.

2. Research Methods

2.1 Interview

Thinking determines one's attitude, while attitude determines one's action. Through interviews, this study explores the thinking of Taiwanese teachers regarding the New National Curriculum during the period of the post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum. Interviews are classified into group and individual interviews.

The interviewees of the group interview include 26 teachers: 14 teachers from Sunlight Primary School and 12 from Moonlight primary schools. The affirmative inquiry strategy is employed1 to discuss three questions regarding the New National Curriculum—want the least,
want, and want the most, in order to learn their expectations for the New National Curriculum of the teachers of primary and middle schools in Taiwan.

The interviewees of the individual interviews are Principle Chen of the Sunlight Primary School, and Principle Hsu of the Moonlight Primary School, who in charge of curriculum in Taiwan, and the interviews were conducted on October 11, 2016.

Table 1. Distribution of Interviews of Principals and Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>School</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Sunlight</td>
<td>Moonlight</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher interviews</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interview questions included:
1. What were the problems of and reflections on school-based curriculum development?
2. How can curriculum leadership be reformed during the transition to the period of the post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum?
3. What are the thinking, strategies, and methods? What patterns does the curriculum have?
4. What are the differences and similarities, as compared with the school-based curriculum development during the period of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum?

2.2 Document Analysis

The contents of document analysis include the curriculum information on the websites of the two schools, as well as the curriculum experience and documents shared externally by the school members.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Reflections on the Experience of Curriculum Reform

Hargreaves (2003) pointed out that, since 1980, curriculum reform has experienced several trends: education standardization, the gradual increase of core subjects (e.g., abilities in liberal arts and science), restrictions on curriculum designs, and educational management policies with high-risk test performance. In terms of global trends, Sahlberg (2011) argued that the introduction of educational standards, indicators, benchmarks, portfolios of evaluation and testing, and restricted curriculum contents drove the services of the educational system to be subjected to performance, thus, education has become a commodity.

Kliebard (2002) referred to the era of the curriculum "shopping center"; it seemed that anything could be included in a curriculum, resulting in continuous curriculum changes. This phenomenon is related to the infinite expansion of the scope of curriculum; it is legitimate to join this competition, as there are many competitors, followed by frequent reforms. As early as 1971, Eisner predicted the dilemma of curriculum reform, and pointed out that these "new..."
curricula" basically started from the view point of discipline. When immersed in such varied disciplines, and implementing new curriculum schemes, professionals found the "plug it in anywhere" course scheme to be the most effective, as it was assumed that the contexts of all schools were the same. However, this method of curriculum establishment neither integrated the new curricula in different fields, nor considered its influence on existing curriculum schemes (Eisner, 1971), and this lack of purpose resulted in all-encompassing curriculums, meaning when stakeholders were willing to exert pressure, any topic could be included in a curriculum. When the interests of discipline experts override that of the study of students, it deviates from the purpose of the existence of a curriculum.

In the face the aforementioned problems, some countries have begun to reflect on curriculum reform, which has been taken for granted. Taking Japan and Singapore for example, both countries adopt the educational policy of "less is more" and intend to give full play to creativity and innovation. Regarding education in Canada, Alberta has the best performance, as it has abolished standardized assessments and loosened educational control rights to produce a system with more intelligent education responsibility that truly cares about effective learning. Even in England, traditionally a country with incomparably intensive testing, under the appeal of teachers, its government began to terminate standardized testing in primary schools (Sahlberg, 2011).

This same trend occurs in Taiwan, and the proposal for a New National Curriculum contains several core principles: decrease without increase, and diversified adaption and flexibility. However, as the major topics of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum are constantly increased, in terms of the New National Curriculum, awareness had been raised to the increasing problems, as pointed out by Kliebard. Unlike the separation of the past, the major topics of the New National Curriculum are integrated in each field (Ministry of Education, 2014). The integration of major topics is a favorable condition for future curriculum promotion, as it can reduce the number of interviews during the promotion of topics, as well as relevant and complicated regulations; however, this is only a small part, as curriculum reform requires cooperation between systematic thinking and relevant factors and mechanisms.

### 3.2 Curriculum Leadership toward Post-Standardization

Kliebard (2002) analyzed curriculum reform in the United States from the perspective of curriculum history, and proposed that curriculum reform must be combined with school structure, and always remain consistent. Fullan (2010) also argued that, school reform was better than fractional reform. For instance, the supportive system for a school could ensure that the school supports the teaching of teachers and the learning of students in an organized manner, rather than requesting that teachers face various challenges. Sahlberg (2011) deemed that school was the only place to truly conduct educational management and relevant matters, rather than politics.
It can be seen that school is an important base for curriculum practice and the focus of curriculum reform. However, marching toward post-standardization, schools are not "required" to meet relevant standards or features, but must have sufficient resources and supports to create an appropriate and suitable environment for teaching and study.

3.3 Transformation of Taiwan Education Context

Taiwan's Grade 1-9 Curriculum was initiated in 2001, which was the peak period of globalization, and all goods, customs, trade, education, talents, and circulation were borderless. The period also witnessed increased outsourcing and the first round of party rotation in Taiwan. At the end of 2014, after the release of the New National Curriculum, the curriculum reform of Taiwanese primary and middle schools entered the period of post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum. Over the past decade, there are some characters reflect on the context for Taiwan curriculum reform:

1) Due to the impact of the low birth rate, parents have more rights in school choice

Due to the impact of the low birth rate in the past decade in Taiwan, the new Grade 1 pupils in 2001 was 320,000, which is reduced to approximately 183,000 in 2017 (Ministry of the Interior, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2016). However, the number of schools has not been reduced, thus, the education selection rights of parents changed from a concept to their daily reality. The quality of a school determines its student enrollment, as well as the turnover rate of teachers.

2) The changing School atmosphere

Meanwhile, in response to teacher taxation, the weekly classes of primary school teachers was reduced to 16 to 18, and class tutor fees increased. Most teachers preferred teaching rather than involvement in administration. The so-called escape from school administrative was caused by numerous evaluations, rising education topics, and insufficient understanding and support between administration and teachers, thus, school administrative personnel became tired and exhausted from running about on missions.

3) Challenges of school-based curriculum

Schools are not passive educational institutions, and should use the curriculum as a strategic tool and development goal (Halinen & Holappa, 2013) to win the recognition of students and parents. In combination with the rights granted to schools to create curriculum since the period of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, curriculum development has become the main mission of school management. However, the quality and development progress of the curriculum of each school differs, depending on its situation, the attitudes of leaders and teachers, as well as their thinking and practices. In particular, in the context of the low birth rate, it becomes even more important to determine whether school-based curriculum can drive the quality of school education.

The Grade 1-9 Curriculum has been implemented since 2001, thus, the school-based curriculum for primary schools has been executed for 17 years, and can be classified into several types: 1) Demonstrating school characteristics, such as reading, science and technology,
natural ecology, local literature and history, and sports; 2) Designing short-term and local school courses with certain characteristics and considering temporary activities as the school-based curriculum; 3) Regarding a school-based curriculum only as the paper work and documents submitted to the Ministry of Education; 4) Developing a school curriculum framework according to the school vision, it is long-term and comprehensive. However, as time passed, teachers became fatigued, they lacked change, they were confined by the teaching materials, and they did not concentrate on teaching; 5) The same curriculum development experience as the aforementioned schools. However, the challenges faced by teachers were the same, and should be adjusted according to school vision, curriculum framework, and the times.

4) **Mutual influence of educational theory and practice**

   Over the past decade, various educational theories have emerged and are practiced in teaching, such as, learning communities, group cooperative learning, flip education, online learning, mobile learning, outdoor exploration, design thinking, and Design for Change (DFC). If schools have good and correct leadership, or serious and professional teachers, a positive learning atmosphere will be formed. Theory and practice are mutually intertwined and beneficial, and many teachers share their knowledge, cooperating with University professors, and working together to deepen the atmosphere of co-learning.

5) **The developing of teacher professional learning communities**

   Internal force is the key point to drive the dramatic change in education (Fullan, 2011). Teachers’ professional learning communities, where teachers independently decide the topics of professional development and seek like-minded partners, is a beneficial policy implemented by Taiwan over the past decade. From interest to expertise, they gradually focus on curriculum design and improve the learning of students.

6) **Attending the classes of other teachers—Observations of other teachers’ classes**

   During the implementation of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum in Taiwan, Teacher Professional Development Evaluation (TPDE) was formed, encouraging teachers to observe the classes of other teachers, have meetings before observing other classes, and offer feedback after observation. Many schools leaders organized learning communities to prepare lessons, observe the classes of other teachers’, and have lesson discussions, thus, it has become a part of teachers’ teaching life.

7) **Independent and professional growth of teachers without the limits of space and time.**

   Due to the convenience of the Internet, the teachers’ professional learning model is also changing from the top-down organization of ability improvement to cross-school group study by teachers, as well as cross-school and online preparation of lessons. Some teachers set up relevant platforms to share their daily teaching experiences, thus, cross-regional, online, and
the physical expertise growth of teachers is closer to the willingness, pragmatics, and timeliness of the study of adults.²

The above-mentioned educational styles result in different contents during the transitional period from the post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum to the New National Curriculum. As the context of curriculum development of primary schools differs from that of the past, the visions of teachers regarding school curriculum also change.

4. Results

4.1 Teachers' Expectations for the New National Curriculum

Teachers' thinking affects their actions, thus, 26 teachers considered and discussed the three dimensions of "want the least", "want", and "want the most" after reading the new curriculum, which is summarized and analyzed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Want the least</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalism</td>
<td>Change just for the change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acting without meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too much paper work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Too many expectations on teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Flip education with no consideration of students’ ability</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too many administrative tasks and odd jobs distract teachers from teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The mindset of teachers did not change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Mandatory promotion disregard the context of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Textbook center, fixed learning content</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superficial curriculum or activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student learning</td>
<td>Study for the purpose of competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inefficient assessment and exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curriculum</td>
<td>Develop various courses in order to improve students’ interest and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum shall be refined (to be more structured) to reduce repetitive content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum and instruction combined with multiple assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>support teachers to improve competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>open mind and cooperate with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead student holistic learning by exploration and practicing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy, listening, and inspire students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancement of the autonomy of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce competition through cooperation and creation of win-win situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Embrace multicultural culture, and connection with the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Students have motivation and passion for study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students are cultivated to learn in an active manner and explore solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shift from competition to co-learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participate in various real situations and learn different skills not limited to subject knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²This was a gentle, but resolute, institutional reform. In 2015, the director of a national middle school in the mountainous region of Taiwan initiated a workshop for teacher expertise growth. Within just two years, over 7,000 teachers participated in the workshop. Nearly 100,000 teachers in Taiwan participated in online teaching communities (the total number of primary and middle school teachers in Taiwan was approximately 200,000), which stimulated the heat of independent study of teachers in the history of Taiwan, and this heat continues (Wang, 2017).
Kliebard (2002) argued that, if reform is a lack of purpose or only for the purpose of "public display", curriculum reform would be "disgorged" by the current school structure and culture. The opinions of the 26 teachers are consistent with the above statement. Regarding the factors of "want the least", "want", and "want the most" in terms of the New National Curriculum, teachers, students, curriculum, and the relevant supportive system should not be separated. Teachers want neither formalism nor reform just for the purpose of reform, and they dislike the interference of non-teaching affairs, ridged curriculum, and competitive and standardized test. In terms of "want" and "want the most" regarding the aspect of students, teachers hope that students can learn autonomy, develop their potential, and cultivate their competency. Teachers must have more autonomy, as well as qualitative and professional growth, in order to help students learn in a more flexible and competent manner. With respect to the curriculum and support system, they hope that the curriculum can be more flexible, teachers can be more trusted, focus on teaching and student learning.

4.2 The stories of Sunlight Primary School and Moonlight Primary School on School-Based Curriculum Development

The following stories of school-based curriculum development are mainly based on interviews with Principle Chen of the Sunlight Primary School and Director Hsu of the Moonlight Primary School. Through information analysis and summarization, the stories are told according to three aspects: a. Problems and reflections of the school-based curriculum. b. Practice of curriculum leadership c. Development of school-based curriculum. This researcher
edits and supplements the stories on the premise that the meanings are not changed.

1) Sunlight Primary School

a. Problems and Reflections of the School-Based Curriculum

The school has more than 1,000 children in 60 classes, which should be noisy; however, at four o’clock in the afternoon, when I was in the office of the principal, I felt the surrounding quiet; no students remain at the school. Teachers prefer comfort and are almost separated from the administrative personnel. As the school is close to emerging residential communities, it is not affected by the low birth rate. Teachers do not have a sense of risk, and they often asked me, "Why change?" Parents do not have many opinions on how teachers treat their children, because they just want to pass this period of time. In such a context, how can teachers improve? During the period of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, the school also had school-based curriculum, fields, curriculum with characteristics, topics, etc. The excessive teaching materials combined in school curriculum. Teachers failed to understand the meaning and purpose of the curriculum and they felt lacked stimulation and passion after the long-term implementation. (Lin, 2016) Moreover, new teachers in the school also failed to understand the original school-based curriculum, thus, the curriculum was not spread among the majority of students. While ability-oriented teaching is stressed, the teachers lacked sufficient abilities, and their knowledge was separated from the actual scenarios, meaning teachers were teaching material to students they already knew, and students lost their passion for study.

The habits of the teachers and the contents of the school-based curriculum are fundamental issues that Sunlight Primary School must face. Fortunately, in such a context, when one part shakes violently, the other parts remained unchanged, which renders the entire system stable. Thus, I have time to handle each part step by step. Another issue is that the schools are not linked, as is extremely difficult to create a network in the school.

b. Practice of Curriculum Leadership

I always ask the teachers two questions. First, whose school is this? Second, who shall be responsible for expertise? Without external monitoring, how great would the tests be? Such questions deconstruct the habits of the teachers and create cultural dialogue. Meanwhile, I try to cultivate teacher leaders, encouraging experienced teachers lead other teachers.

In regard to the training of teachers’ expertise, I changed the mandatory seminar on Wednesday afternoons to optional. Three courses are simultaneously opened, and teachers are asked to select one to attend and share what they learn with their peers. The remaining time is for the community of teacher expertise. Currently, 10 communities are simultaneously held on Wednesday afternoons3. In the second year, several communities will begin to share with each

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3 IN Taiwan, Wednesday afternoons are the primary school teachers’ professional developing time because primary school students stay at school from 7:50 to 12:00 on Wednesday.
other. In the third year, all the communities will become involved in preparations, observations, and discussions lesson.

This transformation is very interesting; to flip a school, the establishment of school culture is vital. First, stories and images are used to create empathy for the life community of the school, as stories are often told to create empathy. I recorded a video of a guard who was sweeping. All the people were gone. Only the old man was there, sweeping. IS THERE A POINT HERE? I let the team watch the video, and I shared the stories of teacher and administrative personnel works. Second is dialogue culture. Third is the desire for expertise. To create a dialogue culture and stimulate teachers' desire for expertise, I must change the teachers' attitude toward study.

In the past, over 100 teachers corrected the homework of students while attending seminars. They did not know what good study was, thus, I divided them into small communities. They were supposed to improve the expertise they needed, and would be responsible for their study. If the seminars we arranged had no relationship with the life and teaching of teachers, how could we flip the school? I often think about how to create the possibility of expertise growth of teachers and how to touch the teachers. I make the teachers become students again, in order that they can perceive the feeling of students. If I did not turn teachers to students, student-centered teaching practice would be impossible.

Over the last decade I learned how to keep balance between outcome and faculty development. We need to find the truth rather than take unnecessary pains to study the necessity of reform. I try to let everyone enjoy creation at work, and explore wonderful experiences in practice. To reform or not, in fact, is just an external form. The key is to identify the essence of education and find who we are.

c. Development of School-Based Curriculum

In recent years, Sunlight Primary School has endeavored to change from being teaching material-oriented to competency-based in terms of the school-based curriculum. Through teacher professional learning community and curriculum development meetings, the study model for the Sunlight Primary School is established, which is problem-oriented and involves cooperative study, hands-on experience, and public participation. Furthermore, the core competency has been transformed to the school-based curriculum target of each grade of Sunlight Primary School. Teachers can respond to the school-based curriculum target during teaching, and design a school-based curriculum with certain characteristics.

Teacher is essential for curriculum reform. Only teachers can generate a curriculum. To differ from the Grade 1-9 Curriculum in the next period of transformation, and achieve qualitative changes in the teaching mode, the key lies in the setup of the environment and culture.
2) Moonlight Primary School

a. Problems of and Reflection on the School-Based Curriculum

Moonlight Primary School is a relatively new school, founded only six years ago, and each year, it employs many new teachers. As the teachers are not familiar with each other, the cohesion among them is being formed. As the school culture is being formed, teachers’ life status and devotion to teaching will vary. The school is located in the emerging residential communities in Chupei, and many students’ parents are engineers at the scientific park, thus, they have many opinions regarding school education. Though parents have high social and economic status, they do not necessarily have correct opinions regarding education.

Recently, the international education curriculum is the school-based curriculum of Moonlight Primary School, and school-based ability indicators have been established. However, teachers lack reflection and feedback on their teaching.

b. Practice of Curriculum Leadership

The education philosophy of the school focuses on cultivation of the practical abilities of students. To this end, the school must balance the actual situation and expectations regarding education, as moderate balance and persistence are necessary for the cultivation of students to be significant. Moreover, the Principal must consider the cultivation of the quality and abilities of both teachers and students (Moonlight Primary School, 2017).

In terms of curriculum leadership, times without classes shall be planned first through class sharing meetings, field meetings, school-year meetings, and strategies. The school holds one curriculum development meeting and one field seminar monthly. Curriculum discussion is also included in the school-year meeting. The topics and interactions of these three meetings are planned in advance for the entire semester, and the curriculum issuance meeting is the highest unit decision of the school. The curriculum development meeting demonstrates how to discuss curriculum and teaching issues, and informs the leader of each field, as well as school-year directors, what topics to discuss and what strategies to apply (Interview Hsu, 20161011L5).

Meanwhile, I also designed worksheets to help the leader of each field plan their tasks for the entire semester. There are four field seminars in each semester, and these worksheets can guide them to plan the four seminars. There are two themes for discussion, including the school-based curriculum and the theme decided by each field; the four seminars must be cohesive. During the monthly curriculum development meeting, leaders report any difficulties they faced. The curriculum of field development shall also be discussed during the school-year meeting, and we apply the operation model of community to the seminar. At the end of each semester, each field will share their findings or outcomes after hands-on experience, and the final target must be the publication of discussion results.

I find that, due to the above efforts, the teachers gradually learn the working model with directions. During the first semester, teachers only shared what was related to their own
curriculum; however, during the second and the third semesters, the teachers started to discuss how to assess and adopt diversified modes. Through this process, school communities were gradually formed, and leaders appeared. Initially, three to four teachers actively requested they setup the community; however, as more and more teachers wanted to have a community, they requested mutual cooperation.

The feedback of curriculum leadership is collected during its implementation. In terms of disputes during the process, my strategy is to raise questions to each community at an appropriate time. No matter whether I agree or disagree with the results, I accept them, as there are no preset answers. Different opinions can be further discussed and modified, and reported at the curriculum development meetings. In fact, the school only needs to implement curriculum development meeting properly, and field seminars will cooperate with the former. As teachers work toward the same target, it will not have high demands for their time. Through discussions, teachers reached a consensus on school curriculum, thus, there was no need for avocation. In this way, they understand what they are discussing and know how to operate. Our current status includes both advantages and disadvantages, and some teachers have taken action. To me, teachers are supposed to take the initiative, and I used this strategy to successfully flip the teachers in the school. The teachers in our school are great. They did it.

Over the past years, we had fun, enjoyed the process, and were excited to see what would happen during the 12-year curriculum guideline. As long as we encourage and support each other, we can definitely achieve our goals. What I see is attention to students, the challenges faced by them, and the true abilities they need for their study. In the future, a 17-year or 18-year curriculum would be the same for me; no matter how the system changes, I absorb and try to have good experiences. There is no one correct answer, only suitable ways for each school, and I look forward sharing with all Hsinchun County schools after next year.

c. Development of the School-Based Curriculum

Three years ago, the school had just begun to create their vision and curriculum framework through the various practices of teachers, as a school-based curriculum needs the participation of the entire school. The strategy first focused on student's learning materials, and I personally designed a set of curricula, including learning sheets and PPT; however, the difference lay in the spirit of exploration. I allowed the students to think and practice many things, and share after learning, encouraged teachers to try new things, advised teachers not to worry, and suggested they assign small tasks to students who were interested. At the end of the semester, all teachers and students shared their experiences and results.

After practice, the teachers modified their teaching materials, and provided me with feedback, which was the first outcome. Second was to flip both teaching and learning. Teachers found that most of the students did not listen to what they taught, and were restless in class; however, when the teaching mode was changed, the students were eager to learn. I encouraged
the teachers to shift their attention and encourage students to complete tasks of interest to them, rather than forcing them to concentrate on study.

Later, as the curricula of other fields were altered, the school curriculum began its transition. On this basis, I find that the spirit of the school curriculum is close to the core quality of the New National Curriculum, both of which are student-centered, respect differences, and allow students to make choices based on their interests. Under the school curriculum framework, teachers could gradually change the themes and connotations of the curriculum, as based on the interests and needs of students. Teachers learn to practice the curriculum, rather than implementing teaching materials without targets.

In addition to continuous curriculum practice, we gradually established indicators for the quality of school-based curriculum, in order conduct in-depth cultivation of quality students. During the curriculum transformation, tools and tables are provided to guide teachers to think about certain issues: "What do you think is the most important element in the school-based curriculum? What do the students do?" After this table is completed, they continue to think about the core qualities: "What are the core qualities we should practice? In combination with the study performance of the New National Curriculum, what do the students have now, and what do they need? What are they lacking? What do they need to improve?" Tools are used for this transformation, and the most essential quality indicators of low, middle, and high grades are analyzed by focusing on the students. Regardless of changes in the environment, teachers shall stress the study of students and the curriculum.

5. Conclusion

Sunlight Primary School and Moonlight Primary School are located in Hsinchu county and Hsinchu city, respectively, and have different foundations and cultures, and the leaders of school curricula lead their teams to form school-based curricula. The characteristics of curriculum leadership and school-based curriculum development are analyzed and described, as follows:

5.1 The Characteristics of Curriculum Leadership

1) Perception, dialogue, community, cooperation, flexibility, and diversity are the common elements in curriculum leadership.

The curricula leaders of the two schools have the characteristics of post-standardization transformation, high awareness of curricula, perceive school cultures, utilize changes according to the needs of teachers, activates curriculum development meetings, and uses the sharing end of each semester to strengthen the communities. They help and lead teachers to work together towards their goals, stress the reflections of teachers on teaching, listen to different voices, have professional dialogues, and gradually improve the professionalism of the curricula and teaching. Work teams with diversified opinions are an inseparable part of school curriculum innovation.
In particular, in the face of difficulties in curriculum teaching, diversified and different voices are necessary, which is consistent with that of Friedman (2017), who advocated that, in addition to communities, diversity is a significant basis for reform. School curriculum leaders shall constantly summarize and integrate the thinking and practices of teachers, summarize their visions, practices, and quality indicators, and provide feedback to teachers to drive school-based curriculum transformation.

2) Differences in the entry points of curriculum leadership: Sunlight Primary School started from communities, while Moonlight Primary School started from curriculum.

Though the leaders of both schools have similar characteristics, due to different school cultures, they started from different points. For instance, Sunlight Primary School is large scale, teachers have few interactions, the Principal stresses communities, uses multi-level professional communities to allow teachers to exchange with each other, cultivates community leaders, and narrows the distance between teachers. In contrast, Moonlight Primary School is a medium-sized new school, where Director Hsu leads the teachers to work with and share the learning materials of students. This school breaks through the boundary between administrative personnel and teachers, encourages teachers to try new things, embraces all kinds of possibilities with an open attitude, and drives teacher growth.

3) Turning teachers into students, and cultivation of empathy and identity

Sahlberg (2011) pointed out that reform methods that are too rational could not be successful. Without emotion, pure science, knowledge, or political interests would never be enough to succeed, as innovation requires strength, which comes from emotion and identity. Sunlight Primary School leads teachers to become students again, perceive the feelings of students, and introduces different growth methods to teachers. Though dialogue, Moonlight Primary School guides teachers to understand the status of students from the perspective of students. The curriculum leaders of both schools attempt to transform the role of teachers. When teachers became students, they perceive the feelings of students, other teachers, and themselves. The inner feelings of teachers are the basis of empathy and identity, as well as the willingness and ability to guide student studies.

4) Focusing on student studies and leading teachers to return to the nature of teaching and learning

The leaders of both schools lead their teams to focus on student studies, which echoes the proposition of Fullan (2007). Teachers are encouraged to discuss their teaching practices during seminars, publicly share their practices and experiences, and focus on meaningful teaching affairs, thus, student study courses are more specific to improve practice.

Both schools consider the nature of study, adopt student-centered curricula, help teachers understand the feelings and needs of students, and understand the expectations of administrative personnel and needs of teachers. When teachers see students actively learning during class, and
accumulating and recording knowledge, teachers are willing to learn to guide students to conduct self-study.

The curriculum leadership of the two schools returns to the nature of teaching and learning. Teachers are guided to develop their expertise, which demonstrates the sustainable operation of curriculum leadership, and displays the nature of teaching and learning, as advocated by post-standardization, and thus, conducts reform at their own step by step pace (Chen and Kuo, 2012).

5) **Demonstrating and offering resources and support to help teachers achieve their goals**

During school-based curriculum development, the demonstration of curriculum leadership is indispensable. The two schools have minor differences in their demonstrated aspects: Sunlight Primary School demonstrated how to lead communities and asked key questions, such as "Whose school is this?" and “Who shall be responsible for expertise?”. Moonlight Primary School demonstrated how to conduct exploration-oriented teaching, and during the curriculum issuance meeting, it demonstrated to the leaders how to guide curriculum discussions and provided support. The two schools displayed changes in the expertise growth model of the teachers; they did not use expert speeches or authority guidance, instead, they asked teachers to demonstrate to each other. Through understanding, experience, hands-on practice, and dialogue sharing, they stressed the necessity to meet the demands of various groups, provide a safe and welcoming environment, embrace various possibilities in curriculum development, offer positive power and guidance, and gradually established the curriculum and improved teachers’ abilities.

6) **Utilization of the current curriculum operational mechanisms**

The curriculum leadership strategies of the two schools lay in the utilization of the existing curriculum development mechanisms. Both give full play to curriculum issuance meetings, field meetings, and community meetings, combine the tasks of their respective school-based curriculum development, introduce key topics, and conduct qualitative dialogues and meaningful discussions. Teachers decide the meeting topics, and through field meetings, community meetings, school-year meetings, curriculum issuance meetings, and dialogues, teachers are encouraged to have common feelings on the joint development of the curriculum. Thus, the school-based curriculum became "our curriculum", rather than that of the principals or directors.

7) **The perception and commitment of curriculum leaders are key to school curriculum development.**

This study observes that the perceptions and commitment of curriculum leaders are key to school curriculum development. Curriculum leaders are expected to trigger the passion of teachers, create a culture of dialogue and a desire for expertise, create the life community of the
school, cross over limits, and allow teachers and students to understand each other. Due to their devotion during curriculum development, teachers receive the feedback of students and see different aspects of themselves. The characteristics of the curriculum leadership of the two schools are described in Table 2.

Table 2: Analysis of the Characteristics of the Curriculum Leadership of Sunlight Primary School and Moonlight Primary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry Point of Curriculum Leadership</th>
<th>Characteristic of Leaders</th>
<th>Application of Strategies</th>
<th>Common Elements</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Curriculum Development Mechanism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunlight Primary School</td>
<td>Be keen to perceptions</td>
<td>.Turning teachers into</td>
<td>.Awareness</td>
<td>.Supportive to teachers .Utilization of the existing curriculum development mechanism, including curriculum issuance meetings, school-year meetings, field meeting, and community meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonlight Primary School</td>
<td>Starting from curriculum design, and changing ideas during practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 School-Based Curriculum

The two schools have the following similarities in terms of school-based curriculum development:

1) Learning from the good experiences of the past, improving existing practices, and conducting meaningful and active transformation

During the post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum period, the two schools did not completely abandon the experience, but tried to seek correlation, improve the existing practices, and conduct meaningful and active transformation. Sunlight Primary School found that its life curriculum has the feature of quality-oriented teaching. In other words, it expanded from this field to other fields, and developed a quality-oriented curriculum and teaching model. Moonlight Primary School utilized the existing international curriculum, explored the comprehensive teaching of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, and expanded the relevant fields. The common finding of the two schools is, “The ways found by all the members of the school are the most suitable.”

2) Discovery of positioning and directions of the schools in the past, at the present, and in the future through spatial context, structure, and time
In the context of changing times and society, what types of talents shall we cultivate in the future? This is an important question that educational practitioners must consider. Moonlight Primary School and Sunlight Primary School combine spatial dimensions (including locations, overall environmental reforms, existing bases, and current major issues) and time dimensions (including bases in the past, advantages and difficulties at present, and future development directions) to confirm their respective visions, and clarify the position of their school-based curricula. Moonlight Primary School regards international education as the center of the school-based curriculum, and their goal is to cultivate students who can learn independently by integrating curriculum and information technology, and combines fields to implement the curriculum. Sunlight Primary School stresses the cultivation of talents with hands-on experience, thinking, and leadership, and gives full play to quality-oriented teaching and outdoor exploration experiences to prolong their students’ motivation and interest in study.

3) **Concentrating on the study of students is a core goal of curriculum development**

This paper finds that during the periods of the post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum and Grade 1-9 Curriculum, Sunlight Primary School and Moonlight Primary School hold different attitudes toward the school-based curriculum. During the period of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, they were committed to establishing a complete school-based curriculum and stressed curriculum development, while ignoring the input of teachers and the true and meaningful study of students, thus, teachers gradually lost their passion for the curriculum, and it became just paperwork. This phenomenon is extremely obvious in terms of Sunlight Primary School. After identifying the dilemma of its school-based curriculum, it attempted to interpret school-based curriculum development from the perspective of students. As a new school, though its international curriculum was institutionalized, during implementation, Moonlight Primary School was still concerned about the interest and demands of students at present, and encouraged teachers to flexibly adjust and modify the curriculum according to the academic performances of students.

After the issuance of the New National Curriculum, spontaneous learning, interaction, and win-win situations were stressed. Through observations of the two schools, this study finds that the curriculum development during the post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum period shifts its attention to human nature, as well as “the understanding and practice of human nature” (Chen, 2007). Attention to the study of students is both the starting and the end points. The key questions in school-based curriculum development include what quality shall students have and how teachers can grow to respond to the study of students. Such core concerns are constantly proposed during curriculum planning, design, implementation, and results publication. This is a common feature of Moonlight Primary School and Sunlight Primary School in regard to the school-based curriculum.

4) **School-based curriculum does not remain unchanged. The theme connotation will be adjusted according to the demands of students and environmental contexts.**
During the period of post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum, due to the leadership of the leaders and the improved expertise of teachers, the two schools have more flexible school-based curricula, as well as clearer directions and key points. For instance, Sunlight Primary School understands the quality of students, as based on the study characteristics of students in different grades. The quality of students is regarded as the guideline of curriculum development, which stresses quality-oriented teaching. No matter what teaching materials teachers use, or what spatial and environmental adjustments are conducted, teachers shall respond to the cultivation of quality students. In contrast, while the quality of students follows its existing framework, it begins to change its curriculum connotations and ways of learning. In terms of field curriculum, it gradually connects the existing international curriculum with core quality. Teachers also make theme connotation adjustments in line with the needs and interests of students, thus, the implementation of the school-based curriculum is changed from doglike obedience to flexible and innovative methods.

6. Conclusion--Dance in the Eye of the Storm

This paper started from the macro-perspective of global reform trends, listened to the voices of teachers during the period of post-Grade 1-9 Curriculum, shared the curriculum leadership and school-based curriculum development of Sunlight Primary School and Moonlight Primary School, and finally, analyzed the curriculum leadership and school-based curriculum of both schools. During onsite dialogue and writing, I studied according to a new mode, and learned the curriculum development, which was the focus of curriculum reform of Taiwan. It seems that, while it pays attention to understanding the characteristics of the curriculum, it stresses the understanding of human perception, practices, and cooperation, and returns the focus to the study of students. This is what each stakeholder in Taiwan needs to learn during this wave of curriculum reform.

Curriculum reform requires more experience sharing and strategic tools; however, experience and tools cannot be transplanted, but shall be used based on the context of the school. The curriculum of "the minority" shall be converted to "our" curriculum through cooperation, mutual support, and sharing.

Meanwhile, while marching toward the New National Curriculum, experts shall learn and work in a modest manner together with the educational practitioners in primary and middle schools. Professional authority exists in each field and at each stage of education; however, it is necessary to conduct cross-border study and listen to various and diversified voices, which is a possible survival mode for the generation of curriculum in the eye of the storm.

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4 Source: Dance in the Eye of the Storm by Friedman (2017). Thank You for Being Late pointed that cooperation, joint efforts, and mutual support and sharing were the operational model of study in the time of great change.
Reference


