

# Curriculum Leadership Research on the Implementation of School-Based Curriculum of Luo-Dong National Primary School in Taiwan

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**ABSTRACT.** Curriculum leadership plays an important role in development and implementation of the school-based curriculum. This study is based on the cases of Luo-Dong National Primary School in Yilan, Taiwan under the Context-Input-Process-Product evaluation model. It can be found that Luo-Dong National Primary School administrators required teachers to participate in the cycle of observation, feedback and reflection of the curriculum, helping teachers adapt to the curriculum innovation, improving their guidance to meet students' needs. This successful development of "Real Learning" school-based curriculum has certain reference significance for other primary schools especially in Mainland China.

**KEYWORDS:** Curriculum leadership, School-based curriculum, Primary school curriculum

## 1. Introduction

School-based curriculum development has been defined as "the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of a program of students' learning by the Educational Institution of which those students are members' [1]. It can be seen that the school-based curriculum is a series of teaching and learning activities carried out under the framework of the national curriculum reform and development, based on the school's own educational philosophy and the development needs of students. In many theories, the connotation of curriculum leadership is often summarized as management and administration [2].

This study is based on the "Real Learning" School-based Curriculum offered by Luo-Dong National Primary School in Yilan, Taiwan, where the author conducted a teaching internship in 2015. Therefore, the relevant information and internal materials about the school's teaching in this case study all comes from the observations during the internship. The author will propose the following three questions around the research object of this case: What form of curriculum leadership has Luo-Dong National Primary School applied to the implementation of the school-based curriculum? What are the more prominent features of this curriculum leadership in this school? Can this form of curriculum leadership be applied to other regions (e.g. Mainland china) or schools?

The author will study the implementation and development of curriculum leadership in this case under the Context-Input-Process-Product evaluation model. The Context-Input-Process-Product Model (referred to as CIPP mode) was developed by the well-known American evaluation expert Stufflebeam, based on Tyler's Goal-oriented evaluation model [3]. The CIPP assessment model will help course leaders plan the development and implementation of school-based curriculum: taking the Context Evaluation as a guidance to form a planned decision, using the Input Evaluation to develop a structural plan, establishing the implementation initiative with the Process Evaluation and evaluating the role of a future development program with the Product Evaluation [4]. This evaluation method is also corresponding with the local theoretical system of "Curricular Integration" in Taiwan. Under the CIPP assessment model, the school's leaders can build a school-based curriculum which is suitable for students' physical and mental development.

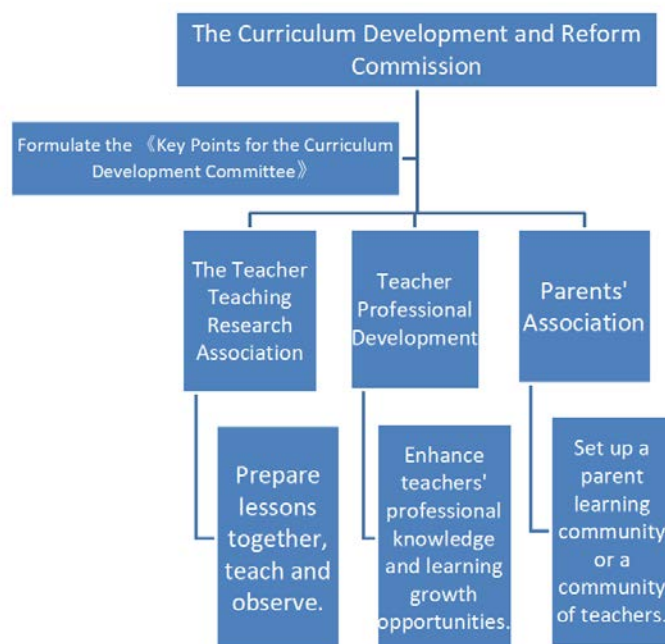
## 2. The Curriculum Development Committee Organization

Since the school-based curriculum of Luo-Dong National Primary School is organized and managed by the Curriculum Development Committee Organization of this school, this article will focus on analyzing the leadership role of this organization in the school-based development process.

Respond to new roles, challenges and issues, school leaders need to restructure an operational structure. In Luo-

Dong National Primary School, the school administrators set up a “Course Development and Reform Commission” and a “Teaching Research Council” in various fields (Fig. 1) to supervise the development and implementation of school-based curriculum and evaluate the implementation of school-based curriculum. In this context, school leadership can promote the process of decentralization within schools, is considered an important aspect of school-based curriculum development [5].

This leadership operation model tends to “distributed leadership”. The allocation of leadership activities, more democratized performance, includes both the distribution of characters and the cooperation or coordination among various departments which is different with the traditional school curriculum leadership. The members in Commission include: school administrators, teachers of grades and fields, representatives of teacher organizations and representatives of parent clubs of students. With these district and school delineations made, the district leadership team should next determine which organizational structures are needed to provide ongoing curriculum leadership [6].



*Fig.1 Curriculum Development Committee Organizational Operation Model*

(Fig. 1 Source: Ministry of Education National and Pres-school Education Department “Convergence of Consensus Rotation Learning”)

### **3. Context Evaluation - Curriculum Leadership in Curriculum Planning**

Curriculum planning is the specification and sequencing of major decisions to be made in the future with regard to the curriculum [7]. Under the guidance of the 12-year National Education Curriculum, Luo-Dong National Primary School’s guides led all school teachers to use the ORID (Focused Conversation Method) strategy to discuss and continuously improve and develop curriculum learning activities that can develop students’ core learning goals and values, and stimulate students’ passion for learning.

The school curriculum leaders organized various teachers established a “historical and cultural park”, a “humanities and art park”, a “natural science park” and a “health promotion park” on the campus to meet the school education vision that building a “Museum-style” education model.

### **4. Input Evaluation - Curriculum Leadership in Curriculum Design**

In the process of curriculum design, the School Curriculum Development Committee follows three principles: First, emphasizing on the integration of different fields and the vertical connection between the various educational stages; Second, the ability of the school administrator to shift leadership styles can provide supportive assistance between

administrators and teachers [7], such as flexibly adjust cross-domain knowledge in accordance with the normalization of teaching; Third, the curriculum design should be appropriately integrated into various topics and planned by the school in the school-based curriculum if necessary.

The school curriculum leaders offer special needs field courses and curriculum adjustments in response to the individual needs of special types of students. Teachers are required to design school-based curriculum according to the individualized education plan specified by individual counseling plans and some necessary courses must be adjusted during the teaching process if necessary. Based on this, the School Curriculum Development Committee closely contacts school teachers to prepare school-based textbooks and learning resources independently to ensure that the learning assessment method is diversified.

## **5. Process Evaluation - Curriculum Leadership in Curriculum Implementation**

Glatthorn pointed that in the implementation of curriculum changes, initiatives that do not consider the integration and updating of resources and materials are often not successful [7]. School leaders enrich books and equipment and establish an accompanying reading mechanism, to make sure the curriculum process is based on curricular goals and available resources [7]. The curriculum leaders also organize school teachers to carry out family education and training to build friendly cooperation relationships between parents and school.

One of the ways to ensure that a new curricular can be effectively implemented is to integrate effective teacher professional development programs with curriculum innovation [7]. Luo-Dong National Primary School Curriculum Leaders attach great importance to the professional development and progress of teachers. School leaders use the Curriculum Development Committee as a platform to hold regular teaching and research meetings to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the teachers on the implementation of the school-based curriculum. Each year, school leaders provide teachers with learning opportunities to enhance their professional knowledge through the organization of teacher function training activities. Through analysis in the field of school-based curriculum, a professional community is established to guide teachers to learn from each other and to study teaching strategies together. At the same time, each instructor also has the right to propose course improvement and development suggestions for his practical experience in the teaching process of the school-based curriculum.

Luo-Dong National Primary School Curriculum Leaders knew the importance of creating a network to increase professional sophistication. They established a “Teacher Teaching Platform” where teachers can share resources and interact with each other on the network to help each teacher gain professional skills while promoting communication and collaboration between teachers. This two-way cooperative operation mode is a remarkable manifestation of “democracy” in curriculum implementation and management.

## **6. Product Evaluation - Curriculum Leadership in Curriculum Evaluation**

Curriculum evaluation should be concerned with assessing the value of a program of studies, a field of study and a course of study [6]. High quality leadership is the most important part of every evaluation process. For educational planners, one of the most important aspects of leadership roles is understanding the process of evaluation and how it should be administered [6]. The Curriculum Development Committee Organization of Luo-Dong National Primary School composed of teachers to hold regularly symposiums to conduct an open and fair evaluation of the process of implementing school-based curriculum. The committee promotes the innovation and development of the curriculum by assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation in various fields or subjects, the effectiveness of teaching activities, student learning, and the effectiveness of school activities at the end of the semester in order to adjusting the direction and plan for the implementation of the school-based curriculum (Fig. 2).

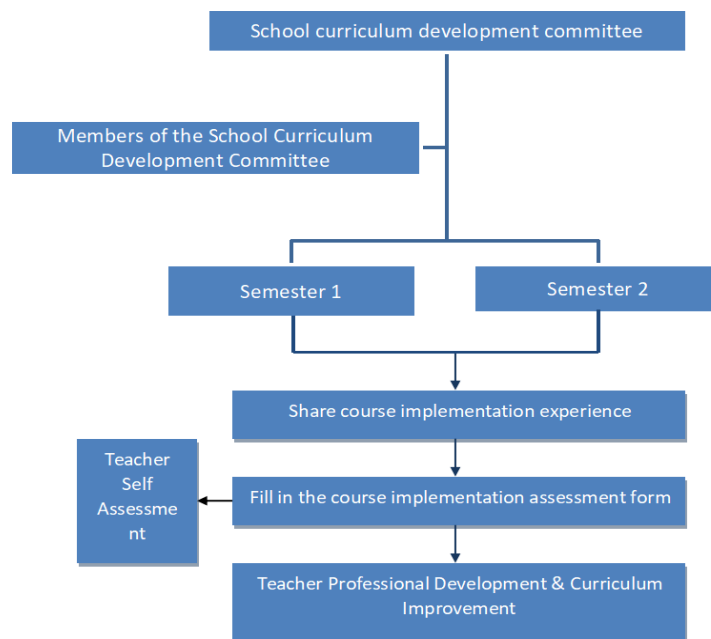


Fig.2 School-Based Curriculum Assessment Process

(Source: Ministry of Education National and Pres-school Education Department “Convergence of Consensus Rotation Learning”)

## 7. Findings

The case study demonstrates the embodiment of curriculum leadership in the implementation of school-based curriculum. The efforts from School institutions and management personnel (such as Teacher Research Council) in the development and implementation of school-based curriculum cannot be ignored.

Based on this case, the research questions at the beginning of the regression can be concluded. Firstly, the operation mode of the leadership in Luo-Dong National Primary School is “Distributed leadership”. Secondly, under the distributed leadership model, the leadership of school-based curriculum in Luo-Dong National Primary School presents the following characteristics: efficient, cooperative, cyclical and improvement. Thirdly, in the question of whether the course management mode can be copied, a variety of factors need to be considered comprehensively (for example: social background, family background, teaching level, students' needs for further studies).

Distributed leadership is not something “done” by an individual “to” others, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group or organization. It is a group activity that acts through relationships rather than individual actions [8]. In Luo-Dong National Primary School, school administrators established a “Distributed leadership” model to create a harmonious relationship for school, teacher, student and parents. Through the distribution and supervision of teachers' teaching work, school leaders closely cooperated with teachers to track and monitor student level data in real time to ensure the progress of all students and they provided professional learning support for the teachers. At the same time, Luo-Dong National Primary School Curriculum Committee continued to hold new curriculum conferences during the semester, and closely contacted with experts and scholars outside the school.

## 8. Discussion and Conclusion

As a student with internship experience on both sides of the strait, the author found that after experiencing difficult policies, theories and practical explorations, the development of school-based curriculum in Mainland China is not smooth. The implementation of school-based curriculum in Mainland China does not really incorporate the curriculum development of teachers into its framework. The curriculum development is still carried out under the “Top-down” curriculum model. The school-based curriculum is only an supplement to national and local courses. Many educators still do not know much about the true meaning, educational philosophizes, the operation, the management and evaluation mechanism of school-based curriculum.

Based on the above questions, the author makes the following suggestions for Mainland China. Firstly, national curriculum managers should decentralize some rights to various regions and schools, and establish a diverse curriculum development mechanism. Secondly, teachers, students, parents, and community members need to share the decision-making power of curriculum development. Just like the leadership model in Lou-Dong case, school-based curriculum development truly establishes cooperation and communication mechanisms. The school will become an open and innovative learning community. Lastly, teachers should participate in the discussion, planning and design of the overall curriculum of the school. Meanwhile, teachers should be empowered to become the deciders of designing teaching activities and editing textbooks as well.

The vision of a leader is critical when it comes to influencing others. The impact of effective leadership on improving the performance and effectiveness of the school's curriculum is enormous. The author believes that more and more questions will be answered in future teaching practices.

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