We care, We share and We commit: A researcher’s ongoing journey on curriculum change in Hong Kong

Marianne Koo
Department of Educational Studies
School of Foundations in Education
Hong Kong Institute of Education
Hong Kong

Correspondence
D2-2/F-10
Hong Kong Institute of Education
Lo Ping Road Taipo NT Hong Kong
Tel: 852-29487783
Fax: 852-29487794
Email: mko@ied.edu.hk

Abstract

The paper presents five close-up snapshots through the lens of the researcher on the way along a collaborative journey navigated by the researcher and participants at a time of curriculum change.

The paper introduces a critical inquiry using narratives from and conversations with a small group of primary school teachers and principals about teacher curriculum decision-making within a context of curriculum change in Hong Kong. The research question in this inquiry is framed by the problem emerging from a new challenge resulting from a curriculum change. The implementation of the TOC may be perceived as a platform for ongoing critique and reconstruction of a dynamic mix of curriculum theory, policy, research and practice.

The ‘magnified’ image of the close-up snapshots through the researcher’s reflections captures an authentic inclusion and commitment of the participants in an Action Research inquiry which is iterative, collaborative and critical. Through sharing and negotiation, ownership and participation as well as agreement and consensus, the participants and the researcher move ahead in ‘a journey of reflections and empowerment’ with hope, trust and authenticity.

The paper concludes by echoing the ‘voice’ in the question: ‘Who cares, who shares and who commits within a context of curriculum change in Hong Kong?’.

About the Presenter

Hello! I am Marianne Koo, a Lecturer in the Department of Educational Studies, School of Foundations in Education at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. I was involved in primary education for several years and have been participating in teacher education work over the last ten years. My teaching and research work are mainly about pre-service and in-service teacher education in which my focus is on curriculum theorising, curriculum inquiry, curriculum change as well as teacher and principal professional development. Meanwhile, I am doing my PhD study at QUT, Australia. I have now reached the second phase of data collection in Hong Kong. It is an Action Research which is iterative, critical and collaborative. The focus is a critical inquiry using narratives from and conversations with a small group of primary school teachers and principals about teacher curriculum decision-making within a context of curriculum change in Hong Kong.
INTRODUCTION

The recommendations on planning and implementation of the Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC) emphasise the need to increase school-based decision-making and to provide teachers and principals with a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for curriculum decisions. Its implementation has not had procedural implications for various kinds of school work. It also affects teachers’ and principals’ school lives in terms of their curriculum practice and their interpersonal and social relations that are central to their daily working experiences.

A curriculum change as represented by the introduction of the TOC in Hong Kong implies that there might be a matching or mismatching of the value positions of teachers and principals about teacher curriculum decision-making to the ‘new’ curriculum change or practice. The paradox of teachers and principals in making curriculum decisions as a result of implementing the TOC in day-to-day school practice reveals the fact that teachers are regarded as mere ‘technicians’ in implementing policy. At the same time, teachers inevitably need to make autonomous and professional decisions on issues and problems encountered in the implementation process. Teachers and principals find it difficult to position themselves within a notion of teacher curriculum decision-making. In other words, they are uncertain about the place, the purpose, the process and the content of teacher curriculum decision-making at a time of curriculum change as introduced by the TOC.

A research question emerges from the issues of a curriculum change (as introduced by the TOC) which needs to be addressed by teachers and principals for ongoing critique and reconstruction of daily curriculum practice:

At a time of curriculum change as represented by the introduction of the TOC, what are the lifeworld perspectives of a selection of primary school teachers and principals about teacher curriculum decision-making; why are these perspectives important for inquiry at a time of curriculum change; and what might be some possible implications for teacher and professional development?

Aspland, Elliott and Macpherson (1995) explain that “lifeworld perspectives” point to the underlying phenomenon of the various interpersonal and social relations that are central to teachers’ daily experiences; focus specifically on such relationships and are characterised by communicative action (Habermas, 1987). The traditional teaching and curriculum decision-making
at a personal and at a school level receive a new challenge which requires more than merely a reconceptualisation of curriculum theory, policy and practice. The new challenge as resulted by a curriculum change as the implementation of the TOC might be perceived as a platform for ongoing critique and reconstruction of a dynamic mix of curriculum theory, policy, research and practice. Ongoing improvement, critique and reconstruction of teacher curriculum decision-making are embedded in research participants’ reflections, as well as their social interactions and relations in developing more positive, warm and supportive working culture in the school.

The major premise underpinning the research problem is that primary school teachers and principals should be more responsive to curriculum change in ways that are critical, empowering and reconstructive in terms of enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning. In turn, there are implications associated with providing sustainable support to teachers and principals in their professional learning and collaborative actions. For advocates like Stenhouse (1975), Young (1990), Goodson (1990), Elliott (1991, 1998), Ruddock (1991), Grundy (1982, 1987, 1992, 1995), Carr & Kemmis (1986), Ross, Cornett & MuCutcheon (1992), Smith (1993), improvement of curriculum practice can be achieved by practitioners emancipating and empowering themselves through spirals of reflection, interpretation and action which use an iterative mix of narratives and conversations. A critical community develops in this way – one which welcomes spirited debate, collaboration, consensual agreement and reconstruction. In this research study, emancipation and empowerment of the participants will be encouraged by their collaboration and participation in a critical inquiry of the TOC. It will take the form of Action Research.

The research study, thus, aims to unfold teachers’ and principals’ lifeworld perspectives from an inside-out standpoint. It means that teachers and principals interact with and reconstruct the interpersonal and social relations on the notion of teacher curriculum decision-making by appraising the complex interplay of factors which influence teacher curriculum decision-making.

The notion of celebrating teacher centrality in curriculum decision-making and their role as curriculum makers in schools and classrooms requires practitioners to go beyond being adopters, implementors, and policy-driven technocrats (Stenhouse, 1975; Bates, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Brubaker, 1993; Smith, 1993; Elliott, 1991, 1998; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis, 1995; Grundy, 1987, 1992, 1995; Ruddock, 1985, 1991; Macpherson & al., 1995; Goodson, 1998, Hargreaves, 1997; Au, 1996). Teachers in each unique learning site have to make curriculum decisions about teaching and learning aims; teaching resources and time allocation; teaching and learning approaches; learning experiences; and evaluating aims, resources, approaches and
experiences. These complex contextual curriculum decisions require teacher professional autonomy and responsibility. Teachers are clearly curriculum decision-makers whose aim is to optimise learning opportunities for learners in a variety of learning settings and school contexts.

The research study is significant for unpacking the complexity of the TOC implementation in school contexts where teachers and principals are the key persons involved in the process of curriculum change. This study would represent the courage, vision and commitment of a group of primary school teachers and principals from two schools. Their participation and collaboration to the research study are crucial in order to achieve communicative understanding and to arrive at unforced consensus about teacher curriculum decision-making.

The research design and methodology of the study involves a choice – determining what kind of strategy and research tools are the most appropriate. The choice is underpinned by the researcher’s conception of the epistemology and ontology of the research. The methodology is dialectical as this curriculum inquiry is a knowledge-building process through questioning, arguing, counter arguing, reflecting, challenging, contradicting, reconciling, modifying and revising where what is presumably known is continually reknown. It is also dialogical as the process of research is a process of competent communication between and among communities of teachers and principals. The inquiry into teacher curriculum decision-making is a complex educational issue which should not be an individual affair involving one person. The social constructive nature of curriculum (Koo, 1999b) needs iterative, collaborative and critical inquiry. The inquiry is deliberate as it captures the features of a curriculum change as represented by the introduction of the TOC which will facilitate a group of primary school teachers and principals to unfold and reconstruct their lifeworld perspectives about teacher curriculum decision-making.


The collaborative and participative research process includes two Phases. Each Phase consists of two Action Steps. It is a spiral process designed to facilitate reflection and reconstruction intertwined with each other throughout the process reflexively. The Second Phase will be a phase of reflection and reconstruction after critical analysis of the information gathered at the First Phase. A body of information will be generated, gathered, organised, analysed and monitored during the
The research study is iterative, collaborative and critical. It is to listen to teachers’ ‘voices’ embedded in reconstructive actions about the notion of teacher curriculum decision-making within a context of curriculum change through their narratives and ensuing conversations. Narrative (for example, Bruner, 1990; Denzin, 1989; Mishler, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gough, 1994; Aspland, Brooker, Macpherson, Proudford & Kemmis, 1996; Beattie, 1997; Fenstermacher, 1997) and conversation (for example, Applebee, 1996; Feldman, 1997) will be used as a basis for interacting with and seeking to understand the lifeworld perspectives of teachers and principals about teacher curriculum decision-making.

My ongoing reflections as a researcher in the research processes become part of the data in which teachers’ stories are interpreted and analysed by hermeneutic circles of reflection, empowerment and actions. I have two main purposes of writing a reflective journal throughout the research process. First, it serves as another data source of teachers’ and principals’ lifeworld perspectives about teacher curriculum decision-making. Second, it acts as a piece of evidence to show how my actions and thinking changed over time. It gives me a ‘space’ for my voice. Writing a reflective journal helps me to build up a mechanism of collecting and managing data as well as evidence-checking. Basically, the research participants are also keeping a reflective journal. I have explained the use of reflective journals to the research participants but the writing may have to be left totally to their personal discretion.

These reflections appraise the intensity and complexity of everyday teachers’ lives. In a sense, my reflective journal becomes the written life story of my experience as a researcher – the subject for ongoing communication with this person.

There are five close-up snapshots which will be salient and noteworthy:

**Snapshot 1:**

*My reflections are ongoing throughout the research study.*
I thought it should be the time for me to document what I have done during the last eleven months of data gathering. Within the captioned period, I have gone through a dynamic mix of data gathering, study, full-time work and personal feelings. It was perfectly a fifth -geared drive to me at my workplace in order to accomplish both research study and full-time work. I haven’t tried to shift to ‘a lower gear’ even within long holidays. In regard to my research time-line and my own full-time work, I made a working schedule in last October so that I could finish the Action Steps 1 and 2 within the time frame. Yet it is very meaningful and empowering! The research is timely and in right direction! The local educational contexts were changing in such fast pace that we have been at a time of educational reform since early in the year.

I returned to Hong Kong after the confirmation of candidature in last November. I began to ‘translate’ the main research ideas into Chinese language because the language of communication used in the research with primary school teachers and principals would be Cantonese and written Chinese characters. Initially, I perceived that the ‘translation’ would not be too hard. I kept the main meanings whilst to conceptualise them in Chinese words. The ‘translation’ process was absolutely challenging! At once, I invited Critical Friend 1 who was a PhD candidate (Australia), an experienced local teacher educator and good at Chinese language and Chinese Literature studies helped to revise and comment my Chinese writings. We spent a whole afternoon and another morning session in office to work together on the ‘translation’. I carefully kept all the meanings of the main ideas of the research. At last, I made eleven pages of transparencies and inserted them into the Research File so that each participant could keep one full set of research information both in English and Chinese. Critical Friend 3 who is a secondary school teacher with a M.Ed. degree (Australia) also helped to have a look of the ‘translation’ when she received from me a copy of the Research File for reference.

The difficulties I encountered in ‘translation’ prompted me to read a few books about the culture of the east and the west, the Chinese philosophy and Continental European philosophy. It is not my intention here to distinguish cultural heritage from the east and the west nor their cultural differences to the development of the societies. From a psychological point of view, we as humans vary from one to another. As we live in a society, individual behavior is shaped by the norm standard or values which are commonly accepted by the society or the law. However, this does not deny that wherever we live in the world, we still treasure some basic or universal rights and values and which at the same time, we as the most intellectual animals have the
What is education for? This is a big but very fundamental question. Education serves the functions of personal, cultural and social development and their transformation. The question addresses issues of development and transformation, liberty and equity, order and discipline, harmony and partnership, rights and responsibilities, justice and respect, esteem and decency. It is also argued that in most cases, education is a political activity in terms of organisational structure and different value positions people have. It is not neutral nor as ‘pure’ as natural science!

In traditional teaching, teachers are used to transmit knowledge in the way that they would believe as ‘neutral’ and ‘non-political’ since they only teach what they are stated in the textbooks. But, will it be the case in the 21st Century? Will the schools be ‘insulated’ from external social, economic, political and cultural forces especially in an era of information explosion? How can education cater the needs of personal, social and cultural development and transformation? Where should the teachers position themselves in the changing society? What are the aims of education in each unique society as well as from a global perspective? There must have some values transcending cultures and societies, and over time and space. These values must be upheld by education for our children and our future. In reality, discrepancies of people’s thinking and acting, if not worthwhile, are at least unavoidable. Nevertheless, I believe conflicts in harmony since we want to retain individuality whilst not sacrificing mutual consensus and collaboration.

Last October, I began to contact the schools which I was familiar with. I called ten primary schools at different times. It was not easy to get in touch with the school heads at the beginning of school year. They were all busy at school meetings and they had to deal with the changing educational policy initiatives at the broader contexts. I had to make several phone calls to each school. One principal (NT11) told me on the phone at the first call about her frustration and helplessness to meet the demands of forthcoming policy initiatives! She was afraid of overloading the teachers by any means.

Between last October and November, I negotiated with the University Human Research Ethics Committee in order to gain approval of my research in Hong Kong. All the research participants and two critical friends have signed two copies of Letter of Acceptance. They kept one personal copy while I kept the other signed one.
I sent the Research File 1 by post to the principals who showed an initial interest on the phone. I usually waited another two weeks before I called the principals again to hear their views. Several principals replied me that they were too busy of school work and they had also received many requests of having research in schools from local researchers. One principal (NT9) told me that the school had a few large research projects in hand that teachers complained the heavy workload due to research on top of teaching. He apologised that he really could not afford time to take part. He counter-proposed me to give him questionnaires so that it would be easier and faster for him and other teachers to ‘help’ me by filling in numbers or giving ticks! This, of course, was antithetical to my research approach.

Another school (NT4) had to move to a new site temporarily because of school remodeling and expansion. The principal told me that all staff were busy setting up the school. They could not afford time to take part. Finally, five out of ten school principals were interested in taking part. But, they wished to let the teachers choose whether they would participate or not. It was speculated that some principals were afraid of overloading the teachers due to the policy initiatives. I offered to have an Introductory Research Seminar. It was the presentation of the research proposed to all teachers at school so that they could decide whether they took part or not. Each teacher received a clear holder of Research File for information sharing. The time allocated to each seminar varied in order to meet each school’s needs. One seminar was scheduled before the staff meeting and I was allowed to have thirty minutes. Another one was arranged after school during the examination period. The third one was assigned between the break of the am and pm school which was between 12.45 pm to 1.15pm. I was able to have a one-hour session in the other two schools. The teachers and the principal often asked two or three questions at the end of the seminar. Most of the teachers listened attentively but were very silent. I perceived that they were interested to critically reflect on the changing policy initiatives. Some teachers asked me to photocopy the newspaper cuttings which presented critical views and represented teachers’ ‘voices’.

One potential school (NT2) had twelve teachers including the principal. One of them was a substitute teacher. It ended up having three teachers and one principal who wished to participate. I apologised that the number of participants could not meet the research requirement which should be six teachers and one principal. The school principal of NT11 personally wished to take part. She explained that the teachers worked very hard to mark student assignments until late at night and that they could not afford time for this research. The
principal of NT10 personally was very interested to know about curriculum change by Action Research. He kept a research file holder on his own after the seminar. It was the second year that he became the principal of the school. He preferred to strengthen the school infrastructure before considering the research participation.

The principal of the first participating school (NT3) was enthusiastic to promote the research to all teachers during the seminar. When I handed him the Research File, he asked me how to find the six teachers. At the end, the teachers were voluntary to take part. Four out of six teachers were my former pre-service or in-service students.

The principal of the second participating school (NT8) was always busy at meetings after school. He told me in the first phone call that the school had already received too many research projects in hand. Once again, he was afraid that teachers were overloaded. He promised to have a look of the Research File. I called him again after two weeks. He said that he had circulated the File to all teachers. Finally, the teachers voted to take part in this research! He asked me to have an Introductory Research Seminar at school as soon as possible. I offered a one-hour session to all teachers. The principal also attended. I received an encouraging response from the teachers. It was in early March. The educational contexts were different to the time when the first participating school made the decision.

This was the beginning of the collaborative journey of research with two primary schools in Hong Kong. It is a critical inquiry of teacher curriculum decision making within a context of curriculum change in Hong Kong by using narratives from and conversations with a selection of primary school teachers and principals.

Our journey begins! Would it be critically reflective, empowering and emancipating to all research participants (and me)?

**Snapshot 2:**

In the First Individual Interview meeting (Action Step 1), Susana and I talked a lot after the interview until it was the time for her to go into the class. She was my former in-service student. She
said that she looked forward to seeing me that she did little work in the afternoon.

In the Second Meeting, Susana came in with a sheet of paper in hand. I reminded her to bring along a cup of tea. She passed me the paper. She said that it was a personal note. It was not a formal essay. I did not look at once. I put it in the research file carefully. I thanked her since I understood that it was not easy for her to have a ‘go’! I guessed that it was her reflective note!

**Susan (Appendix 3:C3.4):** 5-2-99 10.15am

“After meeting Mrs. Sham, the memory of our last meeting unceasingly appeared in my mind. My feeling was that I was like ‘a car being added with petrol’. It was because after I left the College, I had not had a chance to express my ideas like what I did in the First Individual Interview meeting. Sometimes, I could share my feelings and thoughts of teaching and education with my husband but he would not facilitate me in a systematic way as what I experienced in the research. Last time, I was offered an opportunity to express my opinions on educational issues in which I reflected broadly and in depth. I did not regret to use up two lessons for the First Interview. In the opposite, my spiritual joy was far beyond or non-comparable than the champion I got in playing majong.

Yesterday, I said that education would be a way of living. I wanted to amend it as ‘a stage of lifespan’. Education is similar to growth, work, retirement…it is one of the necessary stages of a lifespan.

6-2-99 11.00am

Yesterday morning, before I wrote the first reflective note, those wordings and sentences were running out again and again in my mind, I could not forget them. Until I wrote them on a sheet of paper, everything calmed down. It looked like that I had accommodated them somewhere that they would no longer stir up my mind. It was strange yet wonderful. Now, I finally understand why Mrs. Sham keeps on encouraging me to write reflective journal.”

I don’t mind how many words Susana wrote. Would the interview be iterative that she was willing to take a first step to write the reflective note? I was comfortable when I read it at night. I was neither happy nor excited. I was just comfortable and peaceful. Curriculum change should not become revolutionary movement. However, it does not mean that we should not take a small step forward to overcome difficulties by mutual agreement and unforced consensus about teacher curriculum decision making at the time of curriculum change.
Snapshot 3:

One of the teachers, Lawrence, was my student. I taught him five years ago. He knew who I was as a teacher educator.

Teaching is ‘life influences life’ (?? ?? ? ? ?). For teachers, I have three questions: “Who am I?”; “Why we teach here?”; “How should we teach and live?”.

Education is embedded in social, political, historical and economic contexts. It is a social, philosophical, political and economic activity of human being. In other words, it is a human activity. At this moment, I am interested to know briefly what Chinese philosophy is about. I picked up a book of ninth edition in 1998. It mentioned that Chinese philosophy emphasised subjectivity, inner morality and practice. It focuses on ‘life’ which has impact on knowledge, wisdom and practice. It is the concern of many Chinese philosophers about ‘Love and Wisdom (???)’, ‘Reflection (?)’ and ‘Human Nature (?)’.

Teachers act on their beliefs. These beliefs are personal, tacit and enacted within a dynamic mix of philosophical, psychological and sociological perspectives. What is ‘curriculum’? How is it related to education? What is the position of a teacher in curriculum theorising and curriculum change? What are our views about teacher curriculum decision-making?

Teachers are not only active listeners but also reflective practitioners. Thinking over curriculum leadership in the next millennium, I would like to raise the following questions:

1. What is curriculum leadership? Who become(s) the leaders? Wherein lies the legitimacy of authority and power?
2. Who own(s) the curriculum decisions?
3. How and why do teachers as practitioners have to become the curriculum leaders?
4. Who are benefited? Who are disadvantaged or marginalised?

It is my understanding that constructive change on education is feasible when teachers undergo critical reflections by praxis.
Snapshot 4:

If teaching is a form of educational inquiry, if teaching is to construct knowledge with the students, if teaching is to reconstruct the problematic educational issues for change and improvement and to promote understanding and valuing the professional practices by the community at large, teaching must embrace the value and practice of research.

Few people would agree that teachers actively involved in daily teaching are merely the persons who are observers and outsiders of the classroom realities. Teachers who care, love and nurture the growth and development of each student should go beyond technical and practical interests. They do need emancipatory interest which gives rise to autonomous and responsible action for the best interests of students and the society. I suppose that critical consciousness is to avoid alienation caused by aesthetic consciousness, historical consciousness and hermeneutical consciousness. Critical thinking generates insights for reconstruction of practices. Critical consciousness is in a state of ‘constructed knowledge’ resulted by praxis. It is action-oriented and sustained through empowerment driven by self-reflection, autonomy and authentic insight. Its meaning is realised in intertwining processes of reflection and reconstruction.

There is no need to draw a line between teaching and research. Teaching is dialectically and dialogically related to research. Research can provide place and space for the ‘voice’ of teaching. The crucial question is what kind of research is of paramount importance to establish and sustain this relation. Teaching is not ‘neutral’. It is represented by various forms of curriculum practices which are value-laden. Engaging in research is a proactive means to facilitate curriculum practices to become dynamic, evolving, interactive and reconstructive in the lived reality.

My questions are:

1. What do we want through research?
2. How do we get what we want from research?
3. Why do we need to be engaged in research with respect to our personal, professional and institutional identities?
**Snapshot 5:**

Whether the notions of place and space of teacher curriculum decision making are a pipe dream or a likely reality are determined (or governed) by the values and beliefs of the people involved. These values and beliefs to make meanings on what is deserved to change are neither static nor unchangeable. If we position ourselves as ‘outsiders’ of or merely spectators to curriculum change, if we believe there will be limited hope to change the present, if we keep on dreaming what we have been dreaming about, it would remain as a pipe dream out there.

If we make actions on the dream, if we participate to put the dream into a reality, if we are involved and committed to transform the present into the future, the dream is neither a null concept nor an empty talk, it is and will be a lived reality! What matters is whether we have a dream and whether we want the dream to become a lived reality that we own and treasure. This is surely not a distorted reality which is regarded by some people who remain the dream as a dream. People can have authentic inclusion by making meanings of the reality they construct but not granted.

*The question is whether we value and treasure Knowledge and Action together (*??*), Diversity in Unity, Conflicts in Harmony and Regionalisation in Globalisation.*

**THE ‘MAGNIFIED’ IMAGE**

It is the heart-felt needs of teachers to be empowered in curriculum practice and to justify the legitimacy when considering the space, purpose and process of teacher curriculum decision-making. Curriculum change implies a gradual and ongoing process in which independent thinking and critical reflections of practitioners through collaboration, trust, democratic participation and negotiation are very important to sustain and deepen the change. Therefore, it is important for researchers not to silence the ‘voices’ of teachers but to channel every opportunity to elicit their ‘voices’ by narratives and conversations.

Thinking over the advocacy of teacher curriculum decision-making within a context of curriculum change in Hong Kong and referring the questions of Snapshots 4 and 5, there are five dimensions
which may be crucially important for seeking consensus in framing the research methodology:

1. Fragmented vs Holistic
2. Objective vs Subjective
3. Generalisable vs Generative
4. Extrinsic reward vs Intrinsic value
5. Sharpness vs Complexity (or linear and positivist vs iterative, hermeneutic and reflective)

Action Research as an approach to reconstruct the present curriculum practices within the notion of teacher curriculum decision-making should be most desirable (Koo, 1999a). It is the intention not to avoid the complexity and subjectivity of the data. Logical reduction is indispensable for managing the data but it is not the integral part of the research analysis. The pursuit of knowledge (or wisdom), the embracing of intrinsic value and the quest for ongoing reflections are justifying the existence of this Action Research inquiry.

The following is a summary statement of my reflections in this collaborative journey:

*Life is genuine, love and respect;*

*Teaching is learning, interaction and construction of knowledge and experiences;*

*Education is a life-long process of learning to love, to care, to respect and to strive for change, justice and equality;*

*Educational research is to search for new meanings; to value and respect; to participate and collaborate; to make known and unknown again; to reflect and to reconstruct*

11th April 1999 Hong Kong

Hence, I argue that an appropriate educational research inquiry should demonstrate the ability to capture wisdom, embed its intrinsic value and generate critical reflections.

**CONCLUSION**
“Personal change is the most powerful route to system change.” (Fullan, 1993, p.140)

Curriculum change is not ‘a fashion’! Change implies risk-taking, breakthrough and responsibility. Change may not be well planned but should be undertaken with constant review of the personal, organisational and social factors. In brief, education is a caring service, social commitment, political and economic activity which involves integration of knowledge and practice. In viewing educational reform of other countries, it is undesirable to authenticate curriculum change which has been highly compressed in terms of three dimensions: time, magnitude and intention. ‘Think big and start small’.

In essence, teachers engaging in the notion of teacher curriculum decision-making within a context of curriculum change in Hong Kong require:

- Clarification of value positions
- Independent thinking and critical reflections
- Ownership of the change
- Commitment and collaboration
- Transformation of changes into challenges and chances
- Clear goals and directions commonly accepted by the stakeholders
- Reconstruction of a dynamic mix of theory, research and practice

Constructive change of education is feasible when teachers undergo critical reflections by praxis. It is timely now to proceed into Action Steps 3 and 4 with confidence for authentic change and improvement in regard to the notion of teacher curriculum decision-making. It is ultimately the meanings of the research that motivate research participants to have authentic inclusion and commitment of their time and effort allocated to the research processes.

But,

‘Who cares, who shares and who commits within a context of curriculum change in Hong Kong?’

This is the ‘voice’ of the research participants and of myself as the researcher to the aforesaid question:
We care, we share and we commit: A researcher’s ongoing journey within a context of curriculum change in Hong Kong

This collaborative journey continues with hope, trust, reflections and authenticity!

REFERENCES


