Practicing Response-to-Intervention Model: A Case of Leadership Practices

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Abstract

With a focus on exemplary practices, this article described and analyzed a principal's understanding of the conceptual framework of the US-based response-to-intervention and his strategies to mobilize school staff to understand and practice the model to achieve effective inclusive education with the principles of whole schooling. This principal was one of the 16 principals who participated in an ongoing research project regarding the conceptualization of the 3-tier intervention model policy and the contextualization of its practices in Hong Kong. His practices have been chosen for elaboration because he was the only one to demonstrate a deep understanding of the RTI model's ultimate intentions, subsequently launching a more comprehensive approach to mobilize school staff and to practice effectively. This article began with a comparison between the conceptual background of the US-based RTI model and Hong Kong's 3-tier intervention model, followed by the delineation of this principal's practices based on his interview and those of his special educational needs coordinator and teachers. Implications for school reform policies and practices across settings were discussed.

Keywords: education for all, leadership, response-to-intervention, Hong Kong

Practicing Response-to-Intervention Model: A Case of Leadership Practices

This article described and analyzed a principal's leadership and administrative practices for mobilizing school staff to understand and practice the US-based response-to-intervention (RTI) model, thereby achieving effective inclusive education within the principles of whole schooling. This principal, alias Allen Tam, was a participant of an ongoing research project investigating the conceptualization of the RTI model and the contextualization of its practices in Hong Kong schools. When other principals perceived the model as different levels of intervention and did not establish any system of monitoring student progress to inform instructional adaptations, Principal Tam demonstrated a clear understanding of the meaning of quality teaching and the evidence-based instruction-assessment cycle of the RTI model. Hence, his practices were chosen for elaboration out of the 16 participating principals. To provide the necessary background for analysis, the article will begin with the conceptual framework of the US-based RTI model to compare with Hong Kong's RTI policy, followed by the delineation of Principal Tam's practices and implications for effective implementation of school reform policies across settings.

Conceptual Framework of RTI and Hong Kong's RTI Policy

The RTI model stemmed from a call for an effective system of identification, instruction, and assessment for students with learning disabilities instead of the IQ-achievement discrepancy model in the 1980s. The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs funded an investigation to identify potential RTI models, the work of which was subsequently included in the 2004 Reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as a mandatory process for identification and intervention (Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2007). Though the RTI process was initiated to facilitate support for students with learning disabilities, the IDEA has emphasized that it should be applied to all struggling students, with or without disabilities.

The RTI framework is primarily conceptualized within problem-solving and standard protocol approaches (King & Coughlin, 2016). The problem-solving approach systematically analyzes instruction, identifies deficiency in target skills or sub-skills, and designs intervention accordingly while the standard protocol approach refers to the implementation of a predetermined set of research-validated instructional approaches to tackle academic difficulties (King & Coughlin, 2016). Both approaches aim at an informative cycle of

curriculum-based assessment and appropriate instruction (Martinez & Young, 2011). Tier 1 of the RTI is meant to cover the core curriculum for all students with classroom routines that enable instructional differentiation, and problem-solving to effectively handle student motivation and behavioral issues (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Vaughn, 2014). The core element of Tier 1 lies in the high-quality teaching that must be informed by research-validated teaching strategies and documentation of outcomes to determine whether learning needs require further support. Tier 2 programs often include small group instructions while Tier 3 moves toward individualized and intensive intervention (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Vaughn, 2014).

This cohesive instructional system is guided by data of student outcomes (without waiting for students to fail), grounded on high-quality teaching, and solely based on an individual student's response to instruction shown in curriculum-based measurement for decisions on the intensity and duration of support services (King & Coughlin, 2016). Students will only be referred for formal special education assessment when Tier 3 support services are required. Thus, proper implementation of this process is expected to decrease unnecessary referrals and placements in special education and boost appropriate decisions. Researchers have examined the advantages and validity of this process in improving learning and how this framework has been conceptualized and practiced in core school subjects such as reading and literacy (O'Connor, Briggs, & Forbes, 2013). The significance of school leadership has been repeatedly affirmed as a key factor for successful implementation of this reform model (e.g., Bean, & Lillenstein, 2012; Duffy, Scala, & National High School Center, 2012).

Successful implementation of the RTI framework can achieve the principles of whole schooling as Peterson (2007) has defined: "Whole Schooling is an approach to developing schools in which all children flourish in engaging, inclusive classrooms" (para. 1). As emphasized in the RTI framework, research-based practices to support the development of the whole child is the foundation of whole schooling (Peterson, 2007). The ultimate goals of the RTI approach share the eight principles of whole schooling (Peterson, 2007) as follows: (a) creating high levels of student learning and increasing individual opportunity through research-validated practices (Principle 1); (b) empowering students and parents through sharing power in the decision making process about student learning (Principle 2); (c) having all students learn together with high quality teaching in Tier 1 (Principle 3); (d) building a caring community among teachers as they are all involved in Tier 1 instructions (Principle 4); (e) supporting learning of students with special needs in the general classrooms (Principle 5); (f) building partnership with parents and community as part of the expectations of the IDEA (Principle 6); (g) using multi-level instructions to support a range of abilities and to move to

students to the next level of competence without ability grouping or segregation at Tier 1 (Principle 7); and (h) providing an informative cycle of curriculum-based assessment and appropriate instruction for effective learning (Principle 8).

Originating from the RTI framework (Luk & Cheng, 2009), Hong Kong is currently the only region found outside of the U.S., with a clear policy to adopt this intervention model. Hong Kong's Education Bureau (2014) refers to the Hong Kong model of RTI as the 3-tier intervention model and designates it as the main process to achieve whole schooling. The RTI and Hong Kong's 3-tier model are similar in four ways: (a) providing universal screening with support and intervention to prevent students from continual failure; (b) emphasizing quality teaching at Tier 1 and continual monitoring; and (c) permitting increasingly more intensive and individualized instruction as students move to a higher tier of support (Education Bureau, 2017a).

The main difference between the U.S. and Hong Kong rests in the fact that Hong Kong policy documents do not specifically call for research-validated instructional practices as the basis for quality teaching. The Indicators for Inclusion (Education Bureau, 2008) highlighted three main criteria for effective instructions: (a) lessons that can accommodate different learning styles; (b) classwork that engages students individually and with peers; and (c) lessons that consist of various forms of learning. As for progress monitoring, Education Bureau (2008) recommended that schools use student surveys, classroom observation, and student work samples. No systematic documentation of student outcomes or responses to intervention was required. According to the data accumulated from an ongoing study, the failure to define quality teaching and to require the maintenance of monitoring procedures have contributed to a poor understanding among school personnel of what this process is meant to accomplish. In turn, Hong Kong school staff have little clue on how to implement high quality teaching and monitor student outcomes. When other participating principals conceptualized the 3-tier intervention model as primarily a guideline for intensifying student support to respond to their varied levels of difficulties, Principal Tam clearly expressed and practiced the two core elements of the RTI model in that he emphasized the adoption of research-validated teaching strategies as the basis of quality teaching and established a system of achieving an informative cycle of curriculum-based assessment and appropriate instruction to identify learning needs, monitor student progress, and improve instructions. Thus, his leadership practices were chosen to examine effective leadership in the practice of Hong Kong's RTI model.

Brief Overview of Study and Data Analysis

Prior to elaborating on Principal Tam's practices, a brief overview of the entire project and analytical procedures of interview data will be provided. The design was a mixed method featuring both qualitative and quantitative components, with the aim of offering theoretical, policy, and practical insights into Hong Kong's 3-tier model in building effective inclusive schools. Because understanding the RTI framework as an informative cycle of curriculum-based assessment and appropriate instruction is of prime importance to effective implementation, the first phase of this project attempted to find out how the 3-tier model in Hong Kong was conceptualized among key school personnel and its relationship to their practices. Thus, this phase consisted of qualitative case studies that examine principals, special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), and core subject teachers of 16 primary and secondary schools, focusing on: (a) the conceptualization of the model and roles of principals and middle leaders in planning, designing, and communicating to teachers the concept of quality teaching; (b) the practice of the cycle of instruction-assessment and progress monitoring; and (c) the respondents' challenges in their respective capacities and suggestions for policy refinement, personnel preparation, and practices. Findings from the case studies and the existing literature would then be used to finalize the territory-wide quantitative survey in the second phase of the study. Details of Principal Tam's practices came from the first phase semi-structured interview data. While this article centers on Principal Tam's leadership and administrative practices, relevant data from teacher interviews at his school affirm the outcomes of his effort and practices where appropriate.

Interview data and field notes were transcribed verbatim. The procedure of member checks for participants to verify and confirm transcripts will be performed to ensure data credibility and trustworthiness. An inductive, thematic analysis of participants' testimony (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was adopted to analyze contextual data and to interpret patterns of conceptualization and practices. Two research team members separately developed the initial codes and confirmed initial themes via discussions. This procedure was repeated throughout the coding process to minimize bias in the theme development. Newly identified concepts and relationships were organized into a theoretical explanatory scheme (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Premises of Principal Tam's Practices

In the process of trying to gain insight into Principal Tam's administrative practices, his conceptualization of inclusive education and understanding of the 3-tier intervention policy were significant in explaining his commitment to the practices congruent with the premises of whole schooling. Thus, these two aspects will be presented prior to the elaboration of his practices.

Conceptualization of Inclusive Education

When Principal Tam responded to how he led his school to practice the 3-tier model and defined quality teaching, his response surprisingly surrounded his Christian faith. For the first question, he stressed the need to have a vision and mission as the leader. Thus, he reiterated that the fundamental goal of his school (a Lutheran school) was to serve people as Christ did. He emphasized the need for all to understand Christianity as the foundation of his school's mission. Thus, he worked to establish a schoolwide mission of what he called HHLPS (i.e., heart, health, learn, passion, and servant) to help all staff understand the goal of faith-based education with respect to nourishing students and enabling them to ultimately serve others. He maintained that all students should be equally valued and referenced the vastly different occupations, such as fisherman and tax collector, and abilities of Christ's 12 disciples. Thus, he emphasized that teachers should enable individuals of all abilities to become contributing members of our society.

For the second question, he quoted the Gospel of Luke, 2:40: "And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him" to explain why the school should foster students to have a balanced development in ethical, intellectual, physical, social, and aesthetic aspects as advocated by the Education Bureau (2006). For instance, he considered it part of his and his teachers' duties to help students with autism spectrum disorders develop positive and meaningful relationships with their teachers and peers, as well as motivating them to develop skills for lifelong learning and improvement. Principal Tam's Christian faith has apparently shaped his conceptualization of and commitment to inclusive education.

Understanding of the 3-Tier Intervention Model Policy

When asked what he thought the purpose of the 3-tier intervention model policy was, Principal Tam immediately stated that there was always a conceptual framework or ideology behind a policy. He pointed out that the government wanted to establish a system to provide

quality education to all students through the model. He believed that the specific functions of the model were to (a) serve as an impetus for better teacher training in order to ensure quality teaching to all students at Tier 1; (b) direct all teachers to focus on efficacy; and (c) provide a structure for a systematic cycle of monitoring student progress and instructional adaptations to meet student needs based on student outcomes. When asked how he derived such a view, he emphasized that this was the outcome of his secondment to the Education Bureau for one year. He shadowed policymakers during that period and was involved in the discussions of relevant policies, including the 3-tier model together with internal seminars and in-house training for policy implementation. He opined that other school personnel should take advantage of this Annual Teacher Secondment Exercise that was established for principals and teachers to take up professional duties in the Education Bureau, to exchange expertise and experience with policymakers (Education Bureau, 2017b) and to thereby increase their understanding of policy intentions and effectiveness in implementing those policies.

Leadership/Administrative Practices

Principal Tam was a teacher for 19 years and an administrator for 15 years at the time of the study. He began his leadership at the current school 4 years ago. This resource school was recognized to be effective in inclusive education and was instructed to share good practices and measures to meet the individual learning needs of students under the School Partnership Scheme (Education Bureau, 2017c). Even though this school has served as a resource school for over 15 years, it only began to be specifically known in a number of good practices after Principal Tam has taken leadership. As the Education Bureau (2017c) stated in a circular to all schools, Principal Tam's school was designated to support partner schools in these practices: (a) developing a caring and inclusive school culture; (b) offering parent counselling (support on emotions and skills); (c) establishing and operating student support teams; and (d) being effective in using 'Mind Reading' strategies (small group support for the students with autism spectrum disorders), 'Read and Write' program (small group teaching for students with specific learning disabilities), writing and implementation of individual education plans, and early identification.

When Principal Tam took up the leadership position, he was immediately concerned about student discipline issues and teachers' lack of enthusiasm as well as limited knowledge and skills for schoolwide inclusive education. He believed that the situation was associated with the practice of the earlier inclusive education model, the intensive remedial teaching program (IRTP), and a lack of understanding of the school's fundamental mission. The IRTP

model was designed to emphasize small group or individual remedial sessions for students with special needs. Schools practicing this model would be funded with an additional teacher position upon the acceptance of five students with special needs and an additional teacher's aide upon the admission of eight students with recognized special needs (Education Bureau, 2007). Therefore, teachers tended to rely on the resource teacher to deal with diverse needs and not perceive students with disabilities as their responsibility. To align with the whole school approach to inclusive education where all teachers should be responsible for all students, Principal Tam adopted a three-stage process: (a) communicating and building a shared schoolwide vision and mission; (b) negotiating a flexible funding model to maximize resources; and (c) developing a conducive structure to facilitate the implementation.

Communicating and Building Schoolwide Vision and Mission

Seeing that some teachers did not seem to grasp the vision and mission of this Christian school, Principal Tam considered clear communication of the school's vision and mission as the key of the first stage. He first formed a leadership team involving the vice principal, the curriculum director, and the team leader of guidance and counseling to strengthen their understanding of the school's vision and mission. These teacher leaders would then work to cultivate their understanding and commitment among teachers in their respective capacities, with the ultimate goal of all staff working toward a shared mission in tandem. Thus, he examined the Christian principles of the founding organization of this school with the teacher leaders, and linked the school's vision and mission with those principles as the foundation for practicing inclusive education. As these teacher leaders were also Christians, they quickly understood and soon shared Principal Tam's commitment to build a schoolwide inclusive culture. In his capacity as the main speaker of the school's morning assemblies, Principal Tam utilized the opportunity to cultivate the underpinned values of the school's vision and mission. Meanwhile, the leadership team members worked to instill among teachers these values in curriculum planning by devising teaching pedagogies, introducing student and parent counseling, writing up individual education plans, and so on. Informally, the leadership team members modelled caring for and valuing all with staff and students in order to build a schoolwide inclusive culture underpinned by their Christian faith. The shared commitment to this effort was quite clear during separate interviews of the teacher leaders and teachers when they emphasized the need to care for and value all students as the basis for practicing whole-school approach to inclusive education.

Principal Tam's role in building this culture was also clearly recognized when teachers affirmed the principal's role in mobilizing such a belief and practice.

Negotiating a Mixed Funding Model to Maximize Resources

Principal Tam's school joined the inclusive education initiative before the launch of the learning support grant (LSG) that requires participating schools to use the whole-school approach and provides up to $1.63 million recurring funds for support of students with special needs for the school year of 2017-18 (Education Bureau, 2017a). To achieve the goal of all teachers taking responsibility for all students, Principal Tam negotiated with the Education Bureau to simultaneously allow the school to keep the extra teacher from the former funding model and to provide the LSG funds to support the school's effort toward the whole-school approach to inclusive education. Principal Tam also emphasized the significance of placing resources appropriately with the goal to ensure best outcomes for all students. The vice principal echoed his view when speaking about resource usage in a separate interview. This mixed funding model offered more resources for the school to have more stable staffing, to purchase the software for detailed record of student performance which facilitated the databased instruction-assessment cycle as required by the RTI model, to host occasional overseas professional development for teachers, and to launch innovative practices in reading improvement programs and parent counseling.

Developing a Conducive Structure for Implementation

The final stage of Principal Tam's process toward effective whole schooling concerns the sustainability of strong commitment, quality instructions, and early intervention. He considered creating a conducive environment critical to achieve these aspects, for which he employed a few strategies: (a) empowerment of teacher leaders, (b) timetabling and resource usage, (c) professional development and lifelong learning culture among teachers, and (d) early identification approaches. Each of these strategies will be elaborated upon in this section.

Empowerment of teacher leaders.

Principal Tam believed that the leadership team members could not play their roles successfully unless they took ownership of the initiatives and positioned themselves to guide other staff to achieve the mission. Thus, he empowered teacher leaders with decision-making power in their respective capacities. First, the vice principal also served as the special

educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and leader of the student support team to help all staff see the significance of supporting students with special needs. The SENCO had authority over the employment of support staff for students with disabilities, the membership of the student support team, relevant professional development for teachers, and resource usage for support services. This teacher leader demonstrated her commitment to quality education for all during the interview in that she stated that effective inclusive education could only be sustained when teachers had a strong commitment and found it meaningful for what they did in their roles. Second, the curriculum director worked to guide teachers in curriculum design, such as the 'read and write' program, and facilitated instructional and assessment adaptations with the decision-making power over the budget for curriculum resources. Lastly, the guidance team leader had authority over a budget for innovative practices toward student and parent counseling and community collaborations. Together with Principal Tam, these teacher leaders collaborated to support teachers through designing a timetable to enable co-planning among teachers, team meetings for problem solving, and a holistic approach to devise individual education plans for challenging cases.

Timetabling and resource usage.

The design of this school's timetabling aimed at facilitating co-planning, core subject teacher consultations, and class-based support meetings. Teachers reiterated the great advantage of a timetable which made it possible for them to consult and discuss student cases during their interviews. As for resource usage, Principal Tam used some of the resources to reduce teachers' overall teaching load to create space for planning and professional development. In addition, teachers were encouraged to discuss with teacher leaders on the use of resources as observed in their daily interactions with students.

Professional development and lifelong learning culture among teachers.

Principal Tam reiterated the importance of teacher professional development as quality instructions were central to the RTI model. He also believed that on-site coaching was the most effective form of professional development. When the Education Bureau offered an innovative training program that involved coaching, he worked with the SENCO to find a way to participate. More importantly, Principal Tam believed that creating a lifelong learning culture among teachers would sustain the provision of quality instructions for all students. He illustrated this concept with the Chinese idiom 'one lags behind when one makes no progress'. The SENCO of his school also emphasized the significance of lifelong learning

among SENCOs to improve their ability to lead teachers for effective practices in a separate interview. Principal Tam's main strategy in this aspect was to increase resources through requesting for the mixed funding mode and to use some of them to enable the participation of additional teacher professional development activities outside those provided by the Education Bureau. He also proactively supported teachers joining the annual secondment scheme. Teachers who have completed the secondment scheme would be expected to discuss with teacher leaders the possibility of practicing the newly acquired strategies and to conduct in-house seminars to share their learning and understanding of policies.

Early identification and intervention.

Recognizing early intervention as a key goal of the 3-tier model, Principal Tam together with his SENCO and teachers placed great emphasis on early identification. Thus, the Learning Achievement Measurement Kit (LAMK) developed by Education Bureau was routinely used as a universal screening tool to identify academic low achievers who are defined as lagging behind two or more years in at least two of core subjects: Chinese, English and Mathematics (Education Bureau, 2017a). In addition, each homeroom teacher would discuss concerns of any student's performance and growth in class-based support meetings at least two to three times a year. Homeroom teachers may also request meetings at any time for urgent consultation and discussions. The SENCO chaired each meeting with homeroom and core subject teachers as participants. Those class-based meetings permitted all relevant personnel to focus on students' academic and behavioral needs from each class, to design appropriate intervention, and to decide the support tier a student may require based on performance evidence as recorded by a software the school purchased. This software allowed teachers to identify specific needs, such as low score in English sentence structures, from student performance in each section of a test/examination and to track student progress over the 6 years students studied in this primary school. Such evidence was presented to the Education Bureau when requesting for funding. More importantly, their practices demonstrated the fulfilment of two main objectives of the RTI model: providing support without waiting for a formal assessment and using data to systematically monitor student progress and inform instructional intervention.

A student's case relayed in the interview of a Chinese language teacher, alias Ms. Wong, can provide a glimpse of their day-to-day working of early intervention and how Principal Tam's effort was linked to concrete learning outcomes. Ms. Wong used formative assessments such as homework upon the completion of each small unit of curriculum to

check student understanding of relevant concepts and vocabularies as well as their use in writing. She quickly noticed a Primary 3 student, who was identified with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, having trouble in the word organization of sentence making for new vocabularies and text comprehension after a few weeks into the school year. Rather than waiting for the scheduled class-based meetings, she requested a meeting with the SENCO, the homeroom teacher who was also this student's mathematics teacher, and the English language teacher. Their discussions revealed that the student liked mathematics with high grades in mathematics but was unmotivated toward language learning and subsequently did poorly in English as well. They administered the LAMK to further confirm the specific areas of weaknesses, co-planned lessons of both languages with Principal Tam through the application of variation theory (Fung-Lo & Marton, 2012) with a goal of increasing interest in language learning, designed more activity-oriented instructions with reference to this student's interests, determined a schedule for lesson observations among them for continual instructional improvement, identified appropriate peers to do paired reading, provided lunchtime and after-school individual tutoring with a focus on strengthening vocabulary use and with a goal of instilling interests in language learning and encouraging communication through building strong rapport with this student, and adjusted homework amount and format according to the student's response to intervention measures. In addition, they met with this student's parents to relay their intervention plan and maintained frequent communications with the parents to maintain home support in learning. This student's performance in English and Chinese of the LAMK rose from 20-30 to 50-60 out of 100 points after about 5 months. Most importantly, his interest in language learning increased as observed from more active class participation, willingness to ask questions, and increased proactivity in teamwork.

Effectiveness of Practices and Conclusions

Inclusive education requires complex changes of the current educational scene (Avissar, Reiter, & Leyser, 2003). Principal Tam has demonstrated that principals are change catalysts (Day & Leithwood, 2007). He has fostered new meanings about diversity, promoted inclusive cultures within his school, and built relationships between schools and communities—three tasks that a school leader must accomplish to realize the vision of inclusive education (Riehl, 2000). His efforts in providing guidance and support in the course of change and drawing together the resources and people to be successful (Ainscow, 2005; Florian, 2010) have served to sustain inclusive values and change (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). In other words, he has created a conducive environment through deployment of resources,

organizational structures, and workload distribution (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005). In addition, both Principal Tam and his SENCO mentioned in their respective interviews a 20% to 65% improved performance among 60% of students identified with disabilities according to their performance database. Principal Tam also cited the increase of mathematics awards in external competitions from 20 to 230 since he had assumed his leadership position. Furthermore, the SENCO confirmed noticeable personal growth of students. The leadership practices and improved student outcomes in this school together affirmed direct links between effective school leadership and learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2011).

It was apparent that Principal Tam's leadership and administrative practices in implementing the Hong Kong RTI model was grounded in his deep understanding of the conceptual framework behind the RTI model and deep conviction in his Christian worldview of valuing all students. His approaches to achieve the mission have further affirmed the effective leadership attributes reported in the existing literature (Florian, 2010): (a) building a shared vision; (b) distributing decision making power to empower teacher leaders; (c) increasing and making good use of resources, (d) supporting teachers through timetabling, workload reduction, participation in decisions for resource usage, increased professional development opportunities, and role modeling. Principal Tam's practices have specific implications across settings in three aspects: (a) the significance of training and coaching for school leaders to understand the intentions of a reform policy and its implementation; (b) professional development with on-site coaching; and (c) the provision of a student performance recording system.

For the first aspect, Hong Kong Education Bureau's secondment scheme from which Principal Tam learned about the policy intentions was effective to achieve communication of policy intentions. However, this scheme is cost- and labor-intensive when a principal is away from his responsibilities for a year and may not be feasible across countries with different socio-economical landscapes. Thus, it may be more feasible for other regions to develop a systematic training and mentoring scheme among school leaders in addition to detailed guidelines for implementation and evaluation of a reform policy. For instance, training-of-trainer workshops can serve as an effective means where a selected group of school leaders receive extensive training and can, in turn, train and mentor other principals if a workable mentoring scheme is in place.

For the second aspect, any reform policy for whole schooling should include the provision of relevant professional development opportunities in regards to mentoring and on-

site coaching, as found in Principal Tam's experiences, to increase post-training success. School leaders should cultivate the lifelong learning culture among teachers and provide space for teachers to participate in professional development activities. Lastly, given the significant role of using software to monitor student performance and inform instructional planning, education policymakers including Hong Kong's Education Bureau should consider the provision of such a student performance record system for all schools to achieve the systematic instruction-assessment cycle. Principal Tam's practices have affirmed that any reform model is only meaningful when concrete improvement of student outcomes is substantiated with evidence.

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