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Qualitative Research Study

Observing the implementation of a school-based curriculum by teachers of different mind styles: a case study in Hong Kong

Samson Yuen

N0441746

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Abstract

Teacher autonomy within Hong Kong's schools is constrained by a highly bureaucratic system in which their individual teaching styles are compromised. This could be reflected in the former studies on the school-based curriculum development (SBCD) schemes initiated by the Hong Kong government, in which what was supposed to be a bottom-up innovation had turned into a highly centralized initiative. Whereas the aim of SBCD should be to allow teachers to make decisions at the school level to cater for pupils' needs, the government-initiated SBCD schemes targeted to satisfy bureaucratic requirements instead. At issue is bureaucratisation of school-based innovations, which threatens to usurp teachers' autonomy to make sensible judgments in response to contextual concerns. To provide a different perspective, this qualitative case study takes an insider approach to examine the implementation of a teacher-initiated school-based curriculum in a Hong Kong secondary school. English lessons delivered by four Secondary 5 (equivalent to Year 11) teachers were observed in 2013. Running logs were used to record how the four teachers delivered the school-based materials in one of their English lessons and were compared. The Gregorc Style Delineator instrument was used to identify the teachers' mind styles following the classroom observations. The research found that three teachers held the same mind style of Concrete Sequential, and their lesson activities shared many common features. However, the teacher who held the mind style of Abstract Sequential adopted a different approach in her teaching. Coupled with the classroom observations were semi-structured interviews which were designed to elicit the four participants' attitudes towards the SBCD in this study. Whilst all teachers held positive attitudes towards the curriculum and mentioned some of the benefits of SBCD that were aligned with overseas studies, they also made adaptations to the materials in accordance with their preferred teaching styles. The findings thus contrast sharply with former studies on government-initiated SBCD schemes, in which teachers tended to conform to the official requirements. Finally, this study discusses the extent to which the factor of mind styles should be incorporated into curriculum design, and provides some guidelines for how SBC could be implemented and developed.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institutions.

Part of the thesis has been presented in the following conferences in the form of a poster or a research paper:

Yuen, S., 2014. A case study on the implementation of a school-based curriculum in a Hong Kong secondary school. *Poster presented in: HERSDA 2014 Conference, Hong Kong Baptist University, 7-10 July 2014.* p. 142.

Yuen, S., 2015. Implementation of school-based curriculum development by teachers of different beliefs in a Hong Kong secondary school. *Paper presented in: eLearning Forum Asia 2015, SIM University, Singapore, 16-19 June 2015.*

Yuen, S., 2016. Observing the implementation of a school-based curriculum by teachers of different mind styles: a case study. *Paper presented in: The Third International Conference on Open and Flexible Education (ICOFE 2016), The Open University of Hong Kong, 6-8 July 2016.* p. 39.

Yuen, S., 2016. A teacher-initiated innovation versus government-led schemes: a case study on school-based curriculum development in Hong Kong. *Paper presented in: The 9th International Conference on Psychology, Language and Teaching (ICPLT), Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, 28-29 December 2016.*

Signed: _____

         Yuen, Hau Lung Samson

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Preface

I firstly present an anecdote that happened during a conference regarding the issue of teaching styles, which refers to the "teaching techniques and activities and approaches that a teacher [prefers to employ] in teaching a certain subject in the classroom" (Rahimi & Asadollahi, 2012, p.49). This serves as an initial framing of the study. During an e-learning conference that I attended in 2015, a Taiwanese scholar presented his research about using Video Graphics Array (VGA) games to consolidate students' learning in Integrated Science. Upon his presentation, another male participant enthusiastically discussed with him where to find some developers of VGA games to save time for potential technical issues. Two female participants, however, raised their eyebrows and responded candidly that they had no idea of how to play the games, and therefore would not use the games in their classrooms.

The above episode illustrates that different teachers may react differently to a curriculum innovation, which is usually embedded in a certain method based on a particular learning or teaching style (Hall, 2005). As such, one should be aware of the hidden agenda in an innovation, as some governments may over-emphasise certain learning styles and incorporate them into their educational innovations in order that students achieve certain skills or attitudes such as "learning to learn" (Hall, 2005, p.49). One example is a recent innovation by the Education Bureau (EDB) in Hong Kong, which has organised numerous workshops and seminars promoting STEM education in the past few months, placing an emphasis on integrated curriculum that espouses Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (Curriculum Development Council, 2015). Here, the embedded method is the use of information technology or e-learning to solve problems in the classroom. I cannot deny that technology can facilitate learning to a certain extent, but the assumption that it can be handled by all teachers or beneficial to all students is problematic. Research finds that e-learning does not necessarily accommodate all learners equally because learners' styles are different (Ross & Shulz, 1999; Manochehr, 2006). Likewise, teachers themselves have their preferred teaching styles, and as such they may have different responses to an innovation that is based on certain learning or teaching style. Thus, when an innovation is indiscriminately introduced to a classroom, it may create more problems than it intends to solve.

However, in reality, when individual teachers such as the Taiwanese scholar in the anecdote design an innovation, it is difficult for them to accommodate all teaching styles in one innovation. Thus, the key to the development of an innovation is to provide teachers with the autonomy to make

sensible decisions and adaptations to it so that they can work in context and look for the optimal way to cater for students' needs.

One educational initiative that emphasises teachers' autonomy and allows teachers to work in their preferred teaching style is school-based curriculum development (SBCD), in which teachers can tailor the teaching content in the way they think appropriate to cater for students' needs. There could be various forms of SBCD, depending on the teachers involved, type of activities and time commitment (Marsh et al., 1990; Brady, 1992). To reduce complexity, SBCD in this study is defined in its narrow sense as "the product of ready-made curriculums developed by school-teachers" (Yeung, 2012, p.61), as well as the planning and implementing processes involved in it (Marsh 2009). It is therefore opposed to a top-down one-for-all formal curriculum (Brady, 1992; Elliot, 1997), which usually advocates a single method and therefore takes little regard for teaching styles. However, initial studies on SBCD in Hong Kong (Lo, 1999; Law, 2001) showed that the SBCD programmes initiated by the government were not much different from the one-for-all formal curriculum as neither of them took teaching styles into consideration.

Wong (2002) argued that the government-led SBCD programmes aim to satisfy the complex bureaucratic requirements such as requiring students to produce up-to-standard outputs for display rather than to construct a school-focused curriculum that caters for the pupils' needs. Part of the evidence was that teachers were required to attend workshops organized by the government and to receive training to ensure that the school-based curriculum (SBC) they produced addressed government concerns. When teachers implemented the SBC, they were also required to strictly follow the SBC to ensure that all students' outputs were up-to-standard (ibid) and that the EDB's concerns were addressed (Lo, 1999; Yeung, 2012). These government-led SBCD programmes, thus, not only disrespect teachers' autonomy and teaching styles but also distort the original intention of SBCD, which is to allow "major decisions about the design, content, organization and presentation of the curriculum, about pedagogy and about assessment of learning" to be taken at the school level (Skilbeck, 1998, p.130). Despite being under the banner of SBCD, these government-led programmes have been turned into highly centralized innovations and one-off production of standardised classroom materials (Lo, 1999; Wong, 2002; Yeung 2012).

Following the above studies, there have been sporadic case studies over the past decade about medium- to large-scale SBCD projects initiated by local universities, bureaucrats and joint schools (Lam & Yeung, 2010), as well as research relating to SBCD leadership (Lo, 2008). Although there

has been evidence showing that the government has taken the role of facilitators in the SBCD initiative in recent years, its supportive means is criticised as a "quality assurance measure in disguise" (ibid, p.78). Meanwhile, there is also a lack of in-depth study, to my current knowledge, about SBCD as an individual effort in the local Hong Kong context. It is therefore worth filling the gap of literature with a case study relating to SBCD practice that is initiated and implemented by teachers themselves with minimal bureaucratic influence and therefore truly reflects a bottom-up implementation process. The case that is to be presented in this thesis is to serve this purpose, and it will offer some new perspectives that former studies do not cover.

One new perspective offered by this case study is that whilst the former studies examined the implementation of SBCD at the school level as an outsider, this case study took an insider approach to explore the issues connected with an SBC that had been designed and implemented at a classroom rather than school-management level. Specifically, the primary purpose of this case study is to examine the implementation of a school-based English curriculum, which has incorporated my curriculum-writing experiences, by four English teachers in a Hong Kong secondary school. Given the differences among the four teachers in terms of their teaching styles and their views on the SBC, this research seeks to: construct a real-life example of how the four teachers respond to the SBC developed by me with minimal bureaucratic influence; investigate how the teachers' teaching styles in terms of Gregorc's mind styles (Gregorc, 1982) might have affected their classroom actions; and finally draw implications on the SBCD in Hong Kong's context for policy makers and curriculum developers who work in similar settings.

To unfold the real-life scenario, I will first discuss in Chapter 1 the issue that has been identified in former research about the government-initiated SBCD schemes in Hong Kong, specifically bureaucracy. Such discussion will help readers understand the macro-context of my case study, which is located in an education system dominated by a particular bureaucratic style. In this chapter, I will also state my personal interest in the research, the aim(s) of the case study and the specific research questions.

Then in Chapter 2, I will narrow down the context to the research site, the participants and the school-based curriculum in this inquiry. The focus of this chapter is on the curriculum development process which is based on my reflection on my teaching and learning experiences. The ethical concerns arising from the insider research such as the power relationship between the researcher

and the researched and the bias involved will also be examined in this chapter.

Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework in this inquiry with an argument that teaching is an artful and reflective act rather than a technical or routinised practice. This also leads to the discussion why teaching styles matter. While there are different models and instruments that are used to analyse teaching or learning styles, in this chapter, I will explain my preference for Gregorc Style Delineator (GSD) (Gregorc, 1982), which categorises one's learning and teaching patterns according to one's mind style. Here the term 'mind style" is used by Gregorc (ibid) to refer to the preferred way one perceives and organises things. When applied to teaching styles, it, therefore, refers to the way that a teacher organises lesson activities and constructs learning. For the purpose of this research, I will specify the term "mind style" when referring to Gregorc's definition. Whereas in other occasions, the word "style" alone is generally defined as the preferred ways of using one's abilities (Sternberg, 1994).

Following the discussion about teaching styles, I will elucidate how my perspective on teaching leads to my decision on adopting the qualitative methodology and the case study approach in Chapter 4. Then reporting and discussing the findings, Chapter 5 is divided into two parts, with the first half reviewing the teachers' attitudes towards the school-based curriculum and the second half analysing how teachers who hold different mind styles deliver the SBC in their classrooms. Finally, in Chapter 6, I will conclude the research by: reflecting on the research ethics; specifying its contribution to the existing literature about teaching styles; offering insights into curriculum development; and outlining some important principles of curriculum development.

Chapter 1

Contextual Issues in School-Based Curriculum Development (SBCD)

In this chapter, I will elucidate Hong Kong's education system to highlight the political context where the research is situated. This helps to explain my intention to conduct a qualitative case study that is of a different perspective from that of other SBCD-related studies in Hong Kong.

Bureaucracy and Hong Kong Education

Murphy and Skillen (2013, p.86) contend that the imperatives of bureaucratisation are "threatening to usurp the educational values at the heart of the profession". Such a threat has loomed over Hong Kong as two initial studies on SBCD (Lo, 1999; Law, 2001) in the city show that the government-led SBCD programmes aim to satisfy complex bureaucratic requirements such as requiring students to produce up-to-standard outputs for displays rather than construct a school-focused curriculum that catered for pupils' needs (Wong, 2002; Yeung, 2012). It is against this context, which is dominated by a particular bureaucratic style in Hong Kong that this study is constructed to showcase how different the implementation of SBCD can be, when it is developed and implemented at the classroom level with minimal bureaucratic influence.

Weber (1978), as the first sociologist who propounded the concept of bureaucracy, predicted that bureaucracy would become a dominant mode in modern society. One feature of bureaucracy among many others is the "methodical attainment of a definitely given and practical end by means of an increasingly precise calculation of adequate means" (Weber, 2001, p.293). In other words, actors calculate all the possible means and select one that is most efficient or one that can maximize the expected outcomes. Today, it is not difficult to see how this kind of calculation occurs under the banner of cost-effectiveness and efficiency, as Murphy and Skillen (2013, p.84) point out, "It is unsurprising then, that modern governments have developed extensive mechanisms of accountability designed specifically to measure the effectiveness of public service".

While the word 'bureaucracy' is now associated with government operations and public services, new forms of bureaucracy continue to emerge. Ritzer (1998, p.48) for instance equates bureaucracy in Weber's sense to McDonaldisation, which he defines as the way to optimise "efficiency, predictability, quantifiability (or calculability), control through substituting nonhuman technology for human judgment, and the irrationality of rationality". Others assign new terms to this

phenomenon such as new managerialism (Lynch, 2013), performativity (Ball, 2003) and neoliberalism (Lynch, 2006; Giroux, 2008). Whereas the first two are more of a top-down supervision that aims to assure quality and standard outputs, the latter even aims to set political, educational and ideological standards, as well as quantifiable output measures to establish a self-regulating society in place of a physical government (Barnett, 2000; Olssen & Peters, 2005). No matter what term is used, they all refer to the same type of bureaucratised calculation, which espouses the logic of the market and quantifiable indicators in place of human judgments or of what Weber (1978, p.973) calls "non-mechanical modes of production".

The features of bureaucracy can be found at all levels of today's society (Ritzer, 1998; Lipman, 2013), including education. When put in the context of education, bureaucracy is usually translated as maximising learning outcomes through 'idealised' or 'expert-designed' methods. In view of the intended curriculum for the English subject in Hong Kong, one can easily identify the trace of bureaucratisation, which is embodied in advocated methods. Teachers are constantly reminded to use technology to increase students' learning efficacy. "McDonaldised" models of curriculum arrangements are shown in the official guidelines (Module -> Unit -> Tasks), and encouraged methods (e.g. the task-based approach) are specified (Curriculum Development Council, 2007). Since the inception of the new senior secondary curriculum in 2009, the Curriculum Development Council has published a number of suggested schemes of work and resource files for English subjects. These models and suggested schemes of work set up standards for schools as means of quality assurance. While I do not contest that these publications are of great help to busy teachers, the above-mentioned resources, which aim to provide 'optimal' models for learning and teaching, have turned into a 'performative' benchmark. Teachers are expected to follow the modules and organise their lessons that are of the same standards as the teaching models or even the suggested schemes of work. Lesson studies are based on the criteria that go with the task-based approach, and among the criteria are group interactions, meaningfulness of tasks and learner-centred teaching (Willis, 2000; Curriculum Development Council, 2007). Teachers who use alternative approaches that deviate from the suggested approach in the English lessons are deemed inappropriate and criticised by the inspectorate of the Education Bureau.

Chiu Wing-tak, former vice-principal of La Salle College, a prestigious secondary school in Hong Kong, revealed that he was once banned from using the grammar-translation approach in his class during a class visit by the Education Bureau inspector (Chan, 2007), thus illustrating that teachers are pressured to comply with the teaching approach recommended in the official documents and to

abandon the methods that are deemed 'ineffective' by the bureau. Nevertheless, the 'optimal' approach recommended by the government usually provides one-size-fits-all solutions that fail to address contextual constraints, as Mr. Chiu shares with the news reporter: [Translated from Chinese]

> Nowadays, the Education Bureau has discouraged schools to teach English grammar. While some schools have adopted a closed-door policy [that includes grammar teaching], many schools have already taken out grammar from their syllabus … Compared with my former students who had learned grammar in early years, today's students are so weak in English that they make a dozen grammar mistakes in one sentence. Worse still, some even are not able to form a complete sentence. The situation is worrying.
>
> <div align="right">(Chan, 2007, Education Column)</div>

While the formal curriculum signifies a preference for a more communicative teaching approach such as task-based learning, what Mr. Chiu's students needed, however, was grammar lessons that helped them fix their writing problems. However, as Ritzer (1988) mentions, in a society in pursuit of McDonaldisation, human judgment is replaced with nonhuman technology and models that ensure 'quality assurance', implying a reductionist approach in education. That the technical decision is superior to humans is also one major feature of bureaucracy:

> The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organisation has always been its purely technical superiority over any other form of organisation. The fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compares with other organisations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production.
>
> <div align="right">(Weber, 1978, p.973)</div>

Undeniably, McDonald-style restaurants which are developed under the 'bureaucratic mechanism' have thrived under globalization (Andersen & Taylor, 2012). Restaurants that emphasise personalised services and local tastes are, however, struggling to survive under the threat of homogeneity brought about by globalisation (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). The same is true to education in Hong Kong. A globalised teaching approach that is introduced to Hong Kong under this kind of bureaucratic mechanism takes no regard for the contextual factors. Carless (1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007), who examines the implementation of the task-based approach being

advocated by the government in Hong Kong, for example, criticises the recommended approach for its failure to address the contextual restraints in Hong Kong:

> Task-based teaching has not yet fully established itself and is generally considered—except by younger or more recently trained teachers—to be innovative. Conditions for task-based learning are not particularly favourable. Average class sizes in primary schools are around 36 pupils per class, and classrooms are usually cramped, spartan, and with inadequate storage space. Just as principals and senior teachers may neither fully understand nor support the rationale for task-based learning, traditional pencil and paper tests are not aligned with methods which tend to place more emphasis on speaking, listening, and the communication of meaning.
>
> (Carless, 2002, p.390)

The issue here, as seen in Carless' study, is that while it is inevitable that the world has to progress with innovations, one cannot overlook the context and more importantly the human factors. Educational innovations, in particular, cannot be introduced as McDonaldised products because what works in one context may not be applicable in another. Sadly, many school-improvement programmes still rely on top-down models that try to get teachers to comply with some expert-designed and research-based solutions to school problems (Little, 1993). Many policymakers and practitioners also have "a naïve belief" that "policies and practices designed in one context can be unproblematically transported elsewhere" (Walker & Dimmock, 2000, p.157). Local scholars such as Morris, Chan and Lo (2003, p.85) thus argued that reforms in Hong Kong are usually initiated by politicians who are "not fully cognizant of the realities of schooling", or developed by "an overseas team with no experience in the local context". Such practice could be problematic as Schön (1983, p.10) warns that "some of the solutions advocated by professional experts were seen as having created problems as bad as or worse than those they had been designed to solve".

This being said, the implementation of school-based curriculum development (SBCD), which is the focus of study for this research, should not be viewed as a standardised, one-size-fits-all initiative developed for the sake of bureaucratic convenience. It must be bound in context and designed to cater for pupils' learning. Lessons can be drawn from previous studies on government-initiated SBCD programmes which have excessive concerns over bureaucratic requirements instead of the pupils' needs. In the following section, I will discuss the issues connecting to government-initiated

SBCD programmes in Hong Kong by reviewing two early studies.

Previous Studies on Government-Initiated SBCD Schemes

Lo (1999) examined in depth the School-based Curriculum Project Scheme (SBCPS) initiated by the then Education Department in the 1980s in three different schools. She described the scheme as a "centralized promotion of decentralization", implying that "the goals of the SBCPS had to be achieved by supplementing the existing central curriculum rather than by developing school-based curricula to meet the needs of pupils" (Lo, 1999, p.424). She added that the schools' motives of joining the scheme were mostly extrinsic, especially when it came to getting more resources and money from the government. "The needs of the pupils appeared not to be a key consideration" in the scheme (ibid, p. 427) because "creating new materials as a long-term plan by a group of teachers" was not evident in the schools studied (ibid, p.426). Moreover, when developing the SBC, teachers in these case studies were required to attend government workshops after a busy day of work to make sure that the course content addresses the formal curriculum concerns. Teachers were also busy preparing written documents for officials' inspection. Evidently, the SBCPS examined by Lo is full of features of bureaucracy especially in terms of "accumulation of written documents" and "trainings" by experts (Weber, 1978, pp.956-958).

Meanwhile, Law (2001) also conducted a similar case study on the impact of a school based curriculum project on teachers and students in a Hong Kong secondary school – Salesians of Don Bosco Ng SiuMui Technical School. The school-based project he examined was an integrated project, linking Mathematics, English and Chinese together under the same themes with the aims of re-establishing students' low self-esteem, re-creating an enjoyable environment and promoting teamwork among teachers. Similar to the projects in Lo's study (1999), the integrated project was initiated by the school administration as a top-down innovation after the government offered some 'incentives' to the school. Following the project, he interviewed six teachers, six students and three co-coordinators involved in the school-based project. While both students and the co-coordinators generally held positive attitudes towards the project, not all the teachers welcomed the innovation. Two experienced teachers were against the innovation and one even withdrew from the project. The latter felt "negative about the pressure for change from the administration", and "recommended a naturalistic approach to change, not a top down from the school administration" (Law, 2001, p.12).

From the above examples, one can identify the reasons why the SBCD scheme initiated by the government was not gaining popularity in Hong Kong in the early 2000s. To begin with, the innovation was introduced with little regard for the local context. Teachers merely transplanted expert-designed methods directly to their schools. Second, the way to administer the innovation was contradictory to its original intention. What is considered as a bottom-up approach has become a top-down innovation in which teachers have almost no say about the implementation. Consequently, teachers just followed the instructions from the then Education Department and strived to make their students produce outputs for official display. Many of these government-led SBCD programmes have therefore turned into an "ad hoc" and "discrete initiative" (Morris, Chan & Lo, 2003, p.84).

Update on SBCD

Although the initial research on government-initiated SBCD schemes was conducted in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the situation has not been changed over the past decade. Chan (2010) commented that following the education reforms in Hong Kong in the early 2000s, the formal curriculum in Hong Kong had been transformed from a centralized one to a more decentralized one in the postcolonial era. The latter assumed that "teachers would become active professionals by renewing a teacher's role through the adoption of various government strategies such as guidelines, recommendations, and the use of school-based curriculum development" (Chan, 2010, p.96). This assumption opened an opportunity for teachers to take an active, autonomous role in developing a school-based curriculum that catered for the pupils' needs. However, Chan argued that despite the changes, the managerial measures taken by the government such as the School Development and Accountability framework, the External School Reviews and the Territory-wide System Assessment, which aimed to assess students' competency in Mathematics and languages and subsequently the teaching quality, exerted great pressure on schools and teachers. Consequently, teachers were pressured to comply with "all the indicators and standards set out by the government" in order to "[present] a good public school image in terms of student achievement and school effectiveness" (Chan, 2010, p.99). The accountability mechanism taken by the government is thus described by Kennedy, Chan and Fok (2011, p.52) as 'hard measures', which refer to "policy instruments that do not have the force of law but that nevertheless go beyond persuasion to create conditions where compliance is the only viable option". In other words, although the aim to decentralize the curriculum shifts the accountability of planning and implementation to teachers, the bureaucratic

control on SBCD has remained unchanged.

Aims and Focus of this Inquiry

Different from above studies (Lo, 1999; Law 2001) that see a huge bureaucratic influence on the implementation of SBCD, the case study that I present in this thesis examines an SBCD programme that has been initiated and implemented by teachers in a secondary school with minimal bureaucratic influence. In addition, whilst the former cases focus on the operation of the SBCD scheme in the participating schools and on the work dynamics among teachers, this inquiry observes how teachers who hold different mind styles according to the Gregorc Style Delineator (Gregorc, 1982) deliver the school-based materials (SBMs) in their own classrooms. Thus, different from the former studies, this case study examines implementation at the classroom level. Most importantly, the teachers in this case study are not told which teaching methods they should follow, which I believe would enable the teachers to exercise autonomy to a certain extent. Specifically, this case study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the mind styles (Gregorc, 1982) of the four participants in this inquiry?

    As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, this study is framed by the idea that teachers' teaching styles are different and therefore their response to an innovation, for example SBCD, can be different. It is important to understand the participants' teaching styles before analysing their response to the SBCD in this inquiry. While there are many tools to assess and frame one's teaching and learning style, in Chapter 3, I will explain the reason for choosing the GDS in this inquiry.

2. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the school-based curriculum in this inquiry?

    "Teachers are usually the key element in the implementation process because they are the people who will implement, adapt or reject the innovation" (Carless, 1997, p.363). By probing into their attitudes towards the SBCD practice in the researched school, one can better understand why and how teachers would make adaptations to the SBMs.

3. How do the four participants who hold different mind styles (Gregorc, 1982) implement the

school-based curriculum at the classroom level? To be more specific, do the four teachers teach according to their mind styles (Gregorc, 1982)? What are the similarities and differences among teachers who hold different mind styles (Gregorc, 1982) in terms of their classroom activities?

The verb "implement" here refers to "teachers' classroom teaching including how they design lessons, organize activities or tasks, teach the four skills of English, use materials and assess students' performance" (Chen, 2010, p.12). Different from other SBCD studies in Hong Kong, which investigate implementation at the management level, the context of this inquiry will be confined to what teachers do in the classroom.

Before answering the above questions, I will describe the research context, including the details of the research site and the participants in the upcoming chapter. Attention should be drawn to the fact that the SBC under this study was developed and implemented by teachers in a local secondary school with little bureaucratic influence, where no performative guidelines and suggested methods have been imposed on the SBC. The implementation of the SBC, from planning to delivery, also exemplifies a bottom-up innovation process.

Chapter 2
Research Context

Having reviewed the nature of bureaucracy in Hong Kong's education system in Chapter 1, this chapter takes a close look at the micro-context, which is the school where the case study was conducted. In particular, the rationale of the school-based curriculum development in this case study will be explained. Attention should be paid to the development process in which I, as the curriculum writer, attempted to personalise the curriculum rather than indiscriminately follow the official guidelines.

Research Site

The research was conducted in a school where I had worked for eight years by time of undertaking the research. The school under investigation is anonymised as TPSS. TPSS is funded by the government under the direct subsidy scheme (DSS). It is a medium-sized secondary school with a student population of about 700 (Form 1 – Form 6, which is equivalent to Year 7 – Year 12 in the UK). Most of these students first enrolled in TPSS with a low proficiency in English, with the attainment test (a placement test for Form 1) score around 30% on average, compared with the territory-wide average of 69% in 2009-2012 (School Internal Record). In addition, although the socio-economic backgrounds of these students are kept confidential by the school authorities, most students that I am in touch with are from low-income families who live in the Northern New Territories and Shenzhen. English is rarely used in the communities around them.

Different from other government-funded schools or aided schools, DSS schools can flexibly manage their financial resources according to their own needs and therefore have more freedom to allocate their staff as and where needed. Capitalising on the above advantages, TPSS effectively deployed English language teachers and planned activities that created an English-rich language environment for students to learn English. The school also made a bold move in deploying more English teachers to develop school-based curricula and materials for different forms, aged 12-18.

Education Philosophy Reflected in Curriculum Writing

As a curriculum developer for the senior forms, I found that there was a lack of a cohesive

curriculum as well as materials for the Workplace Communication elective in Form 5 (equivalent to Year 11 in Britain). I therefore proposed to the subject panel that I write up a new curriculum package in the academic year 2012-2013. At the planning stage, I did not look up the established SBCD models such as Bruner (1966), Hanley (1970), Walker (1971) and Tyler (2013). One reason is that there are no 'best' models per se and the strengths of one model are often also its weaknesses (Morris, 1998). As such, one has to consider "a variety of factors including the political environment and on the conceptions or images of schooling of key decision makers" (ibid, p.71).

Another reason is that I consider curriculum writing as a "method of inquiry", which involves two dimensions, as Richardson (2000, p.926) explains, "First, it directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as a person writing from a particular position at specific times. Second, it frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said at once to everyone".

The SBC that I wrote for the school, therefore, embodied my reflection as a learner and teacher of English who was writing a curriculum specifically for the group of students in a local school. To put it another way, the writing of the curriculum is embedded in my education philosophy, which is defined by Ornstein (2007, p.5) as "a framework for broad issues and tasks, such as determining the goals of education, subject content and its organization, the process of teaching and learning and, in general, what experiences and activities to stress in schools and classrooms". It also reflects my "life experiences, common sense, social and economic background, education, and general beliefs about people" (ibid, p.5). To be specific, I took the following into consideration when planning the SBC:

1.   Most of my students in this study share the same childhood as mine, and they live in a neighborhood where English is rarely spoken. The experience of my primary school days shows that students without enough exposure to the target language can hardly put the language into practical or communicative use (Willis, 2000, p.4). In other words, students should be given opportunities to present and share their ideas with their classmates using the target language. They should be able to get access to authentic materials, which can widen their repertoire of language use.

2.   My secondary school experience suggests that learning would lose its meaning if it were all about getting the best answers to outdo other candidates as in the norm-referenced examinations. To

put it in Kohn's terms:

> "The best teachers are vitally active and involved, but not in propelling students toward right answers, not in filling them full of facts, not in giving them worksheets that consist of naked numbers, or disconnected sentences in which the point is to circle vowels or verbs."
>
> (Kohn, cited in Thuermer, 1999, p.96)

Thus, in designing the school-based materials, I provided space for students to think critically and be creative.

3.   Learning tasks should be progressive and contextualized. Learners can progress from easier tasks to more difficult tasks under the same context or theme. Teachers should set learning tasks and targets that are achievable. No-one should be considered "doomed to fail" as in the norm-referenced examinations.

4.   The success of cram schools (schools that offer tutorial lessons for students to help them succeed in the public examination) in Hong Kong shows that most students' drive for learning English is instrumental rather than intrinsic. Research indicates that 70% of the students in the last grade of secondary schooling in Hong Kong attend cram schools in preparation for the public examination (Bray, 2013). They attend cram schools for sample questions and model answers that they can look up to in order to get a better grade in the examination. It shows that students continue to be concerned about examinations. Students are eager to learn and listen if they realize that the learning tasks will help them do better in the examination, whether the mode of instruction is lecturing in nature (as in most cram schools) or interactive. Thus, the content of the school-based curriculum should be linked with the public examination.

5.   Most students in Hong Kong learn English not for leisure or communication but for examination. Communicative language teaching (CLT) does not entirely fit the context in Hong Kong and adaptations have to be made (Carless, 2007). At times, teachers also need to explicitly teach the language patterns and grammar rules that help realise the target text type (or the final assessment task to be exact). To ask students to work on communicative tasks without scaffolding is like putting a non-swimmer to sea. After all, as long as we teach English in context, it is

unavoidable that students should learn about the register in use such as in the case of Workplace Communication.

This does not mean that teachers should test students' knowledge of grammar. On the contrary, assessment tasks should be communicative in nature to give students greater exposure to the language use. In other words, assessment tasks should not be based on how much a student knows about the rules, but instead on the extent to which students can apply the rules to daily communication. As such, teaching of rules and language patterns is necessary only when they are used as a tool that helps students construct their meaning later on in the assessment tasks.

6.   With reference to the hallmark of outcome-based education, teachers should take students' future needs into account. Teachers should teach not only linguistic knowledge, but also life skills, and in the context of Workplace Communication, it means: understanding the job requirements, getting to know about a company's culture, and how to spot scams. As Freire (1998, p.67) argues, a teacher cannot separate "the teaching of content from the ethical education of the students".

7.   Considering teaching as an artful act, which will be further discussed in Chapter 3, I do not consider the school-based curriculum as a technical manual with steps that must be followed to achieve the final outcome. Instead, it should provide flexibility for teachers and students to create. That is why students are given different opportunities to share about their dream jobs, and are free to choose a job to present on. Teachers can also get to know their students' interests and as such alter or reproduce any content to cater for the students' needs.

With the above reflection based on my teaching and learning experiences, I wrote up the SBC on Workplace Communication for S5 students. It should be noted that in the design of the curriculum I had considered the students' backgrounds and needs (e.g. points 1, 4 and 5). The course materials had also been reviewed and commented by the participants before being sent out for printing, ensuring that teachers had input to the curriculum design and implementation. Finally, as mentioned in point 7 above, during the implementation, the teachers were given room to exercise their discretion and autonomy to deal with any uncertainties in their classrooms. The outline of the course is attached in Appendix 1. After examining the background of how the SBC was written, the following sub-section describes the participants.

Selection of Participants

The four English teachers participating in the research were teaching Form 5 in the academic year of 2013-14. As in previous years, teachers set aside four to six weeks before the final examination to teach the English elective - Workplace Communication and conducted school-based assessment for their students, which formed part of the public examination grade. Since there were only four Form 5 teachers teaching the elective, they represented the total population in the case study. The sampling strategy used in this inquiry is, therefore, comprehensive selection (LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch, 1993). A brief profile of the four participants, whose names are changed into pseudonyms, is listed below:

Ms Sussie is a local teacher who was raised and educated in Hong Kong in her early years. Upon finishing her secondary school, she continued her studies in the U.S., and graduated there with a major in Teaching English as a Second Language. She had eight years of teaching experience by the time the research was conducted. She was teaching the class of the highest ability.

Miss Joey was raised and educated in Hong Kong, but chose to complete her first degree in the U.K. She had six years of teaching experience by the time the research was conducted. She was teaching the lower ability group.

Miss Tina completed her secondary and college education in Hong Kong. Compared to other teachers in the research, Miss Tina, who had only taught English for three years, had the least experience. At the time of the research, she was teaching the lower ability group.

Miss Mitchell was the only expat teacher in the research. Born in Malaysia but raised in Singapore, she completed her primary and secondary education in Singapore, and attended college in the U.S.A. She had eight years of teaching experience, and was teaching the second best group among the four classes under investigation.

Researcher's Involvement

Besides the four participants above, my involvement in the research, as a researcher and curriculum writer, is also significant because it separates the nature of this inquiry from previous SBDC-related

studies in Hong Kong (Lo, 1999; Law 2001), which examine the issues from the outsiders' perspective. As the researcher in this case study, I was not only the designer of the curriculum under investigation, but also the one who co-constructed and interpreted the implementation of SBCD. I therefore consider myself as an insider-researcher who shares "the characteristic, role, or experience under study with the participants" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p.55). Taking the role of an insider is a two-edged sword, and there are benefits, as well as limitations (Kanuha, 2000; McGinity, 2012).

On the positive side, an insider-researcher can gain an in-depth understanding of the context, get access to the research site easily, elicit genuine answers from the participants, and speak the same insider language (Bonner & Tolhust, 2002; Unluer, 2012). On the negative side, objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity of a research project are questioned at times because "one knows too much or is too close to the project and may be too similar to those being studied" (Kanuha, 2000, p.444). Researcher subjectivity could harm data analysis and even collection (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p.58). This is particularly true in action research, where the primary aim is to evaluate a programme (Burns, 2010). However, since my research here did not encompass any evaluative orientation, there were no norms against which I intended to gauge; therefore action research as a methodological approach was discounted. Instead of evaluating the effectiveness of the SBCD, this research focuses on the question "how" the school-based curriculum is implemented, which therefore avoids the issue of bias to a certain extent.

Ethical Considerations

Despite my attempt to minimize bias, my relationship with the participants raises some ethical issues. Kvale (2002, p.9) warns that the interactions between the researcher and the participants usually involve "asymmetrical power relations". To minimise such inequality, I opted to conduct the research in a naturalistic setting (vide Duff, 2008; Johnson 1992). To begin with, the curriculum materials were used in a natural setting and as planned within their work schedule and therefore not separate as part of this research project. It is, therefore, different from previous research on SBCD (e.g. Lo, 1999), where the participants were required to carry out a scheme that was 'super-imposed' on them. As a researcher in this case study, I was also a member of the same organization and of the same grade as other participants (by the time of the research), and therefore, did not come as an external expert to evaluate their work and the implementation. Before the research, I explained the purpose clearly to the teachers, telling them that I did not come to evaluate their teaching practice

but encouraged them to deliver the lessons in their preferred methods. This, I believe, could relieve teachers from the stress of being observed to a certain extent. In spite of this belief, it is still necessary to acknowledge the difference between a closed-door lesson and an observed lesson. In the methodology chapter, I will further explain how my role in the research and my presence in the observations might have impacted this research.

Although the research was conducted in a natural setting and the participants were studied based on their work routine, the dealing with the participants and the procedures had strictly followed the *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* by the British Educational Research Association (2011). This includes having obtained informed consent from the participants. The aims and the operation of the research have been clearly stated in the letter requesting consent (Appendix 2). Participates were also briefed that they had "the right to refuse to participate in a study, and can withdraw at any time" (Creswell, 2002, p.13) so that they could opt out without feeling that they were compromising their colleague's research project. Despite having gained the consent from the participants, there is still tension in this research as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.60) warn:

> Let's us say that the researcher has been working closely in a school for one or two years; surely that researcher has an obligation to improve the lives of those being researched, rather than simply gathering data instrumentally? To do the latter would be inhumane and deeply disrespectful. The issue is tension ridden: is the research for people and issues or about people and issues? We have to be clear about our answer to the question 'what will this research do for the participants and the wider community, not just for the researcher?'

While this research project would grant me a doctoral qualification, my colleagues who participated in the research might gain nothing. The research would fall short of integrity if its primary aim were to pursue a personal interest. Thus, just as what Cohen Manion and Morrison (ibid) mention above, I had an obligation to improve the well-being of the respondents such as giving credit to them by acknowledging their assistance in this thesis, reporting the findings unearthed in this research to disseminate good practices both inside and outside of the school; and allowing the participants to read and comment on my work including the findings and analysis, which would be presented in different academic conferences. In all instances, "permission has been requested and obtained from

all participants", and any conference papers that refer to real people "have been given to those people for editing and approval, prior to putting the text into the public domain" (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p.78). Again, participants could opt out from the research and request not being named or included in the public domain; thus ensuring the integrity of this research.

To sum up, this chapter provides details about: the development of the SBC based on the curriculum writer's philosophy; the four participants' profiles; and the ethical issues connecting with my relationship with the participants. The focus of the chapter, as does this inquiry, is humans and not the programme itself as in other SBCD-related studies. To understand how an SBCD initiative is implemented, one needs to understand how individual teachers think and act differently. The next chapter will, therefore, take a closer look at the act of teaching with an emphasis on teaching styles, which has subsequently formed the theoretical framework of this inquiry.

Chapter 3
Teaching as an artful act

Teaching as Reflective Actions

In Chapter 1, examples of "McDonaldised" education initiatives in Hong Kong were given. At issue is that these government initiatives emphasises the technical aspects of implementation such as seeking effective ways to solve classroom problems rather than seeing teaching as a reflective practice imbued with compassion, care and passion (Zeichner, 1994). Teachers in the government-led school-based curriculum projects, for instance, acted like 'technicians' who launched the schemes according to a list of official criteria instead of at their own discretion (Lo, 1999). Little has been done at the government level in Hong Kong to examine teachers' reflective actions in the classroom as the official documents (e.g. Curriculum Development Council, 2007, 2015) refer to the technical aspects of teaching and curriculum implementation. By "reflective", Dewey (1933, p.215) means that teachers should become involved in action that entails "active and persistent consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads". Teachers, therefore, are not robots that are programmed to follow certain rules and criteria in the implementation of a certain teaching initiative, but they have their own beliefs, teaching philosophies and thinking styles, which is defined by Sternberg (1997, 1988) as one's preferred ways of government or managing one's daily activities. All these factors underline teachers' reactions to an initiative.

In line with Dewey's thinking, Schön (1983) also calls for a shift from the scientific or technical approach, which he calls Technical Rationality, to the reflective approach when looking at the teachers' actions in the classroom. What Schön (1983) suggests is that instead of finding out a universal or standard practice (in teaching or SBCD), it is necessary to understand the knowing and the acting of an individual, as well as the individual's reflection in action. The two entities (knowing and action/ reflection and action), according to Schön (1983), are not separate ideas but an integrated process of knowing-in-action or reflection-in-action. For instance, what I do in SBCD reflects my knowing in second language education, which encompasses my knowledge, experiences and reflection on teaching. Here, the notion of Schön (1983) is different from that of Dewey (1933) in the sense that the former tends to believe that a practitioner's 'know-how' is internalised, which means that a practitioner may not be able to explicitly explain his philosophy and belief, but he or

she has the know-how to get things done, as Schön (1983, p.49) explains:

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

Despite the difference in explaining teachers' actions, what Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983) have in common is that both are strongly against routinised, bodily practice (Reckwitz, 2002). Teachers should not just teach from textbooks or comply certain guidelines but should judge and act prudently with their beliefs and discretion (Shulman, 1987).

Besides beliefs, teachers have different teaching styles when they teach. Even when they use the same methods, their presentation and techniques could be different (Rubin, 1983; Entwistle, 2013). Given the variations in teaching methods, I therefore argue that one should not examine classroom practice by using performative indicators showing what teachers and learners should do during the lesson. Against this type of bodily practice (Reckwitz, 2002), I therefore adopted a reflective approach in conducting my research. While I will further explain my research methodology in the next chapter, in the following sub-section, I will concentrate on 'artistry' in teaching, which leads to the discussion about the significance of examining teaching styles in this case study.

Teaching as Artistry

Explaining an abstract concept like "artistry" is by no means an easy task. In an attempt to explain the term, Schön (1983, p.32) contrasts "artistry" with Technical Rationality, which he refers to the ways to solve problems or make decision "through the selection, from available means, of the one best suited to established ends". The selection of means to established ends, as mentioned in Chapter 1, is the hallmark of bureaucracy. According to Schön (1983), this feature can be found everywhere in professional practice. By "practice", Schön (1983) notes that there are two levels. The first level refers to "performance in a range of professional situations", whereas the second level refers to "preparation for performance" (ibid, p.56). However, when professionals repeatedly

practise the selection of available means for the established ends, it will result in over-learning, in which professionals habitually follow the established methods without regarding the setting and the human needs, thus resulting in the loss of the values they are supposed to promote:

> Among younger professionals and students, there are many who find the professions without real interest in the values they are supposed to promote: lawyers have no real interest in justice or compassion; physicians, in the equitable distribution of quality health care; scientists and engineers, in the beneficence and safety of their technologies.
>
> <div align="right">(Schön, 1983, p.12)</div>

What Schön tries to warn against is the danger of Technical Rationality that may turn practice into repetitive production without social values. Education is dealing with humans. Teachers cannot solve problems by just resorting to one-size-fits-all methods repetitively. Tolstoy (1967), thus, argues that teachers should not blindly follow some standardised methods, but judge sensibly what is the best solution to the possible difficulties incurred by a pupil. In short, teaching is "not a method but an art and talent" (ibid, p.58).

The above interpretation by Tolstoy (1967) best illustrates the concept of "artistry" in teaching. Such act of artistry requires 'sensibility, imagination, technique, and the ability to make judgments" (Eisner, 2005, p.251); "the ability to take skillful advantage of situations and to do whatever is most appropriate" (Rubin, 1983, p.48); and "accumulation of experience, insight, and professional cunning" (ibid, p.49). Summarising the act of artistry, Eisner (1984, p.24) reminds us that "eclecticism [is] not a practical liability but a necessary feature of the deliberative process" and that "deliberation - the exercise of human's highest intellectual powers - was necessary in making decisions that must suit changing contexts riddled with idiosyncrasies". Eisner's reminder exemplifies Schön's (1983) notion of reflective practitioners, which criticises the use of scientific and standard models in place of humans' judgment.

Eclecticism and deliberation, the two major features of artistry, also reflect the real-life scenario in the classroom as opposed to bureaucratised, routine official norms. Olson (2005, p.97) maintains that teachers may not necessarily solve problems according to "official norms" but very often they resort to "a wide variety of ideas", which are expressed in practice itself.

One lively example in Hong Kong's context is a classroom story unfolded by Lin (1999), in which she examined how an English teacher in a local secondary school attempted to connect with the students' social habitus by using the students' first language (L1) to "explain vocabulary, give directions, make the English story texts come alive, explain grammatical points, and interact with students most of the time" (Lin, 1999, p. 401). Whereas the use of L1 might not be aligned with the official norms, the teacher used her creative and discursive efforts to successfully help her students from a Cantonese-dominant working class habitus gain confidence and interest in learning the English language (ibid). The story here indicates that teachers are not robots who follow prescriptive methods stipulated in the official curriculum but at times resort to creative and artful methods to cater for learners' needs.

Seeing teaching as an artful act, I, therefore, do not intend to view the implementation of the SBC from the Technical Rationality prospective. In other words, the aim is not to check to what extent the teachers follow the official norms or prescriptive methods, but to examine how they adopt "a wide variety of ideas" to teach via their reflective practice. Thus, the implementation of the SBCD in this case study is different from the curriculum tradition in the United States, which is described by Westbury (2000, p.17) as follows:

> [The American curriculum's] overall organisational framework [is] a "curriculum-as-manual," containing them templates for coverage and methods that are seen as guiding, directing, or controlling a school's, or a school system's, day-by-day classroom work… what is essential is the idea that public control of the schools means that, whatever the character of the curriculum that is developed for a school or school system, teachers as employees of the school system have been, and are, expected to "implement" their system's curricula – albeit with verve and spirit – just as a system's business officials are expected to follow their airline's rules governing what they should do.

Instead, the implementation of the SBC in this study is more aligned with the German Didaktik tradition, which "is centered on the forms of reasoning about teaching appropriate for an autonomous professional teacher who has complete freedom within the framework of the *Lehrplan* [or curriculum in English] to develop his or her own approaches to teaching" (ibid, p.17). It is therefore based on the "art" of Didaktik that the teachers will be observed how to implement the

SBC.

Although teachers use different methods to solve problems and to deal with their students, it is acknowledged that teachers, like students, have their own preferred teaching styles in organising their lessons and solving the problems. Rubin (1983), for example, argues that even with the same materials, teachers may handle them with their distinctive methods, thus producing different results. Thus, it is important to understand the concept of teaching styles, which are explained as follows.

Analogy between Cooking and Teaching

Following Rubin's line of thinking, Freeman (1988, pp.10-11) uses the analogy of cooking to describe the implementation of curriculum in the classroom:

> When you cook from a recipe, the food you produce is always unique in some way. When teachers use exercises from a textbook, they transform each activity from something that exists in a limbo outside of time and place into the concrete messiness of their classrooms and students… This fact is not subversive; it is simply true because teaching and learning are human activities. People teach people who are learning, which creates a human environment in which the abstractions of curriculum, materials, and pedagogy are transformed into actual practice.

What Freeman emphasises is the appreciation of individual differences in delivering the school-based curriculum. Each teacher's 'recipe' is unique. They have their own ways of delivering and organising the school-based materials. By setting a standardised recipe for teachers and asking them to follow the steps one by one, teachers are no difference from a robot and their creativity would be stifled. However, previous studies about the SBCD schemes initiated by the government (e.g. Lo, 1999; and Law, 2001) showed that teachers were required to follow the bureaucratic requirements when designing and delivering the curriculum. Technical Rationality was strictly followed, and features of new managerialism were found in these studies, including "measurement, surveillance, control and regulation" (Lynch, 2013, p.10), which restrict teachers from using their own teaching styles and exercising discretion to solve problems. The lack of respect to individuality led to an implementation that failed to address the individual needs of the pupils who could have different attainment according to their social class as shown in the research by Lin (1999).

Education, as shown in these studies, is merely repetitive production that carries no social values (Schön, 1983).

As Freeman (1998) mentions, each recipe produced by an individual teacher is distinct. Likewise, each teacher's teaching styles are individual. It is based on this assumption that when I conduct the research on how teachers who hold different teaching styles deliver a school-based curriculum, I do not assign any value to a particular style.

One prototype that is used to analyse one's teaching styles without ranking the superiority of one style over another is the Gregorc Style Delineator (GSD) (Gregorc, 1982). [5][b] In the following sections, a brief review of GSD and its relation to teaching styles and how they might be observed will be given.

Mind Styles as Analytical Tool for Teaching Styles

GSD (Gregorc, 1982) assesses one's mediation abilities – perception and ordering. The former refers to two perceptual qualities: abstractness and concreteness. The latter refers to one's ordering abilities: sequence and randomness. While each individual possesses all these abilities, which Gregorc refers to as mind styles (1982), each uses them with different intensity (Harris, Sadowski & Birchman, 2009). It is note-worthy that no mind style described in Gregorc's model is superior and each mind style can be effective in its own way (Allen, Scheve & Nieter, 2011). The characteristics of the four mind styles are summarised by Coffield et al. (2004, p.16) as follows:

> The **Concrete Sequential** (CS) learner is ordered, perfection-oriented, practical and thorough.
> The **Abstract Sequential** (AS) learner is logical, analytical, rational and evaluative.
> The **Abstract Random** (AR) learner is sensitive, colourful, emotional and spontaneous.
> The **Concrete Random** (CR) learner is intuitive, independent, impulsive and original.

GSD is a popular learning style inventory (De Bello, 1990; Ross, Drysdale & Schulz, 2001). However, as Dunn and Dunn (1979, p.241) suggest that "teachers teach the way they learned",

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one's learning styles can justify one's teaching styles (Esa et al., 2009). GSD as a popular learning style inventory is thus also widely used in research about teaching styles (e.g. Seidel & England, 1997；Thompson et al., 2002; Gould & Caswell, 2006; Akdemir & Koszalka, 2008; Esa et al., 2009). The two terms, teaching styles and mind styles, are also used interchangeably in some research. For example, Gregorc (1979) applies his own Mind Style model interchangeably to learning and teaching styles with a claim that the former affects the latter. However, to understand the relationship between teaching styles and mind styles, it is necessary to define the term "teaching style".

The term "teaching style" is defined, in its technical sense, as one's preference in the use of "approaches to classroom organisation, use of subject matter, instructional planning, teaching, evaluation, classroom management, and behaviour management" (Louisell & Descamps, 2001, p.381). Thus, it covers teachers' actions ranging from planning, implementation to evaluation. One technical categorisation of teaching styles is, for example, by teaching approaches such as direct teaching, cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, or self-instructional learning (Louisell & Descamps, 2001). Teaching styles can also be classified based on different taxonomies, personality traits and attributes. Heimlich (1999, p.30), believed to the first scholar who developed a measurement tool for teaching styles, therefore concludes that "[t]here is no consistent definition of teaching style that emerges from literature". Despite the variations, Heimlich (1990, p.31) admits that "[o]ne explanation for predilection in teaching style is that an educator has a preference for various teaching methods to garner specific learner outcomes". Thus, to observe one's teaching style, one possible way is to observe one's preference for teaching methods. That is why I define the term 'teaching style' in the preface chapter in its broadest sense as "teaching techniques and activities and approaches that a teacher prefers to employ in teaching a certain subject in the classroom" (Rahimi & Asadollahi, 2012, p.49).

In practice, GSD provides frames of reference as to what teaching methods are preferred by teachers or learners of different mind styles (Harod, 2004; Butler and Pinto-zipp, 2006; Kbathgate, Mostert & Sandland, 2013). It, therefore, offers not only a possible categorization of teaching styles, namely CS, AS, AR and CR, but also a framework to analyse a teacher's preferred teaching methods, which will be illustrated in the latter part of this chapter (Table 4.1).

Apparently, the categorization of teaching styles follows that of mind styles, but there is a need to

distinguish the nuances between the two. Take the technical categorisation by Louisell and Descamps (2001) for example. While a CS teacher, in favour of an orderly classroom, is most likely to use the direct teaching approach (Butler and Pinto-zipp, 2006), it does not mean that AS, AR or CR teachers may not use the same approach. However, the difference is that an AS teacher, when using direct teaching, may start with "flashes of insight" (Kbathgate, Mostert & Sandland, 2013, p.100) instead of a step-by-step instruction as does the CS teacher. Therefore, when analysing the four participants' activities in their classrooms, I not only focused on what common approach they used, but also investigated their variations in dealing with these approaches, such as different ways of questioning. In short, the mind style model by Gregorc (1982) offers not only a possible way of categorising teaching styles, but also a micro-analytical tool to examine the participants' teaching approaches.

Gregorc Style Delineator Aligned with Aims of Research

One reason why I choose GSD as a tool to analyse each participant's teaching styles is that it goes with the theoretical framework of this study, which is to examine teachers' reflective actions in their classrooms. GSD, which is grounded in phenomenology, helps analyse the underlying causes of teachers' actions in their classrooms, as Harris, Sadowski and Birchman (2009, p.20) explain:

> Through extensive research interviews, Gregorc (2000) identified four channels of mediation that individuals use for perception and ordering. These "channels" serve as the "frames of reference" which influence the individual's experience and resulting behavior. The Phenomenology research method was used to classify overt behaviors (phenos) and match them with underlying causes (noumena) in order to draw conclusions about the nature (logos) of the individual's style.

GSD is used to examine not only the things by their surface but also the driving forces behind them, as Gregorc (2013, n.p.) himself, explains in his personal webpage that his phenomenological research identifies the three levels of existence: "the essence/spirit of something [what], the nature of the driving forces that emanate from it [why] and the outer appearance, characters, behaviors and mannerisms that are the signatures of the spirit and invisible driving forces [how]". The three levels of existence best explain the depth of my inquiry, as I am examining not only "what" school-based curriculum means to teachers but also "how" they deliver and implement it and "why" they choose

a certain way to deliver it, or in short the driving forces (or the teachers' mind styles in this case) behind their actions.

By the same token, in accounting for the human actions, Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus (1997, p.20) argue that style is the ground of meaning in human activities, as it opens a disclosive space in a threshold manner: "(1) by coordinating actions, (2) by determining how things and people *matter*, and (3) by being what is transferred from situation to situation". Therefore, styles provide the underlying causes to account for what happens in the classroom. Through the analysis of teachers' mind styles, one can easily explain why they choose to attach to some teaching methods but not the others. Thus, in this case study, I not only exam the teaching methods the teachers used to deliver the school-based curriculum, but also their mind styles, which are possibly the driving force behind their actions.

In addition, GSD is used for the purpose of this research because it goes with the underlying principles of constructivism which holds that the meaning of reality is socially constructed rather than decided by the researcher himself. In fact, Gregorc (2013, n.p.) keeps emphasizing in his personal website that the model is a self-assessing tool:

> The Gregorc Style Delineator is an integral component of the Mind Styles Model. Its primary purpose, as a self-assessment instrument, is to help individuals move towards the Model's goals of increasing consciousness, being harmless to Self and others, and using the ideas and activities at the appropriate times.

In other words, teachers involved in the research will get to understand and know about their own mind styles based on their interpretation of the words presented in the four mediations in the GSD test instead of from the researcher's interpretation. Gregorc's model therefore fits the purpose of this inquiry. Whilst I will give more details as to how I administer GSD, it is necessary to highlight the limitations of the model.

Limitations of Gregorc's Model

One limitation of GSD is that the validity of the model has been questioned. Reio and Wiswell (2006, p.489), for example, criticise that "there was little support for GSD's theoretical basis or

design and the concomitant accurate portrayal of one's cognitive learning style". Benton (1995) thus warned that one should not use GSD beyond its acknowledged purpose (as a self-assessment tool) because of its lack of validity. Others also criticise the model for its lack of empirical evidence:

> Gregorc presents no empirical evidence for construct validity other than the fact that the 40 words were chosen by 60 adults as being expressive of the four styles. Criterion related validity was addressed by having 110 adults also respond to another 40 words supposedly characteristic of each style. Only moderate correlations are reported.
>
> (Coffield et al., 2004, p.53)

Although the reliability of the GDS is questioned, compared with other commonly used learning style instruments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicators (Myers et al., 1985) and the Kolb Learning Styles Inventory (Kolb, 1976), the GSD is comparatively reliable (Terry, 2002; Butler and Pinto-Zipp, 2006), and it is "sufficient to investigate the construct validity in terms of its use in the classroom" (Seidel & England, 1997, pp. 10-11).

Mostly importantly, as De Bello (1990), who compares eleven major learning style models, argues, all learning models are valid and they just offer approaches with different emphasis for investigation. In other words, the choice of the learning style instrument must align with the purpose of investigation. In this research project, although I have taken some learning style models in consideration, there is none that aligns with the research purpose as the GSD does. For example, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicators (Myers et al., 1985) emphasises one's personality and therefore using it to describe teachers' actions in the classroom appears to be inappropriate. Kolb's model (Kolb, 1976) is close to Gregorc's model because both share some common terminology such as 'abstract' and 'concrete'. However, by default Kolb's model is based on the assumption that learning is an experiential process and therefore learning styles are subject to changes over time when learners proceed from one stage of learning to another (Coffield et al., 2004). Based on this assumption, learners may, for example, move from concrete to abstract learning. Nevertheless, such assumption is not applicable to this research as teachers, who are already advanced learners in their subject, may not have this inclination. On the other hand, the GSD, which suggests that one's mind styles consist of "distinctive and observable behaviours that provide clues about mediation abilities

of individuals" (Gregorc, 1979, p. 19), better serves the purpose of this study than other models because this study aims to observe the participants' behaviours in the classroom that provide clues about their mind styles. Therefore, despite the aforesaid limitation, there are no other established models that serve the purpose of this investigation as does the GSD.

Another limitation of using the style model in a research study is that there are still divided views, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, on whether learning [as well as teaching] styles could be changed according to the contexts. Supporters of fixed traits and abilities argue that a valid and reliable measure is a sound basis for diagnosing one's learning styles (vide Coffield et al., 2004, p.13). Montgomery and Groat (1998), on the other hand, maintain that learning and teaching styles are not immutable and subject to changes over time and for different purposes in different classroom contexts. Although I argue in the previous paragraph that teachers' learning styles should be fixed, it is not known to what extent the teachers may adjust their teaching styles for the purpose of the lesson observation, or to cater for their learners' needs. However, as far as the administration of the GSD test is concerned, which will be further illustrated in the next section, the GSD test was conducted almost three months after the lesson observations. If teachers' mind styles could change, then the GSD results might not be aligned with the observation results. Having said that, the issue of consistency of styles is not the focus of this research.

In addition, there are some adjustments made in this study. To begin with, the limitation mentioned by Reio and Wiswell (2006) is based on their quantitative analysis. In this study, a qualitative method, namely observation, will be used to cross-check if the teachers' mind styles according to the Gregorc's model are aligned with their delivery of the school-based materials. This being said, there is no assumption that the strategies used by the teachers in the classrooms must be aligned with their mind styles.

Finally, one should be aware of the misuse of the learning style instruments, as Hall (2005, p.55) warns that "they can all be misused to label or limit learners" and in this researcher context, teachers as well. She argues that "the theories which underpin the models of learning style have the potential to provide teachers and learners with concepts of learning which can be both motivating and liberating" (ibid). Thus, the purpose of this research is not to find out what mind style follows what method best, which would label the teachers and limit their teaching practices. Instead, through classroom observations, some 'motivating and liberating' practices will be identified, and

practitioners can therefore learn from each other's good practices regardless of their mind styles. After all, although each teacher in this research may have a dominant mind style, it does not mean that they will not operate in a less dominant mind style (Gregorc, 1982). After reviewing the limitations of the model, I now go into length to describe how I administer GSD with the four teachers.

Administering GSD

As mentioned earlier, GSD is a self-assessing instrument to help adults discover their own mind styles. The instrument contains 10 sets of words arranged in matrix and each set contains four words that represent the four attributions of individual mind style namely, concrete, abstract, sequential and random. Respondents are required to rank the words that best describe them from 1 being less descriptive to 4 being the most descriptive. The rearrangement of score of each question answered by respondents will determine the mind style. Four sets of scores will show up, representing the score for each mind style: Concrete Sequential (CS), Abstract Sequential (AS), Abstract Random (AR) and Concrete Random (CR). If the total score is 27 or above, it represents the respondent's dominant mind style. The average mind style is between 16 and 26, and a weak mind style falls between 10 and 15. However, respondents might have more than one mind style that is dominant to them, which here refers to bimodal or trimodal. In some cases, some respondents might not have any mind style that is dominant to them, if their mind style score does not even reach 27 (Esa et al., 2009).

To avoid bias, the GSD test was not given to the teachers until after the lesson observations. The table below summarises the mind styles of the four teachers and the scores they received in the GSD test

Teacher	Concrete Sequential (CS)	Abstract Sequential (AS)	Abstract Random (AR)	Concrete Random (CR)	Dominant Style
Tina	32	23	20	24	CS
Sussie	32	24	30	14	CS, (AR)
Mitchell	26	30	23	21	AS
Joey	30	26	27	17	CS, (AR)

Table 3.1: Four Teachers' Scores in the GSD Test.

As stated in the previous paragraph, a score that totals 27 or above represents the person's dominant mind style. According to the results shown in the above table, three teachers in this study have the same dominant mind style, which is Concrete Sequential (CS), whereas one teacher's mind style is Abstract Sequential (AS). It is also noted that Miss Sussie and Miss Joey have bimodal styles, which means they have two dominant styles – CS and Abstract Random (AR). However, the figures of these two teachers show that they have a stronger style in CS than in AR. While there is a lack of empirical research, to my current knowledge, about the commonality of bimodal styles, some studies (e.g. Thompson et al., 2002; Esa et al., 2009) show that about 50% of their participants are of bimodal styles. Thus, it is definitely not uncommon for people to have bimodal styles in the GDS test.

To sum up, this chapter reviews the issues connecting with teaching acts and teaching styles. The argument in this chapter is that teachers are not technicians and they should not be asked to conform to standardised methods. Teaching is an artful act, and teachers should exercise what Eisner (1984, p.24) calls "eclecticism and deliberation" and make decisions that suit "changing contexts riddled with idiosyncrasies". As such, this research has adopted a qualitative methodology to exam the idiosyncrasies in the classroom instead of using the positivist approach that sees classroom as a stagnant experimental environment.

Chapter 4
Methodology and methods

In the previous chapter, I argue that teaching is an artful act, and there are idiosyncrasies in the classroom. As such, any attempt to use quantitative data to examine the quality of teaching may provide very limited view on learning or teaching (Chesterfield, 2015). Lessons can be learned from two common practices by the Education Bureau (EDB) in Hong Kong. The first one is related to a recent controversy over a standardised test in Hong Kong, which will be elucidated below.

Campaign against a Standardised Test and its Implications

At the time I am writing this chapter (early 2016), there has been a defiant campaign against a standardised test which is administered by the Hong Kong Education Bureau (EDB) for all primary 3 and 6 students. The original aims of the standardised test, called the Territory-wide System Assessment or commonly known as TSA, are to promote assessment for learning, provide information for students to improve learning and to allow teachers to reflect on and improve teaching in core subjects such as Chinese and English (Berry, 2011). However, school personnel generally believe that the test results collected by the government would turn into performance indicators that the EDB would ultimately use to evaluate schools and decide which schools to shut down. As a result, most primary schools "drill their students frantically" for the test (Berry, 2011, p.208). Such drilling practices finally reached their boiling point in 2015, and parents started to complain about their kids having no time to do sports or rest because of the piles of TSA exercises that they have to complete every day. A desperate parent called on the EDB to scrap the standardised test on his Facebook page, which subsequently attracted at least 46,000 followers (Lai, 2015). It was the first time in Hong Kong's history that parents stood up against a standardised test and called for a class boycott. Despite the fierce criticisms by parents and educators alike, the EDB in Hong Kong did not step back and insisted that the administration of TSA was necessary because it helped the bureau collect *statistics* to assess students' learning (Cheung, 2015). The above scenario in Hong Kong is not uncommon elsewhere in the world, as Sukys (2009, p.18) describes that many teachers in the U.S. also "tend to teach [standardised] test taking techniques as often, if not more often, than they teach the actual subject matter of a class". Likewise, McIntyre and Jones (2014) argue that such standardised tests and performative practice have been evident in the U.K, Australia and the U.S., and that they have had a huge impact on not just how teachers view their

work but also how English and other subjects have been formulated.

In response to the controversy in Hong Kong, I wrote to the press and queried the grounds on which the EDB could claim that the quantitative data collected from the standardised test could give a full picture of the learning or teaching quality (Personal Communication, 2015). Chesterfield (2015), for one, warns against the use of the quantitative approach in the research of learning, criticising the approach for its failure to address quality of learning or teaching. In the case of standardised tests, for example, the good results generated by excessive drilling do not necessarily represent good quality of teaching.

Here, I am not criticizing the scientific approach in TSA. There is no doubt that the quantitative data has a certain value in assessing students' proficiency in languages. My concern is that the authorities' insistence on standardised tests and performance indicators as the single approach in evaluating a school's quality of teaching may present only a limited view on what is happening in the classroom.

The above scenario indicates the EDB's overemphasis on the quantitative methodology when it examines classroom practices. The quantitative methodology is "an approach to the conduct of social research which applies a natural science, and in particular a positivist, approach to social phenomena" (Bryman, 1984, p.77). One limitation of this methodology as we see in the above controversy is that it fails to probe in-depth into the underlying phenomena, which is usually linked with the contextual factors (ibid). In the TSA controversy, for example, what is overlooked is the drilling culture in the classroom.

Obsession with Methods

Equally problematic is the authorities' overemphasis on expert-designed teaching methods and models, which is also based on a reductionist approach in the positivist tradition. The introduction of the task-based approach to the English subject teaching, which has been discussed in Chapter 2, is one example. Same as standardised tests, these methods ignore contextual issues (Carless, 2002, 2003, 2004 & 2007) and are regarded by the authorities as assurance of good teaching. However, as Kumaravadivelu (2012) warns, the design of many methods in teaching English as a second language (ESL) is still based on the assumption that the learning environments are stagnant, and

they should not be hailed as a panacea to all classroom problems. Likewise, Long (2001, p.181) also alerts us against promotion of a single method, which he calls the "method traps":

> First, even as idealized by their developers, groups of methods overlap considerably, prescribing and proscribing many of the same classroom practices… studies have set out to compare the effectiveness of supposedly quite different methods (e.g. Scherer and Wertheimer 1964; Smith 1970; Von Elek and Oskarsson 1975) have typically found little or no advantage for one over another, or only local and usually short-lived advantages.

It should be noted that what happens in classrooms is full of complexity. The account of teachers' actions in the classroom should not be simply based on performative, quantifiable indicators or on 'expert-designed methods' that are used to judge teachers' 'effectiveness'. As Long (2001) argues above, the performative indicators derived from the 'idealised' method may not necessarily outperform the others.

This being said, my inquiry, which examines the implementation of a school-based curriculum by teachers holding different mind styles in a local secondary school, cannot be easily resolved by the quantitative approach, which takes little reference to what works best in context. Avoiding the pitfall of the quantitative approach and the method traps, I am therefore in favour of the qualitative methodology, which is primarily concerned with "the way in which people shape the world" (Denscombe, 2010, pp.132-133). Here the keyword is "people", and thus, qualitative research emphasises the ways in which human activity creates meaning and generates the social order that characterises the world which we live – what is termed "human agency" (ibid, p.133). When applied to education, "human agency" turns into "teacher agency" (Lam & Lo, 2012, p.216), which represents teachers' ability to create a curriculum, judge the existing practice and identify alternatives to established methods and models.

Qualitative Methodology as Preferred Approach to Classroom Study

Nevertheless, as seen in the two policy pitfalls above, educational innovations in Hong Kong place too much emphasis on Technical Rationality instead of teacher agency. Frontline teachers whose practice deviates from the 'quantitative indicators' or 'suggested teaching approach' are criticised,

as in Mr. Chiu's case (Chan, 2007). Some schools in Hong Kong even require their teachers to comply with certain teaching methods such as task-based learning, mastery learning, brain-based learning and outcome-based learning, and put them as the performance indicators in the appraisal. Teachers who want to exercise discretion and sound judgment in their classrooms have to resort to 'cocooning', which is described by Ho and Tsang (2008, p.173) as follows:

> For those who choose to remain in the profession, there are defenders who try to cocoon themselves from the invasion of the new ethics. Cocooning, for them, means the effort to preserve a minimal set of values and practices they want to sustain or safeguard. Within the cocoon is the zone that they grant themselves freedom to actualize missions they used to commit to - showing care for young people, making the lessons fun, meaningful and inspiring, or promoting moral and civic development of their students. Outside the cocoon, however, they need to shoulder duties that they may disagree with, but they are the prerequisites for the continuation of their work.

Similar to cocooning, McIntyre and Jones (2014, p.38) borrow Lefebvre's (1991) term "lived space" to describe the ways "in which [teachers'] daily realities differ to the dominant spaces imposed upon them" and the space "where such dominance is challenged and negotiated". Cocooning or "lived space" occurs because the Education Bureau has failed to acknowledge the significance of teacher agency in its decision-making process and emphasised technical aspects like system, organisation and teaching materials instead of what values to students, teachers and parents. Qualitative research, on the contrary, has shifted the focus on to humans, as noted by Benton and Craib (2011, p.76):

> [T]he objects of the social sciences - human beings and human groups – possess a property that we know as self-consciousness. They are able to reflect on themselves and their situations and their relationships. Human life is essentially a life of meaning, of language and reflective thought and communication.

Teachers are not technicians, and they do not go through a check-list to make sure all parts go well. The same principle is applied to my research. The aim of my inquiry is not to look for imperatives to account for a phenomenon, but to understand the underlying phenomenon and to construct the reality through interpretation of people's thoughts and actions. It is for this reason that I attempt to

uncrack the 'cocoon' in the classrooms using a qualitative methodology, which is primarily concerned with 'the way in which people shape the world' (Denscombe, 2010, p.132).

Using Case Study to Uncrack "Cocoons"

One way to uncrack "complex phenomena within their contexts" is through the case study approach (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p.544). Many qualitative researchers (e.g.; Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Gall, Borg & Gall, 2003) agree that case study can help us understand the "texture of reality" (Stenhouse, 1983, p.24). Gall, Borg and Gall (2003, p.436) for instance define case study research as "the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon".

Traditionally, quantitative researchers conduct a case study with an aim to "probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisation about the wider population to which that unit belongs" (Cohen & Manion, 1989, pp. 124-125). The same, however, is not true for a qualitative case study. Yin (2013) holds that the value of case study does not lie in how the case relates to the wider population but the fact that the phenomenon is inseparable from its context. In qualitative case study, the inquiry "does not preclude an interest in generalisation" since the case by itself "is regarded as of sufficient interest to merit investigation" (Stenhouse, 1983, p.49). Even when generalisation and application occurs, Stenhouse (1983) argues that they are "matters of judgment rather than calculation" (p.49). In other words, readers can relate their context to that discussed in the research and judge on their own whether they can apply the findings to their own context. Using Stake's words, case study can, therefore, provide "readers with good raw materials for their own generalising" (Stake, 1995, p.102). Melrose (2010, p.599) further elaborates on this kind of generalisation:

> Naturalistic generalisation is a process where readers gain insight by reflecting on the details and descriptions presented in case studies. As readers recognise similarities in case study details and find descriptions that resonate with their own experiences; they consider whether their situations are similar enough to warrant generalisations. Naturalistic generalisation invites readers to apply ideas from the natural and in-depth depictions presented in case studies to personal contexts.

The above comment by Melrose (2010) represents the purpose of my inquiry. Unlike the goal in quantitative research, the aim of my study is not to seek generalization in a scientific sense. Nor is it to identify an ideal school-based curriculum approach for others to follow. As argued earlier, research into classrooms should move beyond the scientific or technical approach. Thus, instead of providing universal or standardised principles of SBCD, the experience of the implementation in the researched secondary school could serve as a mirror of retrospection for readers or teachers alike to reflect on their current practices. Using Melrose's words, readers "can recognise similarities" in my case study and select whatever they think that can "resonate with their own experience".

In the following sections, I will explain why and how I use observation and interview as the methods to construct and interpret the teachers' experiences in the implementation of SBCD in this case study.

Reflective Framework for Observations

The observation method used in this inquiry is grounded on Schön's *Reflective Practitioner* (1983), the purpose of which is for teachers to discover "more about their own teaching by seeking to understand the processes of teaching and learning in their own and others' classrooms" (Wajnryb, 1993, p.9). Thus, instead of coming to the classroom as an authoritative figure assessing the teaching quality of the teachers with a set of performative indicators, I adopt a partnership role in the observation (Tilstone, 1998, p.59), which "expresses a more collaborative, democratic relationship between observer and observee". This being said, the purpose of the classroom visit was clearly stated to each participant. Teachers were told that the observations were not graded so as to avoid teachers 'playing the game' by putting up an artificial lesson to ensure a successful outcome in response to certain performative indicators (O'Leary, 2013, p.50). Meanwhile, teachers were encouraged to preserve their teaching styles to ensure an analysis of authentic processes of teaching and learning in their own classrooms. The goal, as Wajnryb (1993, p.9) mentions, is to:

> … respect the agenda of the individual and must aim towards teacher autonomy, not dependence. By the very nature, … teacher educators cannot offer formulaic, top-down prescriptions. Not only do these tend to close off the pathways to autonomy for the teacher, as well as invest responsibility for change in the educator (instead of shifting it to the teacher), but they simply cannot provide answers for

anything other than low-inference – readily learnable – skills.

Not only will top-down prescriptions shut down the pathways to autonomy, I would add that they prevent teachers from using their own creative methods to solve problems in their classrooms. Thus, what is valuable in classroom observation is not to see to what extent teachers adhere to the official norms, but to examine how the frontline practitioners incorporate their own teaching styles and thinking into their practice, as Wajnryb (1993, p.13) mentions: "The language classroom is the primary source of information out of which teachers will develop their own personal philosophy of what makes effective teaching and learning".

However, this qualitative method is not without its limitations. In the following paragraphs, the limitations of observation are discussed.

Limitations of Observations

It has to be recognised that an observer who is normally not present in the classroom may influence what happens in the enclosed setting and the nature of the lesson (Wragg et al., 1996), including the "dynamics and the ambience of the group" (Wajnryb, 1993, p.26). Thus, May (2011, p.170) reminds researchers that they should not "comprehend the situation as though it were 'uncontaminated' by their social presence". Although I made sure that the teachers understood my intention of observation, which was not to evaluate their teaching, it happened to a certain extent that teachers might feel nervous during my presence in the classroom, and might not act as naturally as they used to, as O'Leary (2013, p.81) explains:

> Reactivity, or what is also referred to as the Hawthorne effect, is a psychological
> term used to describe the extent to which the observed environment is influenced by
> the observer's presence. In other words, to what extent is a teacher's performance or
> behaviour in the classroom affected, consciously or not, by being observed? If we
> were to pose this question to a group of teachers, the response might well be a
> resounding, 'Well, of course it is!'

To reduce teacher attention to having an observer in the class, I, therefore, adopted the "piece of the furniture" strategy, in which "the observer sits at a student desk and becomes part of the desk", and

"does not play a part in the activities going on" (Chesterfield, 2015, p.8). However, O'Leary (2013) identifies that it is inevitable that teachers' actions, as well as students', might still be affected no matter what role the observer takes. Having said that, given the non-evaluative nature of observations, teachers are not necessary to put up a show in order to meet the performative indicators.

As observations are non-evaluative in nature, there will not be any post-lesson interviews arranged. One reason is that in Chinese culture, "[o]pen disclosure and critical evaluation are uncommon in interpersonal interactions such as appraisal meetings or classroom observations" as they might lead to "confrontation" and "a threat to authority and hierarchical relationship" (Walker & Dimmock, 2000, p.173). Chinese teachers tend to be unwilling to openly critique their performances and as such "it appears unlikely that worthwhile discussion will result" (ibid). Another reason is that the post-lesson evaluation by the teachers is not the emphasis of this research, which instead focuses more on how teachers' mind styles are reflected in observable behaviour. Therefore, one limitation in this study is that the teachers' observable behaviour is interpreted more by me as a researcher than by the teachers themselves. However, to ensure that the participants had the right to view and comment on my interpretations, all the papers submitted for disseminating good practices at academic conferences have been reviewed by the participants.

Finally, as agreed by the participants, observation was conducted only once so as to minimize stress and disturbance. However, such one-off observations may provide a limited view of teachers' actions in one lesson (Wragg et al., 1996). Further, May (2011, p.187) warns that "the observation of small-scale settings leaves it open to the charge that its findings are local, specific and not generalisable". As such, more research is needed to examine the consistency of teaching styles over a prolonged period. Despite the above limitations, one has to acknowledge that no operation research method is perfect, as May (2011, p.189) asserts:

> As is the case with all research methods, anyone looking for the means to secure the Truth through its successful operation will inevitably be disappointed. What they will find, however, is yet another means through which we can gain better understandings of ourselves and the environment we inhabit.

Thus, readers should be reminded that the findings derived from the observation are context-bound

and constrained by the research operation. In the following sub-section, I will elaborate on the operation of observation for the purpose of this inquiry.

Operation of Observations

Classroom observations are not confined to the study of activities in the classrooms, as Wajnryb (1993) states that there are three stages of observation: preparation, observation and analysis. To begin with, in the preparation stage, one has to choose the focus of observation. Richards and Farrell (2011), for example, list eight aspects of lessons that one may observe: lesson structure, classroom management strategies, types of teaching activities, teaching strategies, teacher's use of materials, teacher's use of language, students' use of language and students' interaction. To select the aspects of lessons to be focused on, one has to consider the purpose of the observation (ibid).

Whilst this inquiry aims to find out how teachers holding different mind styles according to GSD deliver the school-based materials at the classroom level, the focus should be on teachers' mind styles, which according to Gregorc (1982) comprises two mediations - perception and organization. These two constructs of teaching styles can be revealed in the aspects such as 'lesson structure', 'types of teaching activities' and 'teaching strategies':

Lesson structure
- The way the lesson opens, develops, and closes
- The number of activities that constitute the lesson
- The links and transitions between activities

Types of teaching activities
- Whole-class activities
- Pair and group activities
- Individual activities

Teaching strategies
- Presenting tasks
- Organizing practice
- Teaching techniques

With reference to the above framework, an observation instrument was developed to study how teachers holding different mind styles delivered the school-based materials in the classroom, based on the way they opened, developed and closed the lesson (Appendix 3). The observation is, therefore, semi-structured, which means that "what the observer records is shaped by a set of pre-established categories" (O'Leary, 2013, p.72). A running log (Appendix 4), which follows the structure of the observation instrument above, was recorded during the lesson observation to provide "narrative descriptions of ongoing events or actions in the classroom" (Chesterfield, 2015, p.25). Each participant in this inquiry was observed once, and hence, there were four running logs in total.

Now, moving on to the final stage of observation, which is post-observation analysis, it has been divided into four steps (May, 2011). To begin with, I decode the teaching events in each of the running logs using my own descriptors. Then, I form a table to compare the descriptors I assigned to the running logs. Third, I check on the frequency and distribution of the descriptors (events) across the four running logs and to identify themes that are typical and widespread to go into the discussion session (Appendix 4). In particular, I will highlight the common and different lesson features among the four participants who hold different mind styles. The analysis of the teaching methods embedded in their lesson activities is based on the frames of reference developed by Kbathgate, Mostert and Sandland (2013), which outline the preferred methods used by teachers of different mind styles.

Frame of reference	CS (Concrete Sequential)	AS (Abstract Sequential)	AR (Abstract Random)	CR (Concrete Random)
Prefer-ence	Deriving information through direct, hands-on experience. Touchable, concrete materials	Experimental, trail-and-error attitude, flashes of insight	Strong skills in working with written and verbal symbols. Grasp concepts and ideas vicariously	Receive information in an unstructured way and like group discussions and multi-sensory experiences.
Methods	Workbooks, Demonstration teaching, programmed instruction, well-organized field trips, practical orientation	Games, simulations, independent study projects, problem-solving activities, optional assignments	Reading and listening, rational presentations given by authorities	Medium movies, group discussion, question-and-answer sessions, and television.

Media, teaching methods and practices			
• Workbooks • Handouts • Drills • Demonstrations • Results oriented • Practical lessons • Hands-on practice • Projects • Models • Manuals • Step-by-step directions • Programmed instruction • Orderly classroom • Orderly lab • Direct Application problems • Computer-aided information	• Experiments • Stimulations • Mini-lectures • Critical issues • Interactive video • Problem-solving curriculum • Independent study • Computer and other games • Trial and error discovery • Optional reading assignments • Invent new ways of doing things • Stress challenges and probing questions • Insist students think for themselves	• Lectures • Textbooks • Audiotapes • Documented evidence • Study carrels • Likes scope and sequence • Evaluate by formal testing • Intellectual debate • Guide individual study • Like long-range plans • Teach from a base of content expertise • Supplementary reading assignment • Develop blueprint from an idea to visualize final produce	• Group discussion • Use media • Flexible with time demands • Personalized classes • Concerned with mood of class • Use thematic approach to content • Create aesthetic or interpretative products • Assign group rather than individual activities

Table 4.1: Effective Educational Methodologies to Match the Different Learning Styles

While I attempt to map teachers' classroom activities with the teaching methods described by the table above, the terms used in the discussion section may be slightly different. For example, although "setting targets for the lesson" seems to go with "result-oriented" in the CS column, the former is an explicit act whereas the latter can be implicit. Despite the nuances, the above table still provides a workable framework to describe the preferences of teachers who hold different mind styles.

Interview as Additional Tool to Probe into Teachers' Perceptions

Coffield et al. (2004, p.13) argue that "the perfect learning [or teaching] style instrument is a fantasy", so observation and interviews should be used to capture some of the broad strategies used by the teachers (ibid). As such, besides observation, the interview method is used in this inquiry to provide further information about the teachers' perceptions on the school-based curriculum and the decisions they made in relation to adaptation to the school-based materials – the two areas that the observation method may not cover. The interview method can, therefore, provide an opportunity for the participants to discuss the circumstances of their experiences from their own perspectives, as Berg and Lune (2012, p.331) mention:

One of the most effective ways to learn about the circumstances of people's lives is to

ask them. Interview data collection in case study research is much like any other research interview, and typically less like an oral history. The nature of the case determines the topics about the interview must cover. Within those boundaries, the data are whatever the subjects have to say on the topic.

Since the nature of my case study is grounded in the constructivist frame with an aim to find out the socially constructed meanings of SBCD in the context of a local secondary school, the interviewer and the interviewees thus seek to "co-construct data in unstructured or semi-structured interviews" in order to generate "situated accountings and possible ways to talk about" SBCD that took place in the school (Roulston, 2010, p.60). In this case study, I adopted semi-structured interviews with the participants, in which I referred to a prepared interview guide that included a number of questions. These questions were usually open-ended, and I at times followed up with probes seeking further details and descriptions in relation to what had been said (Roulston, 2010).

Whilst part of the research (R2) was to understand the teachers' attitude towards the SBC investigated under this inquiry, I extended my questions to the way they delivered or used the school-based materials in their classroom, the discussion of which thus could further inform us of their preferred ways of teaching. The questions directed to the teachers were reflective in nature, and the topics were based on but not limited to the following themes:

a. what strategies they usually use to teach English;
b. their views on the school-based curriculum (SBC) and the teaching materials;
c. the way they delivered the SBC materials.

The interview data derived from these questions not only direct us to the answer "why they did what they did" (Oberg, 2005, p.78), but most importantly, they provide explanation of their ground of professional practice, as Olson (2005, p.97) points out, "Accumulating views that people have about their work helps us appreciate the range of perspectives they bring to that work; yet one doesn't only want to know what people think, one wants also to understand why they approach problems in the way they do".

After interviewing the four participants, I analysed the data using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which is explained in the sub-section below.

Constructing Meanings through Thematic Analysis

To generate constructed meanings of SBCD in this inquiry, thematic analysis, which is compatible with the constructivist paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2006), is used to analyze the interview data.

One advantage of thematic analysis over surveys is that it provides flexibility for the participants to voice out their stories. Whereas the latter is usually set by the researcher and the themes of the questions are pre-determined. This shortcoming is particularly evident in surveys using closed-ended questions:

> The chief shortcoming of closed-ended questions lies in the researcher's structuring of responses. When the relevant answers to a given question are relatively clear, there should be no problem. In other cases, however, the researcher's structuring of responses may overlook some important responses. In asking about "the most important issue facing the United States," for example, his or her checklist of issues might omit certain issues that respondents would have said were important.
>
> (Babbie, 2010, pp.256-257)

Thematic analysis, on the other hand, allows researchers to identify, analyse and report patterns according to the importance of the data presented by the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, instead of setting pre-determined and assumptive themes for discussion, researchers may develop socially constructed themes, using thematic analysis. This method is particularly useful in answering research questions that are explorative in nature and do not carry any assumptions such as this inquiry, where the teachers' attitude towards the SBCD and the way they adapted the materials were unknown prior to this study. The analysis of the interview data in this study follows the steps of thematic analysis outlined in Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Sorting out the data – Since the data to be analyzed are mainly derived from interviews with teachers, the interview scripts are examined in depth. The interviews, conducted with the four participants in the academic year 2013-12, are transcribed. While three participants prefer to use their mother tongue – Cantonese – for the interviews, their scripts are subsequently translated and analysed in English. According to Berg and Lune (2012), there are many possible ways of

transcribing interviews (e.g. Jefferson, 2004; Gee, 2014). The simplest way is to include words, whereas others are transformed into punctuated sentences, using Jeffersonian conventions for instance, to show paralinguistic features, which help to analyse the speakers' emotions, verbal mannerism, tone of voice, fluency, etc. In this research, I adopt the former method of transcription that excludes paralinguistic features because it is irrelevant to examine the interviewees' speech production in their mother tongue.

2. Identifying the themes of interests – After transcribing the data, I decode the scripts using my own descriptors (Appendix 6). I then create a summary of the four interviews based on the descriptors (Appendix 7). Going through the descriptors, I search for the items that represent the four teachers' views on the SBC (highlighted in red) and make comparison among these items. These turn into the major theme of interests in this inquiry, that is to explain the teachers' views on the SBC and highlight their likes and dislikes.

3. Further themes are selected from the scripts for further analysis and discussion, in particular the adaptations made by the teachers to the school-based materials.

4. Extracting data – Data extract "refers to an individual coded chunk of data, which has been identified within, and extracted from a data item". Part of the data from the interviews is extracted to provide support for the observation data, especially in terms of explaining the teachers' preference for certain teaching methods.

Limitations of the Interview Method

Similar to observation, the interview method is not without limitations. While one advantage of interview is the empowerment of the interviewees through highlighting the most important aspects of their teaching (Chik, 2008), there is also a tendency that they may overlook certain details about their practice in the classroom. However, as I mention before, interview and observation should go hand in hand to examine the teachers' teaching styles. The data derived from observations can therefore supplement this missing part.

Chapter Summary

To conclude, this chapter justifies why a qualitative case study is a preferred way to examine the complexity of teachers' actions in the classroom. The focus here is human agency – how the teachers make decisions on their own based on human and contextual needs rather than on prescribed methods or models. The observation method, grounded on Schön's framework, is introduced to provide a framework to look at the grounds of good practice by the teachers in the classroom instead of accounting for what official norms they adhere to. Finally, semi-structured interviews are conducted to supplement for the limitations of observations as they provide co-constructed views on the issues of SBCD in context instead of one-sided interpretation as in the observation method. Having reviewed the methodology and methods used for the purpose of this inquiry, I now move on to report and discuss the findings in the next chapter.

Chapter 5
Findings and Discussion

This chapter is divided into two sections — Part A and Part B. Part A presents the findings derived from the semi-structured interviews with the four participants – Miss Joey, Miss Sussie, Miss Tina and Miss Mitchell. To begin with, the teachers' attitudes towards the school-based curriculum (SBC) in this inquiry will be reported. Going through the descriptors in the summary of the interviews with the four teachers, I search for the items that represent the four teachers' views on the SBC (highlighted in red in Appendix 7) and make comparison among these items. I then contrast the findings of this inquiry with previous studies on government-initiated programmes (Lo, 1999 and Law, 2001). While analysing their views, I also examine their feedback to the school-based materials (SBMs). In particular, I will discuss how the four teachers stress on incorporating their personal styles into the SBC during the interviews (highlighted in blue in Appendix 7). Here, the term personal style "refers functionally to the way in which a person responds to events and people in their environment" (Ben-Chaim & Zoller, 2001, p.437). When applied to teaching, it means the way that teachers make adaptations in response to students, materials and the classroom context. Finally, emphasis will be placed on how the four teachers made adaptation to the school-based materials (SBMs) to cater for the needs of their students (highlighted in yellow in Appendix 7), an issue that has been ignored by the teachers in previous SBCD-related studies.

In Part B, a report on the delivery of SBMs at the classroom level by the four teachers holding different mind styles according to the Gregorc Styles Delineator (GSD) (Gregorc, 1982) will be given. Eight most occurring activities noted from the lesson running plogs will be selected for discussion. The discussion is at times triangulated by the interview data, where the teachers shared about the strategies they usually used in their teaching and their beliefs in teaching English as a second language.

Part A - Teachers' Views on SBCD

1. Teachers Show Positive Attitudes towards SBCD

Teachers in this study generally have positive views on the school-based curriculum (SBC) designed for the English elective Workplace Communication. I use the word "generally" here

because the SBC that I developed, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is not impeccable, and teachers in this inquiry also gave some constructive comments on how to improve the SBMs during the interviews. However, their attitudes towards the SBC are overall positive. To begin with, a report on the extent to which they covered the SBMs will be given below.

Teachers in this inquiry all used the SBMs for their teaching on a voluntary basis and covered most content. Miss Joey and Miss Sussie, for example, explicitly mentioned in the interviews that they had completed the SBMs from cover to cover. Miss Tina also covered 90% of the content, but she skipped the pages that provided a list of useful expressions and phrases used for a job advertisement. The pages were intended to put in the SBMs as an appendix to help students complete a job advertisement, but Miss Tina thought that her students should have the basic ability to guess some of the meanings in the list. As for Miss Mitchell, although she did design some extra assessment and lesson activities for students, which will be discussed in greater details in the section 3 below, she still went through the materials very quickly.

Whilst teachers in previous studies about government-led SBCD programmes in Hong Kong (Lo, 1999 and Law, 2001) also covered the school-based curriculum comprehensively, the extent of coverage, therefore, did not mean that teachers held positive views on the SBCD. One reason was that the teachers in the former studies were forced to follow the official guidelines to deliver the materials in order to produce standard learning outputs (Lo, 1999). As such, they might not be able to exercise discretion by skipping or altering the school-based materials to cater for learners' diversity. Thus, besides probing into the coverage of SBC, an analysis of the teachers' comments is necessary.

In this qualitative study, all the four participants indicated their support for the SBCD in the researched school. All of them mentioned explicitly during the interviews that the curriculum developed by the school was able to cater for learners' diversity:

> **Miss Mitchell**: In our SBC, we gave them a passage that is similar to what they are going to write, so they are exposed to it. And after that, we teach step by step at different stages, like the introduction, the actual reason for such and such, reason one, reason two and then the conclusion. I think it's very good for weak students. (Interview Data)

Miss Joey: [My views on the SBC] is positive because the things we produced can be manageable. The language we use in the SBC is easier, which caters for our students' level. The cost is also much lower because students don't need to buy a textbook. But the cost of [writing the materials] is very high. (Interview Data)

Miss Tina: I gave my full support for the SBM. It was really developed in accordance with our students' levels. (Interview Data)

Miss Sussie: I think the SBMs could save us the time used for planning how to teach writing. We only have to follow the materials, step by step. It really saves our preparation time. Our school has prepared something that the textbooks don't provide but that caters for our students' levels. (Interview Data)

The above excerpts not only show that teachers feel positive about the school-based curriculum, but also point out the reasons for their support such as catering for students' diversity, saving costs on textbooks for students and reducing teachers' preparation time. These are the advantages that are supposedly found in SBCD (Skilbeck, 1984). Nevertheless, previous case studies on government-led SBCD programmes show otherwise (Wong, 2002). In Lo's (1999) case for example, teachers were busy attending workshops organized by the then Education Department and preparing documents to apply for funding. Pushing students to produce outputs for official display, teachers were unable to teach according to the students' levels. Although the government-led SBCD programme was finally implemented at the classroom level, the teachers merely put it up as a one-off initiative in order to secure the funding. Lo (1999, p.463), therefore, concludes:

... the nature of the [School-based Curriculum Project Scheme] was promoted as a means to pursue the goals commonly associated with SBCD, namely the identification and satisfaction of pupils' needs, and of teachers' involvement in curriculum development. In reality, the scheme was highly centralized and resulted in the Education Department's maintaining control of the process and products of the scheme. It is therefore, a bureaucratic version of SBCD which stressed the one-off production of classroom materials.

Compared to Lo's study (ibid), the SBCD in this inquiry was initiated and implemented by teachers themselves as opposed to a centralised effort. Thus, instead of adding workloads to teachers as shown in previous studies, this case study showed that SBCD could help teachers reduce their workloads especially in terms of lesson preparation time (Miss Sin, Interview Data). Also contrary to Lo's (1999) study where the true meaning of SBCD did not come across, teachers in this case study could make use of materials that aim to cater for pupils' diversity.

Fullan (2008, p.121) suggests that in order to make the school-based curriculum successfully go into the classroom, three Ps: "personalization (addressing each child's learning needs), precision (tailoring the instruction to the needs without getting prescriptive), and professional learning (where each and every teacher learns every day" are indispensable. From the interview data, it can be seen that the first P, personalization, has been addressed by all the participants. All of them used the SBMs not because they wanted to acquire the funding, but because the materials were personalized and written at the students' level.

2. Teachers Emphasise Artistry in Teaching

Although teachers in this inquiry showed satisfaction with the SBMs, they also gave some constructive feedback. However, whilst the teaching materials contain imperfections, what the teachers concerned about were not the way the SBMs were written, but how they brought the materials to life by tailoring the instruction, that is the second "P" mentioned by Fullan (2008) above.

The word 'tailor' used by Fullan (2008) embodies a sense of craftsmanship. Craftsmanship encompasses not only skills in making but also the artistic quality of workmanship, or artistry in short. To understand the relationship between teaching skills and craftsmanship is no easy task, and to start with I would like to quote a late Hong Kong sculpture artist, King-sum Tong (1940-2008):

> I now get along with wood very well. Before I start making the sculpture. I would observe the wood carefully, to understand its grain, then consider how to make use of or hide some of the grains.

> (Tong, 2014, quoted in an exhibition)

The above quotation perhaps best illustrates the art of curriculum implementation. All sculptors are facing some kind of constraint because of the materials used. Wood sculptors like Tong, for instance, have to craft their masterpieces based on the features of materials at hand. Teachers are similar to sculptors in a sense that they cannot follow one hundred per cent what the school-based curriculum expects of them. At times, they also need to craft their own teaching work based on the abilities of their students, thus placing teaching as a kind of artistry (Rubin, 1983; Eisner, 2005). Some teachers may love to experiment with innovations whereas others may pursue the traditional wisdom of craftsmanship. As participants suggest below, no matter how well the school-based curriculum is written or planned, it is always the teacher who brings it to life.

> **Miss Sussie:** Well, I don't think it's the problem of the materials. It's my teaching strategy that I need to adjust. To be honest, all the things needed are included in the school-based materials. Let's say it's a precious sword. You also need to know how to use it. Indeed, I need more time to plan for the lead-ins, the transitions between tasks and select tasks that are suitable for my students. (Interview Data)

> **Miss Tina:** As an English teacher, I also selectively choose the materials, and see which tasks are suitable for my group of students. I think you have provided us with the choices because there are different parts in the curriculum. Just depending on the school-based curriculum alone may not be enough to generate desired outcomes. We teachers also have to add some elements to lead to the outcomes. (Interview Data)

> **Miss Mitchell:** I think the purpose of education is, you still have to use the materials given to you, but you have to implement your own style of teaching, as well as make sure that you are enticing the kids to learn. (Interview Data)

> **Miss Joey:** I don't have a preference [for what materials to be used] because I have to adapt to the materials - whether they are easy or difficult. Our students need extra help. What's more important is we need to observe the students learning progress in the first few lessons. Then we need to adapt to the materials on hand. It's impossible that you could predict beforehand the students' ability and interests and create a course pack that's perfect. (Interview Data)

What the above teachers emphasise is skill and discernment: teachers need to analyze the features of the materials at hand before crafting. It also goes with the art of Didaktik in German education tradition, where the state curriculum "can only become educative as it is interpreted and given life by teachers" (Westbury, 2000, p.17).

Returning to Fullan's (2008, p.121) concept of 'precision', he does not equate 'precision' with following the curriculum in a strict manner but "tailoring the instruction to the needs without getting prescriptive". In SBCD, it is therefore important to devise a curriculum with this type of precision. Teachers should be given room to practise artistry in their classrooms.

In reality, government-led SBCD programmes, however, offer little room for teachers to exercise discretion. In one SBCD-related case study by Law (2001), for example, teachers were required to strictly follow the teaching activities stated in the SBC. One teacher found it incompatible with his own teaching philosophy and opted to withdraw from the programme. The lesson learned from this episode is that teachers should be given autonomy to tailor the materials for the needs of their students. One cannot turn the school-based curriculum into a bureaucratic practice, which is described by Weber (1978, p.223) as a measure "superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability". Teaching differs from doing experiments. In the latter, you need to ensure reliability by strictly following all the steps in order to generate the same experiment results. The implementation of a curriculum is a different story, as Eisner (2002, p.381) pinpoints:

> Those interested in curriculum matters and working with teachers began to recognize that the conditions teachers addressed were each distinctive. As a result abstract theory would be of limited value. Each child needed to be known individually … each situation … was unique. It was a grasp of these distinctive features that the teachers needed to make good decisions in the classroom.

The way that the SBMs are delivered should be at the teachers' discretion. Nevertheless, there seems to be no place for teachers' decisions as indicated in previous government-led programmes. Zeichner (1994, p.10), thus, argues that there is "a general lack of respect for the craft knowledge of good teachers in the educational research establishment which has attempted to define a so-called 'knowledge base' for teaching minus the voices of teachers". In the following subsection, I attempt

to convey the voices of teachers by highlighting the "craft knowledge" (ibid) of two teachers in this case study. I choose these two participants for discussion because they represent two extreme examples of how teachers adapt to SBMs to cater for students' needs.

3. Teachers Incorporate Personal Styles into School-Based Materials

As mentioned in the previous section, a sculptor crafts his or her artwork based on the materials at hand. Likewise, the interview data show that teachers also teach according to the group of students they have at hands.

One example in this inquiry was Miss Mitchell, who was teaching one lower-form class and one upper-form class. Despite her interest in project-learning, she admitted that it was difficult to do so in her lower-form class where the pupils were of lower ability:

> **Miss Mitchell:** I tried to implement it into the [weaker ability group]. But it's very hard as the kids' level of English is very low. So you have to basically give them more input. (Interview Data)

However, teaching students of higher ability in this case study allows her to incorporate project-learning into the SBC:

> **Miss Mitchell:** [11] So, [for this higher ability group], they were supposed to do a project and after this project, I put in my own questions. Hopefully, they would... it was in the hope that, through their experience - they have done on the project, they would realize the kind of jobs that would require of them. (Interview Data)

Using Flint and Peim's (2012, p.35) definition of a "liberal classroom", Miss Mitchell was teaching her students to be reflective, self-directing and self-managing through the introduction of a creative project into her class. The example presented by Miss Mitchell shows that teachers made adaptation to the SBC based on the students' level.

Another example is Miss Joey. Recalling her learning experiences in her secondary school, she mentioned that she received minimal help from her English teacher and had to complete all the

exercises assigned by the teacher on her own. However, teaching the weakest class in the case study, Miss Joey said candidly that she had to offer comprehensive scaffolding and step-by-step guides for her group of students:

> **Miss Joey:** Maybe students don't have self-learning skills these days. Their ability was very low, so you have to prepare all the things and stuff them into their brain. That's why you have to spend time looking for materials, organizing them so that students can memorize the things easier and regurgitate the things again. So teachers have to make lots of preparations. (Interview Data)

Whilst the SBMs already included a list of job titles from different categories, some of her students found them incompatible to their interest. Going extra miles for her students, Miss Joey catered to her students' needs and made greater effort in developing materials for them:

> **Miss Joey:**… Some boys in my class wanted to be professional football players, and even fire fighter. These jobs are not mentioned in the course pack, but they could think of them.   But they didn't know how to [write about] these jobs. Then I had to teach them to search on the government websites to find out what requirements or levels these jobs required. Sometimes, I needed to teach them how to read the websites. …
>
> … Then I had to search the information and reorganize the materials for them. But since you have developed the frame such as the job title, requirements, skills etc. I just had to follow this pattern and look for relevant information. (Interview Data)

The two examples above indicate that teachers are not 'technicians' as described by the Education Bureau, which blamed the teachers for their rigidity and therefore called for reforms in the early 2000s (Morris & Adamson, 2010, p.30). Teachers adopt various strategies according to the group of students they have, be they learner-centred as in Miss Mitchell's case or teacher-guided as in Miss Joey's case. Teachers are able to make adaptations in response to different constraints and contexts. By the same token, SBC developers should be vigilant to the contextual constraints when planning the curriculum. In addition, different from the previous government-initiated SBCD programmes, the above examples also show that the SBCD innovation in the researched school has provided

room for teachers to exercise their discretion so that they could apply different methods according to the students' level.

Finally, it is evident from the interview data that the adaptations made by the teachers are in line with their preferred teaching styles. Miss Mitchell, for instance, explicitly mentioned in the interview that she always wanted to implement project-based learning in her classroom. Therefore, when she had a chance, she also incorporated project learning into the SBC. Likewise, Miss Joey also stated her teaching preference candidly towards the end of the interview, saying, "My preference is how much my students have learned rather than how much I have covered." (Miss Joey, Interview Data). She therefore did not mind doing extra for her students and provided step-by-step guidelines to prepare them for the final assessment.

To sum up Part A, participants in this case study hold a positive attitude towards the SBCD in the researched school. In contrast with previous research on government-led programmes, this case study shows a bottom-up, teacher-initiated effort that fully embodies the spirit of SBCD, namely identification of learners' needs and greater teachers' involvement. Other benefits of SBCD were also unearthed in the interviews such as saving teachers' preparation time and cutting the cost of textbooks for students. The SBCD programme launched in the school also offers room for teachers to exercise their discretion and hence they could make adaptations to the SBC according to their preferred teaching styles.

Although the interview data provided some hints about the linkage between the teachers' preferred teaching styles and their actions in the classroom, there are still some limitations. One limitation, as mentioned in Chapter 4, is that during the semi-structured interviews, the interviewees became the "microphone holder" (Kvale, 2002, p.13) and shared only what they believed were the most important aspects of their teaching (Chik, 2008). As such, some aspects of their daily practice may be overlooked. In the upcoming chapter, I therefore adopt another research method – classroom observation – to look into the teachers' actions at the classroom level.

Part B – Observing Teachers' Actions in the Classroom

Based on the interview data, Part A reports the teachers' views on the school-based curriculum (SBC) and the adaptations they made to the materials. In Part B, a closer look will be taken into the

implementation of the SBC at the classroom level by the four teachers – Miss Tina, Miss Sussie, Miss Mitchell and Miss Joey. Observation methods were applied to examine how the four teachers delivered the Workplace Communication course in a selected English lesson that lasted about 50 minutes each. To avoid bias, the GSD test (Gregorc, 1982) was not administered until the observations were done. This chapter thus adds the missing pieces from the previous section and further informs us of how the teachers who hold different mind styles deliver and adapt to the SBMs in natural settings.

A thematic approach is used to categorise the common and different features of the classroom activities conducted by the four teachers. Based on the most frequently occurring lesson features that were recorded during the classroom observations (Appendix 4), eight themes are selected for discussion in this chapter. The discussion is organised according to the way the teachers opened, developed and closed their lesson (Richards & Farrell, 2011). On top of the data derived from the observation data, I at times draw on the interview data to provide further explanation of the teachers' actions, as well as triangulated evidence of the teachers' preferred teaching styles. However, not all lesson features can be cross-referenced with the interview data since there are certainly some issues that were not raised during the interview.

To begin with, I would discuss how the four teachers opened their lessons. Before analyzing the data, I assumed that the Abstract-Sequential (AS) teacher (Miss Mitchell) might start off the lesson in a different way from the three other Concrete-Sequential (CS) teachers (Miss Tina, Miss Joey and Miss Sussie). Contradictory to my assumption however, all teachers opened the lessons in a similar way – that is by settling the classroom housekeeping.

1. Settling the Classroom Housekeeping

No matter which mind styles the teachers belong to, all the teachers in this case study preferred to settle classroom housekeeping at the beginning of the lesson. In this case study, for instance, teachers who had assigned homework for students would check and collect their homework before the start of the lessons, whereas teachers who did not assign any homework in the previous lesson would check if students had their materials ready.

Teachers' concern about homework collection is commonplace in Hong Kong's classrooms. Tam

and Chan (2010, p.363) describe that "Chinese people believe that drilling and practice provided through homework assignments enhances children's academic performance". As such, homework is not just for consolidation of learning, but is assigned to meet Chinese parents' expectations. In a report about teachers' workloads in Hong Kong, all teachers interviewed needed to spend time marking students' homework even on weekends and public holidays (Hong Kong Legislative Council, 2006). Another reason why the teachers were 'obsessed with' collecting homework was probably because of the homework inspection culture in Hong Kong. In the middle of the term, the panel chairperson would check students' assignments and teachers' marking to make sure that an appropriate amount of homework has been given to students. In some schools in Hong Kong such as the one in the case study, the panel chairperson may request to check all the students' workbooks and exercise books twice a year, which forms part of the teachers' appraisal. Under this kind of new managerial work culture in Hong Kong, teachers may have to chase students for their homework at the beginning of the lesson just in case they would have trouble providing the books for homework inspection later on. Even having not assigned homework in the previous lesson, teachers may also have to check if students have got their workbooks in place so that they would not miss any classwork.   That they put the checking at the beginning of the lesson instead of the end of the lesson also indicated its priority. Although the school-based curriculum does not require teachers to assign and collect homework for evidence, it seems that the new managerial or accountability culture has penetrated into every part of the curriculum. As described by Chan (2001, p.245), under the global tide of managerialism, "courses offered tend to be market-driven and teaching staff are evaluated by performance indicators and teaching audits". Although teaching audits are not the focus of this research, one has to be aware of the impact of homework inspection on the flow of teaching.

2.   Revision of Prior Learning

Following the classroom housekeeping, another classroom feature that was common among the three CS teachers at the opening of the lessons was revision, which was however an absent feature in the AS teacher's lesson in this case study. CS teachers co-incidentally preferred to start with revising the things they taught in the previous lessons. The purpose of revising the previously learned materials was similar among the three CS teachers. All of them attempted to provide coherence between lessons, highlighting the relationship between previous learning and the target of the coming lesson. This purpose was particularly prominent in Miss Tina's lesson, in which she

first went through the adjectives describing personalities that students learned in the previous lesson, and then asked students to apply some adjectives to describe certain jobs later on in the lesson. In fact, during the interview Miss Tina strongly emphasised the need for coherence between the lessons:

> **Miss Tina**: I didn't remember much about my past learning experience in secondary school. But when I teach English now, I intentionally make sure that my students know what they learn in this lesson is connected with the previous lesson, and they can also use the things in the future lessons. There should be coherence between the lessons. (Interview Data)

The teaching method that stresses the connection between previous learning and new knowledge is called teaching with variation (Gu, Huang & Marton, 2004), which has been developed by some Mathematic teachers in China. This method enables learners to "establish a substantial and non-arbitrary connection" with their previous learning (Huang & Leung, 2005, p.36). This concept also goes with the task-based approach in English learning, in which the language acquired from one small task can scaffold the learners for more difficult tasks later on (Willis, 2000).

After examining how the four teachers opened the lesson, I will shift the focus to how they developed the lessons. Again, the most occurring features will be taken from the lesson running logs for discussion to showcase the commonalities and differences among the four teachers.

3.   Setting Lesson Targets

Besides revision, one classroom feature that separated the AS teacher from the CS teachers in this study was that not all teachers mentioned the target of the lessons explicitly at the beginning of the lesson. The AS teacher for instance started the lesson simply by asking the students to turn to page so and so, and went straight to the task. All the CS teachers, however, mentioned the targets of the lesson explicitly. Miss Sussie for example even reiterated the final target of the whole course at the beginning, which was to prepare students to deal with the elective of Workplace Communication in the examination. Although she did explicitly and candidly mention the target during the observed lesson, she reflected in the interview that she did not do enough of them:

Miss Sussie: When I looked back, I didn't frame them well before using the materials. Maybe they think that… Well, Form 5 students are very exam-oriented. They all looked upon the exam and thought, "The SBMs have nothing to do with our exam. They are not past papers or reading passages that we have to do in the public exam. Why should we do matching? Why should we fill in the mind map?" Then, I didn't do well in framing them. I just passed out the SBMs and told them, "Now, we are focusing on Workplace Communication". Maybe I just mentioned the purpose of the SBMs very briefly. But in fact, the end product of the SBMs is for their school-based assessment. (Interview Data)

The above interview data thus further illustrate the teachers' emphasis on target setting. It not only shows the students what they are going to do in the upcoming lessons but also serves as framing, which provides the reason for what they need to do. Compared to Miss Sussie, Miss Joey's target was, however, more specific as she wrote on the board, "Today's target: Task 1 – Revision, pp.2-4; Check answers, and p.5 Interview".

It is also noted that Miss Tina and Miss Sussie highlighted their lesson targets again in the middle of the lesson to remind students what they had to do in the upcoming activities. Miss Tina for example put the words "job-related adjectives" on the blackboard in the middle of the lesson to alert her students to shift the focus from adjectives relating to personalities to job-related adjectives. Again, this was something to do with her belief in coherence.

Setting targets for individual lessons, according to Moss and Brookhart (2012, p.1), rests on the theory of action, which they define as "the individual's mental map for what to do in a certain situation to produce a desired result". Moss and Brookhart (2012, p.2) argue that setting targets for a lesson is beneficial to students' learning as "the right learning target for today's lesson builds on the learning targets from previous lessons in the unit and connects with learning targets in future lessons to advance student understanding of important concepts and skills".

However, that the AS teacher, Miss Mitchell, does not start the lesson with a target in mind also goes with the characteristics of AS learners which are experimental, trial-and-error attitude, and flashes of insight (Kbathgat, Mostert & Sandland, 2013). If one sees a lesson as experimental, it is possible that new learning targets may arise as the lesson moves on, and as such setting targets may

be meaningless. As Mitchell mentions in the interview, what concerns most is not achieving the language target but how to get the students to experience the language:

> **Miss Mitchell**: But I think each individual [teacher] comes up with their own ways of teaching and their ways of getting the message across, getting the students to come up with creative ideas. I think at the end, the most important thing is that students come to know not just about the language but also the experience. (Interview Data)

Given the AS teacher's emphasis on the means (experience) of learning instead of the end, it is self-explanatory why she did not set a target at the beginning.

4.   Applying the Language in Use

In addition to setting learning targets, what separates the CS teachers from the AS teacher was the fact that the former prefer to emphasise application of the target language. One example was noted in Miss Tina's lesson. When teaching job-related adjectives, she did not go through the adjectives one by one by explaining the meaning of each word. Instead, she asked students to use appropriate adjectives to describe the jobs of the school principal and a funeral worker who does make-up for the deceased and so on. In fact, her emphasis on putting the language into use was also revealed during the interview, where she talked about the way she assigned dictation and worksheets to her students:

> **Miss Tina**: Well, the original idea [of giving them the extra worksheets] was for them to memorize the vocabulary. After spelling the words, they should also need to know their meanings. When I design the worksheet, I didn't want to use traditional dictation methods, in which the teacher reads and students dictate, but then students couldn't apply the vocabulary at all. There's some level of difficulty in the worksheet. It could be handled by Form 5 students in general, but for class it's quite difficult because they don't read throughout the text from top to bottom. The purpose of this worksheet is for them to practice thinking and getting the words from their long-term memory. (Interview Data)

Like Miss Tina, Miss Joey also insists on getting her students to put what they have learned into real use. For example, after teaching the students different job titles and their natures, Miss Joey asked her students to write three sentences about the job they wanted to do, its job nature (using the target sentence pattern: A XXX is a person who …), and the reason for choosing the job.

Another piece of evidence that shows the difference between CS and AS teachers is that while Miss Joey, Miss Sussie and Miss Mitchell were covering the same matching exercise during my class visit, they deal with the exercise in a different manner. Miss Joey and Miss Sussie, whose mind style is CS, required students to read the matched sentences aloud, for example: "A nurse is a person [matches with] who assists doctors and takes care of patients in a hospital". Whereas Miss Mitchell, whose mind style is AS, accepted short answers, for example Question 1 matches with "C". It indicates that CS teachers insisted on asking students to learn sentence patterns through practice and repetition. In other words, students need to practise saying the sentences aloud before being able to apply it elsewhere. In fact, reading aloud is common in the beginning-level ESL classes, and the function of it is to develop an awareness of sound-symbol relationships and to expose students to words that they would not normally hear in spoken forms (Griffin, 1992).

However, such a feature of reading aloud was not available in Miss Mitchell's lesson. Nevertheless, it could not be concluded that Miss Mitchell's lesson was less effective as her class was more capable and oral reading may slow their comprehension speed (Smith, 1971; Kim, Wagner & Foster, 2011). Another reason why she allowed short answers from the students was possibly because she wanted to implement an extra project into the curriculum, and thus speeded up her teaching:

> **Miss Mitchell**: For those that are little bit better, I went through the things faster, coz I think these are the things that they should know… Then, because I tried to make them a bit more interactive - I was teaching the better class, so I wanted to put more creative activities [and] I wanted it to be project-based, so at the end, we were supposed to get them to do a product placement video. So, they are supposed to come up with their own product, and make an advertisement of that product. (Interview Data)

Again, this shows her emphasis on getting the students to experience the language by themselves. Thus, instead of making her students mechanically repeat the taught sentence patterns in the

classroom, Miss Mitchell wanted her students to have a more lively experience in using the language by incorporating a project into the SBC. Although the focus of speaking practice is different, in this case study, it can be observed how teachers of different mind styles engage their students in speaking activities.

5.   Presentations

Another example of putting the target language in use is to ask students to give a presentation during the lesson. Giving presentations is a common practice in ESL classrooms. A teacher may ask students to give a presentation because the teacher may want to know what they have done individually or in a group so that the teacher may give timely feedback to the students. Giving a presentation also provides students with more opportunities to practise speaking or sharpen their communication skills (Morita, 2000).

In this case study, both Miss Joey and Miss Sussie, whose mind style is both CS, asked their students to give a short presentation after the students completed their tasks. Miss Joey, for instance asked her students to write three sentences to talk about what job they wanted to do in the future. She then selected seven students to give a presentation. When students got stuck, she offered them some hints:

Student: I wish to become a primary school teacher. A primary school teacher is a person who teaches younger children and develops teaching materials…

Miss Joey: Why do you want to be a primary teacher?

Student: I love children. That's why I want to be a primary school teacher.

(Lesson running log, Miss Joey)

Likewise, after telling her students to write a sentence to describe a job, Miss Sussie also selected some students to read their sentences aloud. She even put the sentence on the visualizer for everybody to read and invited feedback from others. The "presentations" I mention in this study are, therefore, different from the presentations involved in public speaking, where a speaker may be given a topic and has to discuss the topic for two minutes. Whereas the latter could be a stressor to

ESL learners as it encompasses advanced communication skills (Woodrow, 2006), the presentations mentioned in this case study are simply short reports of what students had done in their classwork. This type of oral monologues encouraged sharing and peer assessment instead (Barrett & Liu, 2016).

On the contrary, Miss Mitchell, whose mind style is AS, did not tell students to present their work after asking them to complete certain tasks. In her lesson, although she asked students to write some sentences about what job they were interested in, she did not ask students to give an oral presentation. Upon completing the tasks, she just took some students' work and showed them on the visualiser without asking the students to talk about their work. One student wanted to be a soldier in the army but he did not want the teacher to show his work on the visualiser. So she selected another student who wanted to be a farmer. Again, she did not read the sentences at all. She just showed the student's sentences on the visualiser and moved very quickly to the next task. Her teaching style was aligned with that of AS learners who insisted that students think for themselves and preferred visual presentations rather than oral presentations (Kbathgat, Mostert & Sandland, 2013).

On the other hand, the CS teachers' insistence on having their students present their work to the whole class was aligned with their preferred teaching methods such as hands-on practice and drilling. As shown in this case study they tended to give more opportunities for students to practise speaking through presentations.

In the aspect of encouraging students to speak more in the classroom, there was a significant difference between the CS teachers and the AS teacher. This could be revealed in the way the teachers asked follow-up questions. In the next sub-section, the way of questioning by the teachers of different mind styles will be discussed.

6. Questioning Techniques

In this study, it is evident that the CS teachers asked more follow-up questions than the AS teacher. Miss Sussie for instance asked follow-up questions to seek further elaboration. For example, when one student gave a definition of a nutritionist, Ms Sussie asked, "What would you add to this definition?" Likewise, Miss Joey also asked follow-up questions to give more hints to the students and encouraged them to say more. For example, when one student from her class mentioned that

she wanted to be a primary school teacher, she asked her, "Why do you want to be a primary school teacher?" Miss Tina, who used follow-up questions most in this case study, also aimed to seek more elaboration from the students. Questions such as "What is an open-minded person like?", "Why do you think a principal should be talkative?" are used as prompts for a more lengthy answer from students.

On the other hand, Miss Mitchell, whose mind style is AS, used a different approach in questioning her students. For example, there was one activity in her lesson in which students needed to put different jobs into the correct category. Then some students put "game tester" in the "professional" category, and Miss Mitchell questioned, "A game tester is a professional? OK". Actually, it would be a good opportunity for students to argue for the choice, but she did not ask the students to give further explanation. Likewise, in an activity where students had to write about the job they were interested in, she co-constructed the sentences with the student on the computer:

> **Miss Mitchell**: I wish to become a C.E.O. A C.E.O. is a person who … So, what does a C.E.O do?

> **Student**: Order people to do things.

> **Miss Mitchell**: Right he is in charge of a company, so a CEO… directs the company direction.
>
> <div align="right">(Lesson running log, Miss Mitchell)</div>

From the above episode, it shows that although Miss Mitchell accepted students' answers in an open-minded manner and helped students rephrase the answer, she did not ask students to elaborate their answers by using "why" questions.

Wilen (1991, pp. 8-9) highlighted eleven purposes of questioning by teachers, including: (1) to stimulate student participation; (2) to conduct a review of materials previously read or studied; (3) to stimulate discussion of a topic, issue, or problem; (4) to involve students in creative thinking; (5) to diagnose student abilities; (6) to assess student progress; (7) to determine the extent to which objectives have been achieved; (8) to arouse student interest; (9) to control student behavior; (10) to personalize subject matter; and (11) to support student contributions in class.

Based on Wilen's framework, it can be observed that CS teachers in this case study asked questions: to stimulate discussion of a topic, issue, or problem (by seeking elaboration on a topic); to stimulate student participation (by giving them more hints); and to involve students in creative thinking (by asking them to challenge the definition given by their classmate). Whereas the AS teacher in this case study asked questions simply to support student contributions in class by accepting answers without further comments.

However, as mentioned in the methodology chapter, the purpose of observation was not to judge which teachers had a better questioning technique. Instead, it is a matter of preference. Although Miss Mitchell did not prompt students to elaborate on their answers, her questioning technique was not inferior. When she asked one student whether a game tester was a professional job, she was actually stressing challenges and probing questions (Kbathgat, Mostert & Sandland, 2013). That she did not ask students to elaborate and explain their answers also went with AS learners' style – to insist students think for themselves (ibid).

While probing questions can be seen as offering hints and help for students to complete the learning tasks, it is evident from the lesson running logs that CS teachers, especially those with the second dominant mind style of AR, offer more guidelines and explicit helps to students than the AS teacher. In the following sub-section, teachers' guidelines and assistance offered to students will be discussed.

7.   **Offering Guidelines and Assistance to Students**

While the four teachers in this case study unanimously assigned independent work time for their students during the lesson, the four teachers' reactions to independent work were different. In this case study, it seemed that teachers whose second dominant style was AR offered more assistance than others. For instance, Miss Sussie gave two minutes for students to complete the matching exercise in the Workplace Communication workbook, but during the two minutes, she was walking around, encouraging students to guess the answers and gave hints for students to complete the matching exercise. Likewise, when Miss Joey asked her students to construct a sentence (using a relative clause to describe a job), she walked around and helped those who were still struggling to make the sentence and gave them some vocabulary items. Before she asked her students to conduct

a survey about students' favourite jobs, she told her students to underline the difficult words in the survey form so that she could explain the words to them later on. The findings here also go with Kbathgat, Mostert and Sandland's (2013) supposition that AR teachers prefer to guide individual study.

Miss Tina, whose prominent mind style is CS, did not offer as much help to students as Miss Sussie and Miss Joey. For example, when she told students to read the vocabulary list about job requirements in the workbook, she did not explain the words to the students. She just asked them to go through the list in two minutes in silence before asking them to apply the requirements to different jobs. In a sense, she still gave some direction to the students as to where to look for the answers, but different from other CS teachers who have bimodal styles, she did not go further by giving individual guides. She explained in the interview why she gave room for students to work on their own:

> **Miss Tina**: Right. It depends on the students' own choice. Then, I didn't go through some vocabulary items because I think students could have some basic ability to guess their meanings. Basically, these two parts (appendix and the vocab list) were not gone through, but I did cover the other parts. (Interview Data)

The above scenario thus explains that no one has a pure mind style and teachers' actions may demonstrate a combination of more than one particular mind style (Gregorc, 1982).

Miss Mitchell, whose mind style was AS, on the other hand, gave the least help to students. After assigning two minutes for students to work on the matching exercise, she did not walk around or even explain the difficult words to the students. Before asking students to conduct a survey about students' favourite jobs, again, she gave no guidelines as to how to complete the tasks. A couple of students who were sitting in front of me asked each other in Cantonese, "Actually, what do we need to do?" (Lesson running log). Some students who did not understand the words in the survey form started to ask one another. Although Miss Mitchell walked around the room to make sure students were doing their work, she only answered a question once, which was initiated by a student. During the lesson, she also gave a few guidelines. There were a couple of times in which her students felt confused and not sure where to write the answers on the workbook.

AR teachers prefer to guide individual study (Kbathgat, Mostert & Sandland, 2013), which may help to explain why Miss Sussie and Miss Joey offered more guidelines and assistance to students than others. Whereas AS teachers' preference for trial and error discovery (ibid) may explain why Miss Mitchell provided more room for students to explore the answers on their own.

After examining the features of how the lessons were developed by the four teachers, I will look into how the four teachers end their lessons, which is also the final part of the discussion.

8.   Ending the Lesson

Wolf and Supon (1994) argue that when used properly, lesson closure may help students summarize the main ideas learned during the day, evaluate class activities, reinforce learning and provide continuity between what occurred and what will occur in the future lessons. In this case study, the four teachers conclude their lessons in different ways.

To start with, Miss Tina, in closing the lesson, did not give something new for her students but reiterated what students needed to do for the homework. Towards the end of the lesson, she went through a Cathay Pacific job advertisement with her students in which some lines about the job requirements were missing. She instructed her students to make use of the vocabulary list on pp. 13-15 of the workbook to fill in the missing information. Thus, before the end of the lesson, she basically told students what they needed to do for homework and reminded them of the dictation in the next lesson. Although she did not summarize the main ideas in the lessons, she assigned appropriate assignments for students to consolidate their learning in the lesson.

In Miss Joey's lesson, the teacher found out towards the end of the lesson that her students had difficulty in completing the "dream job" survey during the lesson, she therefore disrupted the activity and told the students, who were doing the interviewing, to go back to their seats. Then, she announced that they would do the same task again next lesson because some students did not understand the words in the survey form. Thus, in closing, Miss Joey previewed what students had to do in the next lesson. She also asked if students had any questions before calling an end to the lesson. Thus, although she did not summarize the main ideas in the lessons, she evaluated the class activity before ending the lesson.

As for Miss Sussie's class, she found out that some of her students were not doing the interview seriously and were chatting with each other in Cantonese, so she scolded the students for their poor attitude at the end of the lesson. Thus, she ended her lesson by disciplining the students and asking them to reflect on their poor attitude. She told her students off, saying, "If you think that this task is childish, try to get a pass in HKDSE (the public examination); you don't care about speaking any English in the classroom!" She also had a lesson preview that she would do the same task again next lesson. Therefore, similar to the other CS teachers (Miss Joey and Miss Tina), she did not really go through the main ideas in the lesson but instead attempted to correct the students' attitude towards the end.

Miss Mitchell, the only AS teacher, in this case study however, ended the lesson abruptly. She did not go through the main ideas. Nor did she preview what the next lesson was about. She simply asked the students to write their names on the front cover of the workbook and to hand in the workbook very quickly. She collected her students' workbooks without saying a word and said goodbye to the students very quickly after the school bell rang.

To quote Wolf and Supon (1994) again, an effective closure should help students summarize the main ideas learned, evaluate class activities, reinforced learning and provide continuity between lessons. In this case study, teachers, especially those whose mind style is CS, made great efforts to close their lessons in a meaningful way such as assigning relevant homework, reassessing the task and correcting students' attitude in learning. Some of them even gave a preview of the following lesson to provide continuity between today lessons and following lessons. The closing by the CS teachers also exemplified teachers' reflection in real practice. Teachers are not technicians who follow linear steps to get the job done, but are reflective practitioners who are able to evaluate their own work and take immediate actions to amend failures.

Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the eight most frequently occurring features from the lesson running logs for discussion. It showcases the commonalities and differences among the four teachers as to how they delivered the school-based materials to Form 5 students. The findings show that all teachers in this case study, regardless of their mind styles, open the lessons by settling classroom housekeeping such as collecting homework and checking students' workbook. Further research is needed to

examine to what extent housekeeping in the classroom may influence the school-based curriculum.

According to the case study, teachers with the same mind style share some common features of lesson activities. Teachers whose mind style is CS prefer to start the lesson with revision and setting targets for lessons. During the development of the lessons, they constantly require the students to apply the target language by asking them to read aloud their answers, giving short presentations and probing follow-up questions to prompt students. When closing the lesson, CS teachers would reinforce students' learning by assigning relevant homework, evaluating the learning task and correcting students' attitudes towards learning. Meanwhile, the research also shows that teachers whose second dominant style is AR tend to offer more help and guidelines to students. On the contrary, the AS teacher adopts a trial and error discovery approach throughout the lesson by giving only minimal help to students. While she stresses challenges and probes questions at times, she does not require actual answers from students on the spot and insists that students think on their own.

In addition, the findings of this case study mostly go with the categorizations by Kbathgat, Mostert and Sandland (2013). I use "mostly" here because there are some instances in this case study that go against the categorisations in Table 3. For example, Miss Tina did show a video about the work life of a flight attendant to the students as a lead-in to the classwork. While the use of media is more aligned with the mind style of CR, more research needs to be done to examine why such exemption occurs.

After reviewing the findings of this case study, I will reflect on the research procedures and findings, and then shift the focus to the implications of the research for the implementation of SBCD at the classroom level. In particular, I will stress how the findings may contribute to the literature relating to mind styles and the current practice of SBCD in secondary schools.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I will reflect on the research procedures and discuss the implications of this case study for school-based curriculum development (SBCD) in Hong Kong. To start with, I will revisit the three research questions and articulate how these have been answered in the study, and whether the focus of the research changed during the implementation of the project. I then focus on how the findings of this qualitative study contribute to the knowledge gap in the existing literature about teachers' mind styles and SBCD. In particular, I will reiterate that SBCD should not be turned into a one-size-fits-all bureaucratic practice. Some practical suggestions will also be given as to how a curriculum developer can incorporate the concepts of teaching styles into SBCD. Finally, I will outline the principles of curriculum design that envisages balanced teaching styles while not discounting teachers' autonomy.

Reflection on the Research Project

The findings reported in previous chapters have addressed the three research questions as discussed in Chapter 1:

> R1: What are the mind styles (Gregorc, 1982) of the four participants in this inquiry?
>
> R2: What are the teachers' attitudes towards the school-based curriculum in this inquiry?
>
> R3: How do the four participants who hold different mind styles (Gregorc, 1982) implement the school-based curriculum at the classroom level? To be more specific, do the four teachers teach according to their mind styles (Gregorc, 1982)? What are the similarities and differences among teachers who hold different mind styles (Gregorc, 1982) in terms of their classroom activities?

While the above questions have been answered, it should be noted that this study is similar to other qualitative studies in a sense that the course of research may be adjusted during the investigation process as Creswell (1998, p.11) states:

> [In qualitative research], we ask open-ended research questions, wanting to listen to

the participants we are studying and shaping the questions after we "explore," and we refrain from assuming the role of the expert researcher with the "best" questions. Our questions change during the process of research to reflect an increased understanding of the problem.

As such, changes are inevitable in qualitative research such as this, as uncertainties may arise during the course of the exploratory case study. One uncertainty in this case study for instance was that the mind styles of the four participants were unknown prior to the research. In this study, three teachers happened to be of the same mind style, namely Concrete Sequential. The analysis would be more varied if they were of different mind styles. However, as I argued in the Methodology Chapter that one tenet of qualitative case study is to provide an "in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (Gall, Borg & Gall, 2003, p.436). The emphasis here is "natural". It is therefore different from other experimental research designs that are strict on the choice of the controlled factors such as including participants of different characters or mind styles. In short, R1 has been answered in a way that is true to natural context

In response to R2, before interviewing the teachers, I had expected to hear some negative comments about the school-based materials (SBMs), which might provide some constructive feedback to the improvement of the SBCD practice in the future. Nevertheless, instead of finding faults with the SBMs, teachers were more concerned about how to make adjustments and adaptations to the SBMs to cater for the students' needs. It was beyond my expectation that all the participants had addressed the same argument as the one in this thesis, that is teaching as an artful act rather than a technical practice. Therefore, instead of providing a factual report about what needs improving in the SBMs, I also highlighted in Chapter 5 the "craft knowledge" (Zeichner, 1994, p.10) of two participants, Miss Joey and Miss Mitchell, who used their contrasting strategies to cater for their students' needs.

Moving on to R3, I made use of part of the interview data to support my observation analysis. This is because during the interviews, teachers also expressed some teaching strategies they preferred to use when delivering the SBMs, which thus provided hints for their mind styles. Even so, I was not sure about their mind styles until they took the GSD assessment towards the end of the investigation. Interestingly, although I did not know any of their mind styles before the assessment, during the classroom observations, it was noticeable that Miss Mitchell's classroom activities were distinct

from others'. Such differences, which have been reported in detail in Part B, Chapter 5, are aligned with the GSD results, which emerged at the last stage of the investigation.

Another intriguing anecdote was that when I conducted the GSD assessment, two CS teachers were quick to conclude that Miss Mitchell's mind style must be different even before they compared the assessment results among themselves. In addition, when I showed them the findings with respect to the classroom observation analysis, the participants could instantaneously identify themselves in the report even though I used pseudonyms in my analysis. It shows that the participants are possibly self-aware of their own mind styles. Although I did not ask the participants to verify my findings black and white, during my informal conversations with them, they all affirmed the findings and showed support for my arguments in this research.

Overall, the focus of the research has not changed significantly during the implementation of the project. Despite some adjustments being made in relation to the limited samples of mind styles, in which case only two mind styles were analysed, the answers to the three research questions offer an "ecological validity" to this case study, which means that the results are interpreted "in as natural a context as possible" (Duff, 2008, p.125). Having said that, the findings would have been more diversified if more than two mind styles had been included in this investigation. Having reflected on the research project, I now shift the focus to how the findings of this case study contribute to the knowledge gap in the areas of mind style research and SBCD.

Contributions to Research on Teachers' Mind Styles

Previous studies about teachers' mind styles were mostly conducted in higher education settings (e.g. Seidel & England, 1997；Thompson et al., 2002; Gould & Caswell, 2006; Akdemir & Koszalka, 2008; Esa et al., 2009), and there is a lack of research conducted in the secondary level. This research thus provides a different context in the research area about teachers' mind styles. To begin with, although there are only four participants in this case study, the findings align with research set in higher education (e.g. Thompson, et al., 2002; Gould & Caswell, 2006), where most teachers possess the dominant style of Concrete Sequential (CS). The findings also echo Gregorc's claim that most individuals are CS (Gregorc, 1982). However, since the sample size is small in this case study, further research is needed to testify whether Gregroc's claim is held true in Hong Kong.

Furthermore, while the examples above examined teaching styles of lecturers and instructors in post-secondary institutions, very few of them actually went into the classroom to observe the strategies used by the teachers (Tulbure, 2011). This case study thus sheds new light on the relationship between teachers' strategies and mind styles. For example, whilst Esa et al. (2009) are skeptical about whether a lecturer with a certain mind style would be teaching in the same style that he or she holds, this case study answers their query in a sense that secondary school teachers do teach according to their mind styles although there are occasional exceptions. The findings of this case study also echo Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus (1997) in that style is the ground of meaning in human activities. In other words, teachers' actions in the classroom are guided by their mind styles. Finally, the findings of this qualitative study re-affirm Gregorc's assumption that the four channels of mediation (concrete, abstract, random and sequential) serve as frames of reference that influence the individual's experience and subsequent actions (Gregorc, 1982).

However, one should take note of the limitations in this case study. The teachers were only observed once and within a limited time. It was not known to what extent their teaching styles were consistent. As critically reviewed in Chapter 3, some researchers (e.g. Montgomery & Groat, 1998) argue that learning and teaching styles are not immutable and subject to changes over time and for different purposes in different classroom contexts. Their claim seems to be true as Miss Mitchell reveals in the interview that in spite of her love for project-learning, she at times resorts to traditional methods in this school:

> **Miss Mitchell**: At this particularly school, I think that is my thinking. But I think my thinking would change with the type of students I teach. I mean, at the end of the day, we have to cater for the students' needs. (Interview Data)

As there are divided voices about the consistency of [learning and teaching] styles (Coffield et al., 2004), a longitudinal study would be preferable if I had to conduct the case study again. However, the problem is that even if a longitudinal study were conducted, it might not be of great use, as Campbell et al. (2004, p.133) argue, "Even successive observations of a teacher will only ever supply a collection of snapshots rather than a full picture of teacher behaviour over the year". Therefore, although the research design may not be perfect, I can only conclude that the findings of this case study are valid in the context and time where it was conducted.

Another limitation of this study is that my mind style is not examined and was unknown in this study. It should be noted that researchers too have their own preferred learning styles and thus adopt the research methods they prefer (Onwuegbuzie, 1997). In terms of mind styles, Abstract Sequential researchers, for example, would be more comfortable with "experimental, trial-and-error" research design (Kbathgate, Mostert & Sandland, 2013, p. 103), whereas Concrete Random researchers who prefer to "receive information in an unstructured way" (ibid) may adopt unstructured interviews and observations in pursuit of an inductive research design featuring 'theory [being] the outcome of research' (Bryman, 2012, p.26). Likewise, differences in styles signify that the methods of analysis can be different. Concrete Sequential researchers, who are in favour of "direct, step-by-step, orderly" methods (Cassidy, 2004, p.429), for example, will be less likely to adopt a grounded theory approach, in which "data collection and analysis should be intertwined" (Bryman, 2012, p.93).

Despite the argument relating to the impact of a researcher's preference on the research designs and data analysis, there is a counter-argument that a researcher's "choices regarding invention, arrangement, and styles are governed by convention" (Paré, 2011, P.64). This is particularly true for a research project in a doctoral study such as this one, where the thesis is more of a social product, as McAlpine and Amundsen (2011, p.2) argue that "the experience of doctoral education is very much locally situated through day-to-day interactions amongst doctoral students, supervisors, other academics, and academic-related staff, each with different roles, intentions, and perhaps hopes". If the research project is socially constructed, the influence of the researchers' mind styles may be discounted. Further research about the impact of the researchers' mind styles on research projects is therefore recommended.

After reviewing the contributions of this case study to the research area about teaching styles, the following section explains the implications that this case study brings to the practice of SBCD in Hong Kong.

Implications for SBCD

Whist there is a lack of research about SBCD in Hong Kong's setting, this research offers new perspectives that previous studies (Lo, 1990; Law, 2001) have not covered before. As opposed to previous studies about government-initiated SBCD schemes, this case study explored a teacher-initiated, bottom-up, implementation of SBCD. The former studies, however, reflect the

top-down practice of SBCD in Hong Kong, which is "bureaucratic" in nature (Lo, 1999, p.424). Teachers, in Lo's (1999) study for example, had to attend SBCD-related workshops to make sure that they addressed the official concerns stated in the formal curriculum when they designed the SBC. Once they wrote up the materials, they had to seek approvals from the officials. In order to get the funding, they had to get all the documents ready for inspection. Subsequently, the SBCD produced under this kind of bureaucratic mechanism aimed to produce up-to-standard student work for display rather than a scheme that identified and satisfied pupils' needs (Lo, 1999).

In contrast, the SBCD reviewed in this case study respects teachers' autonomy. As the curriculum writer, I had the freedom to tailor the content of the SBC based on my teaching philosophies. Teachers were also given the autonomy as to how to deliver the course materials, each according to their preferred teaching styles. Teachers were not under pressure to adhere to certain teaching methods and were not evaluated based on certain performative indicators as opposed to the previous studies (Lo, 1999; Law, 2001). When I was talking with the teachers informally after observations, none of them showed any internal conflicts against the SBC. This was due to the fact that they delivered the materials according to their preferred teaching styles instead of being forced to follow the official guidelines or steps that could be incompatible with their teaching styles or philosophy. Whereas the true purpose of SBCD did not come across according to the previous studies on government-led SBCD schemes (Lo, 1999), this case study demonstrated how learning took place in a natural setting. Examples of authentic learning were prevalent in this case study. CS teachers provided opportunities for their students to put the language into practical use, offered extra guidelines for their students to complete the learning tasks, and closed the lesson by giving them appropriate homework and by rectifying their learning attitudes. On the other hand, the AS teacher provided room for students to think on their own and to discover knowledge through trial and error.

The contrast between this case study and the government-initiated SBCD schemes indicates that implementation that aims to satisfy complex bureaucratic requirements can never lead to the authentic purpose of school-based curriculum (Wong, 2002). However, as predicted by Weber (1978, p.225), modern society is usually dominated by these bureaucratic measures that attempt to ensure that everybody follows the same expert-claimed norms in order to achieve the same "desired" results:

> …Without hatred or passion, and hence without affection or enthusiasm. The

dominant norms are concepts of straightforward duty without regard to personal considerations. Everyone is subject to formal equality of treatment; that is, everyone in the same empirical situation. This is the spirit in which the ideal official conducts his office.

His prediction is prevalent throughout the official curriculum documents in Hong Kong, in which one can find various models and expert-designed terms like "learning to learn", "target-oriented", "integrated curriculum", "catering to learners' diversity" etc. in the curriculum guides. I am not arguing whether these models and concepts are appropriate or not. However, if teachers just blindly follow these concepts without "personal consideration" (ibid) or reflecting on their past experiences and beliefs, they would only deliver a rigid curriculum irrelevant to the pupils and the context. Using Weber's term, teachers would end up teaching "[w]ithout hatred or passion, and hence without affection or enthusiasm" (Weber, 1978, p.225).

What is missing in the government documents and initiatives in Hong Kong is, therefore, a personal touch, or more accurately teachers' beliefs, reflections and particularly passion. Passion, as described concretely by Day (2004, p.12), refers to "the qualities that effective teachers display in everyday social interactions". Such qualities include, but are not limited to:

> listening to what students say, being close rather than distant, having a good sense of playfulness, humour, encouraging students to learn in different ways, relating learning to experience, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning, maintaining an organised classroom environment, being knowledgeable about their subject, creating learning environments that engage students and stimulate in them an excitement to learn. (ibid)

These qualities are evidently vested in the participants. Without passion, Miss Joey would not have prepared additional materials for her students in every learning task she delivered (Lesson Running Log, Miss Joey). Without passion, Miss Mitchell would not have designed another project for her students (Lesson Running Log, Miss Mitchell). Without passion, Miss Sussie and Miss Tina would not have reflected their own teaching after each lesson (Interview Data, Miss Sussie and Miss Tina).

As such, SBCD should not be one-size-fits-all bureaucratic practice that carries no soul. Teachers

should be allowed to exercise discretion when necessary, and encouraged to incorporate their own personal styles, whether in terms of mind styles as defined by Gregorc (1982) or others, into SBCD.

Incorporating the Concept of Teaching Styles into Curriculum Design

Whilst personal styles should be encouraged, one has to be cautious about the consistency of teaching style brought about by the autonomy that teachers enjoy, which I would describe as 'fossilisation in teaching style'. Studies on teaching and learning styles show that the congruence between the two could result in better learning experiences and attitudes in primary and secondary levels (Griggs & Dunn, 1984; Smith & Renzulli, 1984). However, since the students' learning styles were not examined in this study, it was not known to what extent the teachers' mind styles were congruent with the students'. One example was found in Miss Sussie's lesson, in which some students seemed not involved in pair work especially in the interview task. It was possible that some students might dislike such interactive tasks that were not in line with their mind styles (Lesson Running Log, Miss Sin).

Despite this unknown factor, Felder and Henriques (1995) argue that "the teaching style with which students feel most comfortable may not correspond to the style that enables them to learn most effectively" (p.27). Presenting the two-sided views here, I am not going to answer the question whether teachers should adapt to students or students to teacher. Neither is this chicken-or-egg question the focus of this inquiry. However, by incorporating the concept of teaching styles into SBCD, I would like to outline some of the principles for curriculum planners. The following principles should be taken as my post curriculum writing reflection, and therefore should not be considered as imperatives. However, they can serve as guidelines for curriculum development.

Principle 1: "Pedagogic sheep dip"
In real practice, a curriculum planner may have difficulty getting to know all the teachers' and pupils' styles. Thus, when designing a school-based curriculum, the key is to provide a "balanced teaching style" (ibid), which should cover the features of all learning styles. Coffield et al. (2004) call the teaching strategies that aim explicitly to touch upon all teaching styles at some point "pedagogic sheep dip" (p.13).

In other words, SBC writers should provide more variations when designing the learning tasks.

Table 4.1 (in Chapter 4), which shows the frames of reference developed by Kbathgat, Mostert and Sandland (2013), provides guideline as to how an SBC can be developed. Since the table comprises a wide range of teaching methods that cover the four mind styles, SBC writers may draw on at least one teaching method from each frame when designing the learning tasks. Then, teachers may be exposed to other methods that may not be in line with their mind styles when they go through the SBC and therefore can provide a more balanced teaching style. Teachers are also reminded that when they deliver the school-based materials, they should try to adopt varied methods to expose students to different learning activities.

Principle 2: Freedom of choice

Providing more choices of methods, however, does not mean that teachers must follow all the choices. SBCD should not be turned into bureaucratic or new managerial practices where teachers are compelled to follow expert-designed methods to achieve desirable learning outcomes. On one hand, Gregorc (2013) warns against any attempts to forcibly change a teacher's natural mind style, saying that it may do more harm than good. Here, the key word is 'natural' as Gregorc (2013) holds that people have inborn inclinations towards one or two mediations in his mind model. Although there is an argument that the way teachers teach in the class has been found to be associated with, on top of the inborn factors, their content knowledge, teacher training and the context of teaching (Louisell & Descamps, 2001), Cooper (2001) believes that inborn factors such as personality largely determine what a teacher will do in his or her classroom.

On the other hand, teachers' autonomy in terms of teaching methods should be respected. By autonomy, I mean teachers may "decide which teaching methods should be used … without having to consult the education provider (i.e. the school's external administrative authority)" (Desurmont, Forsthuber & Oberheidt, 2008, p.26). The keyword here is 'decide'. Teachers do not choose a method randomly but they usually weigh among different methods before coming to a decision. Thus, autonomy does not mean that teachers do whatever they like in the classroom, but that teachers are self-reflective (Dewey, 1933). They could reflect on and fine-tune their teaching with respect to the problems in the classroom, which may include any inefficacy of learning, poor attitude and rowdy behaviour among students. One on-the-spot example that could be drawn from this case study was Miss Joey's lesson in which she ended the lesson by telling the students that she would re-teach the interview tasks after noticing that some students failed to do it. Another example is Miss Sussie's lesson in which she scolded the students for their poor attitude towards learning.

These are great examples of teachers' self-reflection. Teachers reflect on what they did and improve thereafter.

While it is impractical for teachers in Hong Kong to decide what content to teach since the public examination content is closely linked with the formal curriculum designed by the policymakers, teachers should, however, be given the autonomy as to which teaching methods to use in their classrooms. They should, for example, have the right to alter or modify the tasks in the school-based curriculum since they know their students best. Human judgments should not be replaced with one-size-fits-all teaching methods or curricula. Otherwise, we will fall into what Long (2001, p.181) describes as "method trap". After all, as shown in this case study, each teaching method is a two-edged sword. Reading aloud for instance would enhance learners' sound awareness in ESL classrooms, but for better students it might hamper their reading speed (Griffin, 1992). Likewise, no learning style is superior and each style can be effective in its own way (Allen, Scheve & Nieter, 2011). Offering more guidelines can be a good thing to weaker students who have difficulty in completing the learning tasks, but it will also limit their creativity to solve problems on their own and even independence.

Principle 3: No teaching styles or methods are superior
Very often, when judging a lesson, one judges from one's perspective and preferred teaching styles but overlooks the benefits of other teaching styles and methods. This kind of judgment would be unfair to teachers who teach in a different way. One common phenomenon in Hong Kong is that good teaching is usually judged according to the criteria and the latest teaching trends stipulated in the curriculum guide. This can be shown in the Excellence Indicators in the Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence (Education Bureau, 2016). Self-directed learning and co-operative learning have become the norms in teaching performance. Teachers are deemed effective if they organize group work and use information technology to facilitate learning, but ineffective if they just use chalk and talk. Nevertheless, a 'good' teacher is defined by students in various ways, as Palmer (2007, p.72) argues:

> …from years of asking students to tell me about their good teachers. As I listen to those stories, it becomes impossible to claim that all good teachers use similar techniques: some lecture non-stop and others speak very little, some stay close to their material and others loose the imagination, some teach with the carrot and others

with the stick.

Thus, SBCD is not just about methods. As Fullan (2008) mentions, the school-based curriculum should not be too prescriptive. Teachers should add a personal touch to the curriculum, and they should be given room to do so, just as Palmer (2007, p.72) mentions, "The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts meaning heart in its ancient sense, the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self".

The key responsibility of a curriculum developer is therefore to provide a freedom of choice but not a specification of methods. Pajak, Stotko and Masci (2007, p.134) offer a practical way of helping new teachers develop their teaching methods, and I think curriculum developers may use that as their framework to fine-tune their curriculum planning:

> [Curriculum developers] should make a deliberate effort to honor and legitimate perspectives and practices that differ from their own preferred styles of perceiving and judging reality. The starting point for helping [the subject] teachers succeed, in other words, should be the development of the teacher's preferred style. Once that style has been successfully developed, of course, the teacher should be encouraged to expand his or her repertoire of strategies and perspectives.

Following the above suggestion would be what McIntyre and Jones (2014, p.38) describe as "development of critically engaged teachers and pupils", which means teachers should be given the opportunities "to articulate their passions, values and beliefs about what English could and should be within safe spaces in which open discussion and negotiation of emerging beliefs can take place". What they are emphasising is that teaching is not a technical practice but a reflective one, and I think this can be equally applied to school-based curriculum implementation.

Freeman (1998) uses an analogy that likens curriculum to cooking. A school-based curriculum is like a recipe. How it is delivered would depend on the teachers themselves, whose job is to transform the abstractions of curriculum, materials, and pedagogy into actual practice (ibid). Teachers may have their own secret recipe. They may cook according to their preferred methods, experiences and beliefs, but in the end, the taste of each lesson is different and personalized. This contrasts sharply to the government-led SBCD programmes in which teachers had to follow all the

'official' procedures in order to achieve standardised learning outputs (Law, 1999). In the latter case, the experience of studying in school is no different to eating in a worldwide fast-food chain restaurant where you have no choice but have to order and eat the same food that everybody eats even though it may not be too salty or too bland for you.

Just as a menu planner who provides tailor-made ingredients for the cooks and lets them transform the ingredients to the taste desired by the diner, a curriculum developer should take the role of providing tailor-made materials for teachers, who will then apply their craft knowledge to cater for pupils' needs.

Further research

This study focuses on only one aspect of influence on SBCD, namely teaching styles. However, further research is suggested as to what extent other personal and external factors could have affected the delivery of the SBC at the classroom level. Such unknown factors may include teachers' beliefs and experiences (Nespor, 1987; Richardson, 1996; Richards, Gallo & Renandya, 2001;Sahin, Bullock & Stables, 2002), the washback effects of Hong Kong's public examinations (Pong & Chow, 2002; Choi, 1999), the school appraisal (Walker & Dimmock, 2000) and school inspections (Whitby, 2010). In addition, as mentioned in the section concerning the limitation of observation, the impact of my mind style on the study's design and analysis is in dispute, and there is a need for further research about the related impact. Likewise, the decision not to involve the participants in discussion of the lesson observation running logs could be perceived as a limitation to the study. Although I argued that post-observation discussion might not be worthwhile in the Chinese context (Walker & Dimmock, 2000), a further study is recommended in the area of post-observation discussion in Hong Kong. Finally, a longitudinal study with numerous points of observation or with more participants involved is recommended. Although, as argued earlier in this chapter, it may continue to create snapshots of the lessons, the longitudinal study will enlarge the base of knowledge by teachers, and subsequently unearth more issues that may have otherwise overlooked in this research.

Appendix 1 – Outline of the School-Based Curriculum on Workplace Communication

Form 5 English Language
Learning English through Workplace Communication
Course outlines

Note: Tasks 1- 3 below are scaffolding tasks that aim to develop students' vocabulary power and sentence structures. Tasks 4-7 are for students to practise the grammar and vocabulary items covered. Tasks 8-11 are writing tasks. Teachers may develop students' writing with the help of the course materials or their own. The course outlines should not be taken as a prescriptive tool kit as teacher autonomy and artistry are a key component of the design and implementation.   Thus, teachers may exercise discretion in response to classroom situations by altering the [sequence of] tasks, or redesigning the tasks to cater for their pupils' needs.

Task	Task Description	Learning Objective
1 a.	Ss are given a table of common jobs with pictures beside the job titles. They need to discuss three questions: 1. What jobs in Hong Kong are high-paying? 2. Which jobs do you think can help people? 3. Which jobs offer good fringe benefits?	To develop vocabulary power in relation to common job titles.
1 b.	Ss need to fill in a mindmap by categorizing the jobs based on their nature: professionals (gold-collar), service occupations, office workers (white-collar) and manual workers (blue-collar)	To brainstorm other jobs that are not found in Task 1. T may also discover what jobs Ss are more interested in.
2.	Matching exercise –Ss match the jobs with their descriptions (e.g. 1. A nurse is a person - (d) who assists doctors and takes care of patients in the hospital.	To introduce the sentence pattern (relative clause) that is used to define different types of jobs, and to be exposed to different job natures.
3.	(Optional) Ss make use of the above sentence pattern to make a sentence about a job that is	To apply the grammar item.

	not in Task 2.	
4.	Which of the job above are you interested in? Write a sentence or two to talk about the job and then share it with a classmate.	To talk about a job using the grammar item learned and to enhance communication skills through pair sharing.
5.	Survey – Interview two classmates about what jobs they want to do, and ask about the reasons for choosing the job, based on the nature, pay, interests, career prospects and perks. A list of reasons is given in the survey form so for weaker Ss, they can just choose from the list.	To increase Ss vocabulary power and raise their awareness of what they can tell about a job.
6.	Report the survey results to the whole class. A sample is given. Ss may recycle the vocabulary and sentence patterns they learn in the presentation. "… Jason said he wanted to work as a nurse… A nurse is a person who… He wants to be a nurse because …"	To consolidate previous learning and to enhance Ss' communication skills.
7.	Reading comprehension – A job ad by DHL Express (Hong Kong) limited, recruiting customer service representatives.	To help Ss deconstruct a job ad, which includes the features like workplace, qualification required, experience required, language skills, personal qualities preferred, etc.
8.	Filling out a job ad by Cathay Pacific, which aims at hiring flight attendents. Ss need to discuss with each other what to fill in the requirements.	To put the language into real use.
9.	Presentation/ Short Writing (250 words). Ss choose a job ad from the classified post (or other sources). Then they have to describe the job nature and requirements needed, and explain why they want to apply for the job.	To consolidate previous learning. To enhance Ss' presentation and researching skills.

10.	Practice for the exam - Long writing topic: Your friend Nancy has just graduated from university in Canada. She studied Business in college. She is coming back to Hong Kong to look for a job. She wants to seek your advice on what job(s) she can apply for in Hong Kong. Write a letter of advice to her. She should shortlist 1-2 jobs that she can apply for, and briefly talk about the job duties, job requirements and why you think she is a suitable candidate for the job. Sign your name 'Chris Wong'.	To get familiar with the format of the writing topic in the public examination. To recycle the vocabulary and sentence patterns learned in this course. To widen their repertoire of language use.
11.	School-based assessment (SBA) practice – A sample (discussion) question is given to Ss, which is similar to the one in the SBA test. In the discussion, Ss role play as the personnel staff and need to talk about how to design a job ad hiring some new sales assistants.	To familiarise with the assessment requirements. To train their critical thinking skills as Ss need to synthesise previous learning and apply it to the 'authentic' workplace.

Appendix 2 – Sample of Consent Letter to the Participants

<div align="center">Nottingham Trent University</div>

2nd April 2013

Dear Ms ██████

You are being invited to participate in a research study on the implementation of a school-based curriculum in your school. In particular, we are interested in how teachers holding different beliefs and teaching styles implement the school-based curriculum titled Workplace Communication in Secondary 5 in the English classrooms.

This research will require about 3 hours of your time. During this time, I will observe 1-2 periods of your English lessons while you are teaching the unit Workplace Communication in May-June in Secondary 5. The lessons will be video-recorded at your convenience and it is optional. In addition, you will be interviewed about your experiences of learning and teaching English as a second language, as well as your views on the school-based curriculum. The interviews will be conducted in the conference room inside Staff Room B in the school, and will be tape-recorded.

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts related to this research. No special arrangements for classroom observation are required, and you just need to carry out your daily teaching as scheduled. You may also find the interview to be very enjoyable and rewarding, as it will provide you a chance to reflect on your former learning experiences and your current practice. By participating in this research, you may also benefit others by helping people to better understand the implementation of the school-based curriculum in your school.

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and identity. While the interviews will be tape-recorded, the audio file will be destroyed in two years after they have been typed up. The typed interviews (i.e. the transcripts) will NOT contain any mention of your name, and any identifying information from the interview will be removed. All audio files and transcripts will be destroyed after 5 years time. Likewise, the video clips recorded during the lesson observation will be destroyed after 5 years time. All the audio and video files will be kept in the researcher's Dropbox secured by password. Only his supervisors will have access to the audio files, the transcripts and the video clips.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, you may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. If you do this, all information from you will be destroyed. The results from this study will be presented in writing in reports read by the faculty members of the Department of Education at Nottingham Trent University, UK. The findings may also be presented in journals and at some academic conferences. At no time, however, will your name be used or any identifying information revealed. If you wish to receive a copy of the results from this study, you may contact one of the researchers at the telephone number given below. If you require any information about this study, or would like to speak to me in person, you would contact me any time.

I would appreciate it very much if you could sign on the reply slip below to show your consent to the participation of the above study.

Yours sincerely
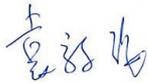
Samson Yuen
(Research Student, Nottingham Trent University)

Reply Slip

I have read the above information regarding this research study, and wish to participate in the research.

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Signature)

3 April 2013 _____ (Date)

Appendix 3 – Structure of Observation Instrument

A. General information

Date: _____   Time: _____

Teacher Name: _____Class: _____

B. Lesson structure and activities

Opening (How does the teacher open the lesson?)

Development of the lessons (Descriptions of activities used)

Closure of the lesson

Appendix 4 – Sample of a Running Log with Descriptors

Lesson observation notes (Miss Sussie)

Lesson – Miss Sussie

Date: 19 April 2013   Time: 12:10 – 1:00

Class: 5H (Higher ability group) – 21 students

1. (1.01) Teachers check if the materials are ready. （administration/classroom housekeeping）prepare Ss for lesson

2. (1.18) Theme of the Unit (Target)

- T asks Ss what the theme of the unit is

- One S answered job

- Then T asks what elective it will appear (Framing – highlight the importance of exam)

- S says Workplace Communication

3. Review (Job titles learned yesterday) (revision – things learned yesterday)

- T asks Ss to give five job titles they learned yesterday.

- T asks Ss to share with each others. (Ss turn around and talk to each other) (Sharing - pair work)

- Ss answer – designer.

- T asks follow-up questions – What does a designer do? (Seek elaboraiton)

- Then T asks S to select another S.

- Another S says accountant. Then T asks another S (Michael) what an accountant is.

- T continues the above patterns – formers...

4. (4.55) talking about different categories of job(revision, sequential questioning)

- T asks one S to give an example of job category – gold collar (professional)

- T asks Ss to give an example of gold collar (engineer)

- T then asks another S (White collar, What is a white collar)

- T then asks Ss to give examples (computer programmer)

- T continue the above process (blue collar – builder/constructor, and service occupations – Shop Assistant)

5. (8.05) Matching Ex in the Booklet

-   T gives 2 minutes for Ss to complete the matching tasks in the booklet – matching the job title (e.g. nurse) with the job nature (is a person who takes care of the patients).   (time to complete exercise)

- Ss work individually for the tasks (individual work)

- T walks around and encourages Ss to guess the answers (monitoring, giving hints)

6. (11.20) T checks answers   (answer checking)

- T asks individual S to read out the answers (A nurse is a person who assists doctor and takes care of patients in a hospital)(Reading aloud individual response)

- T tells Ss to put a tick on their book if their answers are correct

- T checks understanding – what's the another word of "assist"? (check understanding)

- T continues the above process (e.g. a photographer – "bridal house"…, a journalist)

- When one S is too shy to answer the question (receptionist), T tells the whole class to read the answer together to help him. (Assisting weaker S)

- T at times explain some jobs in detail (e.g. engineers) – Where do they work? (construction site) How do they differ from construction worker? …(elaboration – extra knowledge)

- T continues to check the answers…

- Towards the end, T tries to speed up the progress. At times, she just asks for short answers (Give me the letter) and reads the sentences on her own. (T exercise discretion)

- Some Ss start to look bored and fall asleep.

7.(22:30) Task 3 – Think of a new job and write a sentence to describe the job

- T gives one minute to work on the tasks, again individual work (Applying the language - individual work)

- T walks around to check if Ss are on tasks, and reminds Ss (come up with a new job title, not the ones you saw in the previous task…) (monitoring, Give extra help)

8.   (24:48) Check answers

- T then asks individual S (Crystal) to give her answer. (presentation - individual response)
- T puts her answer on the visualiser for everybody in the class to read. (sharing)
- (A nutritionist is a person who uses his professional knowledge to analyse patients' needs)
- T asks follow-up question – What would you add to this definition? (seek elaboration - higher level questioning)
- Johnny, another S, gives an answer, and he gives other job duties that a nutritionist may do.
- T selects another – Kimmy, who wants to write about a principal, but he has no idea what he does.
- One S says: employ teachers.(Ss help each other)
- T gives hints to Ss. Imagine in a company what does a C.E.O do? Then, T introduces the key word "manage". (T give extra help)
- T asks Ss what a principal manages, then another S answers

1. (30:09) Introducing the new task(transition: restate the target)
    - After Sslearns about different types of job, T explains that the next task is about what job they wants to do after they graduate.
    - T then explains the task, telling Ss to walk around the classroom to interview two students. (pair work)
    - T tells everybody to stand up and take actions

2. (32:30) Interview – Pair work(whole-class engagment)
    - Ssbegain to interview each other.
    - T walks around the classroom to check if Ss are on task(monitoring)
    - Some Ss just mentions the letter instead of reading out the sentences. (e.g. I want to become xxx because A B C)
    - T therefore gives further instruction – Do not just mentions the letters(give extra instruction)
    - Most Ss are on task
    - (39:00) One S is not on task, and he walks around to chat with others.
    - T scolds the S, and he talks back. (Discipline Ss)

- T gets really angry and asks him to stay after lunch.
- T tells the Ss off for their poor attitude: If you think that this task is childish, try to get a pass in HKDSE... You don't care about speaking any English in the classroom...(correct Ss' attitude)

3. (42:00) The bell rang
    - T continues to scold the Ss and and explains why she is angry with their poor attitude. (End lesson with rectifying Ss' attitude)
    - T then ends the lesson and says she would continue with the task tomorrow.(preview next lesson - to continue unfinished task)

Appendix 5 – Summary of Running Logs

	Tina (CS)	Sussie (CS,AR)	Mitchell (AS)	Joey (CS, AR)
Opening	Classroom housekeeping (HW Checking)	Classroom housekeeping (Check materials)	Classroom housekeeping (HW checking)	Classroom housekeeping (HW Checking)
Development of the lessons (strategies)	Revision; Check previous learning; Target; Demonstration; Check understanding; Independent work; Whole-class engagement; Translation; Follow-up Q; Independent work; Reading aloud; Assign dictation; Application; Target; Application; Application; Follow-up Q; Application; Follow-up Q; Rewarding; Transition; Independent work; Application; Check understanding; Follow-up Q; Transition; Video; Give guidelines	Target; Revision; Pair work; Follow-up Q; Revision; Sequential questioning; Independent work; Monitoring; Reading aloud; Check understanding; Offering help; (Speeding up); Application; Monitoring; Checking answers (presentation); Follow-up Q; Offering help; Target; Pair work; Whole-class engagement; Monitoring; Give guidelines; Discipline;	Analysing (Problem-solving); Follow-up Q; Offering help (by student, not by teacher); Demonstration; Independent work; (lack of) monitoring; checking answers; (not) reading aloud; (no) transition; co-construction; (no) guidelines; (no) presentation; pair work; (no) guidelines; (not) offering help demonstration; giving guidelines, but not enough; offering help (explain difficult words)	Target; Revision; Whole-class engagement; Reading aloud; Follow-up Q (levelling); Check answers; Application; Presentation; Giving feedback; Offering help; Independent work; Presentation; Offering help; Offering help (by S); Being questioned; Independent work; Offering help; Individual difference; Monitoring; Pair work; Offering help; Individual difference
Closing	Assign HW Assign Dictation	Rectifying Ss' attitude; Preview of next lesson	Collect course materials; (no wrap up or preview)	Preview of next lesson; Reflection

Appendix 6 – Sample of Interviewing Scripts (translated from Cantonese)

Interview with Ms [Tina]

July 9, 2014

Today I'd like to interview Ms [Tina], one of the participants of my research.

IR: Ms [Tina], can you tell me your experience of learning English in both primary and secondary schools? What did you do in your English lessons?

IE: To be honest, I didn't have a deep impression on what I did during the lessons. But I think one effective way of learning English is reading. When I read, I also pay attention to the sentence patterns - why is the sentence used in this way? Or why did the author use this tense here? As a result, I spend longer than usual time on reading. If you ask me whether reading newspaper is effective, I'd say it's not for elementary learners of English. It should be for those who have basic grasp of current issues and English grammar. So, I didn't read any English news reports until I got into the university. In the secondary school, I mostly read the Young Post and I borrowed books continuously. And then, I also wrote a lot. I forced myself to write English journals. (Learn: Intensive reading, grammar, reading newspaper and writing)

IR: So, does it mean that you learned English mostly outside the classroom in your secondary time? Does it mean that you didn't learn much during the lessons, or the teaching in English lessons did not help you much?

IE: When I look back, it's not that the English lessons didn't help. I just didn't have any impression. But I think it's something to do with Hong Kong education system - It's spoon-feeding. T finishes one lesson and then goes to the next lesson. For learners of English as a second language, there is no connection between the lessons. Only when students are self-motivated, could they learn English in this way. (Learn: HK education system – spoon-feeding, no connection between lessons)

IR: Can you tell me what you mean by spoon-feeding during the secondary school? Do you still remember how your teacher in the secondary school organized the lesson.

IE: I really couldn't remember much what happened during my prim and sec sch times. Maybe in one week, there were two topics, say "to infinitives". The grammar topic did not refer back to the content of the passage. And then the passage here and the next passage might not h a v e a n y coherence. This could be Hong Kong publishers' choice (organizing the materials).   (Learn: lack coherence)

IR: Does it mean that when you learned grammar during the sec sch, things are not in context?

IE: Right! I'd say that's the biggest problem. (Belief: Grammar in context)

IR: Let's talk about your teaching now. Is it different from the way you learned English in the lesson?

IE: I didn't remember much about my past learning experience in secondary school. But when I teach English now, I intentionally make sure that my students know what they learn in this lesson is connected with the previous lesson, and they can also use the things in the future lessons. There should be coherence between the lessons. (Practice: coherence between lessons)

IR: Does it mean that you work towards the target?

IE: Yes, of course!

IR: And you add bit by bit every day ?

IE: Correct! (Practice: progressive learning)

IR: So, what is the most important thing for our students in terms of learning English?

IE: What's important about learning English...I think Ss didn't pick up much English even after having learned it for 10 years or so because they were too dependent on the teacher. They think that as long as they recite something and pass the dictation, they could get by. However, what's most important, as I said earlier, is self-motivation. They need to learn English on their own in their spare time too.   (Belief: independent learning)

IR: So, you mentioned learning English outside the classroom. How about inside the classroom? In what way can teachers help students?

IE: Ts have to adjust themselves. They need to create a relaxing environment in the classroom. Learning a language can be stressful. Ts need to create a relaxing learning atmosphere. (Belief: Ts need to adjust themselves)

IR: So, it's all about the ambience of the lessons.

IE: Right.

IR: How many years have you been teaching?

IE: Four years.

IR: Did you have any changes during these four years?

IE: Of course. Even though I'm a teacher, but in every lesson, I still have to learn from my Ss. I learn how to be a better teacher. I'm not the best, but after every lesson, I need to reflect on my teaching: Did I do something wrong during the lesson? One thing I didn't change much is my

aptitude, but my mentality has changed, maybe because I have a baby now. Then, I've realized that every student has his/her own value. They have parents and they are precious. So, in terms of mentality, I have also changed accordingly, especially in this year. I have put more heart into my teaching.   (Belief: Reflect on each lesson)

IR: Does it mean that this year you tried to pay more attention to learners' diversity?

IE: Yes, exactly. (Practice: learners' diversity)

IR: Let's talk about the Workplace communication, which is part of our SBC in Form 5. What's your view on SBCD?

IE: What I think of SBCD?... Ay... I have a two-sided view. For weaker students, they won't all die in the public examination. The (exam) becomes fairer because now Ts have to consider students' classroom performances such as their projects. And the project marks may affect their public examination grade subsequently. This is a good initiative because students now understand that what they do in the lesson can contribute to their future (public exam) results. But the drawback is that teachers' workloads have become heavier. There are also some unfair situations, overall speaking. How should I put it? Well, since teachers from the same school are the assessors, it's hard to generate an objective grading. I'm not saying that Ts have prejudice, but it's hard to avoid. It's not fair that some Ts may not grade their Ss not objectively. The main drawback is still the increasing workloads. This is because you need to attend meetings outside school, and you need to save students' files. And the drawback is it's not fair. (Belief: positive attitudes towards SBA)

IR: So now you have been talking about SBA?

IE: Yes.

IR: But, I actually wanted to talk about the SBM.

IE: Oh, I see.

IR: Since we touch on the topic of SBA, how do you think the grading could be fairer?

IE: Actually, the Education Bureau has been giving us some guidelines. If every teacher follows the guidelines, it will lower the risk of unfairness. But the problem is the teacher who is teaching the same class is grading the Ss. So it's hard to have an objective assessment. (Belief: SBA can be subjective)

IR: Let's go back to the SBM. You just finished the module Workplace Communication. How do you view the organization of the SBC?

IE: I gave my full support for the SBM. It was really developed in accordance with our students'

levels. But I think we need to bridge them to the requirements of the public examination. Maybe students think that they could handle the school-based assessment with these materials, but will they ignore the fact that the public examination is far more demanding? The SBC developer need to bridge our Ss slowly. I think the workplace materials can achieve this effect. But of course, we don't do it just within 1-2 lessons, we have to do it continuously so that we could achieve this effect. (Belief: Full support for SBM)

IR: So, you think that the SBC must be linked to the public examination?

IE: Right, especially in the upper form. We need to help our Ss to cope with the public examination. (Belief: SBC must be linked to the public exam)

IR: Understood. After you taught the module Workplace Communication, are their any conflicts or commonality between the organization of the course and your ideology of teaching – say what you have just mentioned like lesson coherence, target-oriented, etc.

IE: It's by no means reaching the "conflict" level. Even though it's school-based, you know the needs of each class are different. Even within the same class, the learning differences could be quite huge. As such, I won't adopt all parts in the SBM. As an English teacher, I also selectively choose the materials, and see which tasks are suitable for my group of Ss. I think you have provided us with the choices because there are different parts in the curriculum. Just depending on the SBM alone may not be enough to generate desired outcomes. We teachers also have to add some elements to lead to the outcomes. (Practice: SBMs need adaptation)

IR: So say for example, how many tasks here did you cover and how many things did you add as extra?

IE: It's over 80%. For example, there is one part talking about the job of flight attendant. Then, I think maybe sec students may not know much about flight attendants. Then, I have searched a video on the web talking about the work life of a flight attendant. Then, I found out that my Ss actually got some ideas. Then, I talked about DHA here, asking them what types of jobs are available in the company. (Practice: add videos and info about the topic)

IR: So, out of the syllabus, you also tried to increase their common sense or "attitude", right? These are the additional efforts. Can you tell me about the 20% uncovered materials?

IE: Let me think. There are many job ads at the end of this booklet. To be honest, I won't go through all of them because of the time…

IR: You mean the appendix?

IE: Right. It depends on the students' own choice. Then, I didn't go through some vocabulary items because I think Ss could have some basic ability to guess their meanings. Basically, these

two parts (appendix and the vocab list) were not gone through, but I did cover the other parts. (Practice: Not going through all parts as Ss have basic ability to guess their meaning).

IR: When you said Ss have some ability, does it mean that they could handle some tasks on their own?

IE: Yes. I just gave them some assistance. I didn't tell them the answers straightaway. They also need to think, say guessing the meanings in context. Of course, the outcome is a letter (to a friend). There are many steps involved in between. For my class, we also had dictation and recitation. (Belief: Ss need to think) (Practice: dictation and recitation)

IR: Then, I also noticed that you had a worksheet for them that tested the knowledge of adjectives.

IE: That's right.

IR: Can you explain the purpose behind the worksheet.

IE: Well, the original idea was for them to memorize the vocabulary. After spelling the words, they should also need to know their meanings. When I design the worksheet, I didn't want to use traditional dictation methods, in which T reads and Ss write, but then Ss couldn't apply the vocabulary at all. There's some level of difficulty in the worksheet. It could be handled by Form 5 Ss in general, but for class it's quite difficult because they don't read throughout the text from top to bottom. The purpose of this worksheet is for them to practice thinking and getting the words from their long-term memory. (Practice: T doesn't use traditional dictation methods).

IR: After all the steps and small tasks, what do you think about their final performance?

IE: It's really not bad! I think the main reason, of course, is not because of my worksheet. It's because of the sample writing. Not all Ss need the sample writing. But it's for students who have no idea of writing. This sample writing explains the meaning behind each sentence. Each paragraph has a purpose. Indeed, Ss need to recite these sentences so that they could use them in the public exam. Of course, not all Ss need recitation. For better Ss, I'd ask them to recite and dictate the whole passage or even compose one for their own. But recitation is really good for those who have no idea of writing. It provides them with some inputs. (Belief: Recitation is good for weak Ss) (Belief: Sampling is vital in SBCD)

IR: You mentioned that sample writing is very important. In SBCD, what other elements, except the sample writing, are important?

IE: You mean what other elements can help them accomplish the outcome?

IR: Right.

IE: Because this topic is workplace, Ss should also need to be familiar with the topic themselves. If they can't understand the nature of common jobs and can't relate to the topic to their daily life, it's hard to write the essay. This is because they don't know much about this topic, so they should have a least some understanding of the topic. (Belief: Ss should know the context well).

IR: So do you mean that when we created our SBC, we need to set a context?

IE: That's right.

IR: So here in this booklet we have short tasks in front and longer tasks towards the end. Do you think they are coherent and help Ss?

IE: Yes, of course. But if you talk about coherence, it's not totally coherent. For instance, on P.16 the sample essay – I think it's a bit rush. Actually, using the sample essay, Ss and T can talk about what is the purpose for each paragraph, what vocabulary should be filled in, and what part of speech they have to use.   Then, we show them a sample essay. So, as you see on P.15 and P.16, the linkage is not much. But of course, the book as a whole can help Ss escape from their frame. (Practice: needs more scaffolding between tasks)

IR: You just mentioned parts of speech. What is the role of grammar in SBCD?

IE: Grammar and SBCD? I don't think we can separate the two things because grammar is very important in English learning because it's a language pattern. In fact, if Form 5 students could not handle the grammar, it means that the foundations they built in the junior forms or even in primary school are really weak.   (Belief: Grammar is vital)

IR: Let's use this course pack as an example. Do you think that this booklet has taught Ss some language patterns which they could use in the future.

IE: Yes, sure. If we look at sample writing again, there are lots of sentence patterns that are essential, which means Ss can use them again in the future. As I said before, the SBM could have been better if you had picked some sentence patterns to analyze with Ss. For instance, where is the subject in this sentence? What's the verb here? What's the focus in this sentence? But of course, even after each teacher got the SBM, they need tailor-making too. (Practice: T selects sentence patterns for analysis)

IR: So you mean the course is actually a "dead object", but the teacher's interpretation is more important?

IE: Exactly. (Belief: T's interpretation is more important)

IR: When I observed your lesson, you also changed some of the sequence of the tasks.

IE: Right.

IR: So, what is your organization of the lessons like? When will you follow the flow and when not?

IE: As you mentioned, the course is really a "dead object", teachers must be really flexible. I think Ss should have appropriate inputs. They need to have enough vocabulary and understanding of the type of writing (genre) and their format. They also need to know how to compile the sentences together into paragraphs. We need to go through these few steps before attaining the outcome. As such, I have to go back and forth and make sure that I have covered these essential steps. (Practice/Belief: T must have flexibility, go back forth at times)

IR: Does it mean that if you found that Ss may not have the vocabulary or understand the sentence patterns well enough, then you will refer to the previous tasks?

IE: Yes, I will, I will. Of course, I need to make sure that they understand each stage well before going to the next step. (Practice: Ss need to grab all steps)

IR: If you needed to use it again, would you use this booklet?

IE: Yes I will, I will. You mean whether to use the same booklet, right? I will. But as I said, it's not really true that this booklet is perfect. Ss have to work with the T too. T needs to know how to use this booklet and optimize it. Therefore, I can't tell you how I will use this booklet next year because I also have to see what my Ss are like. (Belief: T needs to optimize SBM and use it at her discretion)

IR: So it should be learner-centered?

IE: Exactly.

IR: I also found it the same. We need to revise from time to time. Finally, I wanna ask – when you use the booklet, does it help Ss interact among themselves or with the T?

IE: Of course. (Practice: SBM provides interactions)

IR: You think the organization of the tasks could lead to many of these interactions?

IE: I think they have given Ss a chance to interact. For instance, on p.6, Ss have to interview their classmates. Why did they want to choose the job? They had to raise questions.   The communication was two-way. Ss can ask T questions and the vice versa. So, I think it has (provided interactions).

IR: Do you think that it's an important element in SBCD? Say there should be some tasks that allow Ss to interact with each other.

IE: You mean in SBCD? I think it's not only in SBCD, but in each lesson, I think there should be some interactions. Ss should have a chance to communicate with each other and even with the T.   (Belief: Ss should have a chance for interaction every lesson)

IR: Thank you for your interview today.

Appendix 7 – Summary of Interviews

Summary of Interview with teachers   (Red: Attitudes towards SBMs/SBC) (Blue: Teachers' reflections and styles) (Yellow: Teachers' adaptations)

Ms (Joey)	Ms (Sussie)	Ms (Tina)	Ms (Mitchell)
(learn) intrinsic motivation, always interested in English (Learn) love watching English documentaries, dramas and films (Learn) Read novels at school (Learn) drilling and grammar in Sec Sch (Learn) Grammar not in context (Learn) nothing to revise before exam (Learn) Remember most - News articles reading and writing (Learn) Passive, just finished the ex books in Sch (Learn) T edited news articles for her to read (Learn in uni) read literary canons (Learn in uni) more independent (Practice) Teaching different from the way she learned (Practice) Prepare all things for Ss cos Ss don't have self-learning skills today	(Learn) use of Chinese, comic strips, memorization , dictation, grammar book in junior forms. (Learn) drilling, did lots of past papers in the senior forms. (Learn) Comic Strips used in exam, helped me remember things better. (Belief) drilling is good for stronger students not weaker students (Learn) Self-talk (Learn) study overseas, hang out with native speakers (Practice) Ss practise the use of L2 (Belief) read and learn writing from good sentences//read, listen, speak and write more often. (Practice) use of dictation to help weaker Ss	(Learn) Intensive reading, grammar, reading newspapers and writing (Learn) HK Ed system – spoon-feeding, no connection between lessons. (Learn) Lack coherence (Belief) Grammar in context (Practice) Coherence between lessons (Practice) Progressive learning (Belief) Independent learning (Belief) Ts needs to adjustment themselves (Belief) Reflect after each lesson (Practice) Learners' diversity (Belief) positive attitudes towards SBA	(Learn) Reading (Learn) in a natural environment (Belief) learn by immersion (Practice) Do more project-based learning but hard (Practice) Teach basic vocab first (Learn) Media (Practice) Use of videos, but have to translate in Cantonese (Belief) SBCD for weaker students (Belief) SBCD provides step by step learning (Belief) SBCD should includes sampling and memorization (Practice) Understand Ss' needs and is willing to contradict to her beliefs. (Practice) Limitations on teaching – contextual constraints (Practice) T adds more creative activities and projects (Practice) T shows them videos about different jobs (Practice) T creates tasks, namely project placement for

(Practice) exp. in developing SBMs

(Belief) SBMs may not be suitable for all classes

(Practice) SBCD depends on time available

(Practice) SBCD exp – text oriented

(Practice) SBCD exp – develop backwards

(Belief) Ss should learn how to synthesize materials

(Practice) Ss couldn't do it

(Practice) Ss are afraid to try and shut off their brains

(Belief) Vocab is basics

(Practice) Grammar teaching must relate to the text

(Practice) Lower forms have more lesson activities

(Practice) too much content to cover, so limited activities

(Practice) traditional methods like dictation is useful

(Practice) very guided teaching c.f. her learning exp

(Belief) motivation and attitude affects Ss learning

(Practice) constant assessment

(Belief) Group work does

(Belief) dictation to gain confidence

(Practice) Ask Ss to recite sentences in context

(Belief) dictation as encouragement, not stress

(Practice 2) use of dictation to help weaker Ss

(Belief) dictation to gain confidence

(Practice) recite sentences in context

(Belief) dictation as encouragement, not stress

(Practice) use makeshifts and even Chinese to teach English

(Practice) build a positive ambience for weaker Ss, praise them

(Belief) Grammar useful for better Ss

(Practice) analysis grammar/ sentence patterns

(Practice) Better Ss need to analyze the text, weaker Ss just

(Belief) SBA can be subjective

(Belief) Full support for SBMs

(Belief) SBC must be linked to public exam

(Practice) SBMs need adaptation

(Practice) add videos and info about the topic

(Practice) Not going through all parts as Ss have basic ability

(Belief) Ss need to think

(Practice) T doesn't use traditional dictation methods

(Belief) Recitation is good for weak students

(Belief) Sampling is vital in SBCD

(Belief) Ss should know the context well

(Practice) scaffolding between tasks

(Belief) Grammar is vital

(Practice) T selects sentence patterns for

Ss

(Belief) T must be immersed in the language. Provides hands-on exp to Ss.

(Practice) T chooses to do the project first and then the SBMs

(Practice) Insists on real-life experience for Ss

(Practice) T not happy with the final assessment in SBMs

(Practice) T still goes thru SBM very quickly

(Practice/Belief) T does not want to waste the materials

(Practice) Better Ss enable T to implement project-based learning

(Belief) Ss cannot create (SBC) materials on their own as it's too complicated.

(Practice) Ss should have hands-on experience

(Belief) SBM still a basis for curriculum, but in the end teaching depends on the teachers' styles.

(Practice) External factors: Use the SBMs or parents may questions

(Practice) Needs the materials for the end task

(Belief) T has positive attitudes towards SBM, esp. for bottom

not work in undisciplined classroom.

(Practice) Ss discuss ideas about a book during SBA lesson

(Belief) L1 necessary as some concepts are difficult

(Practice) follow the sequence of SBMs in research but have to repeat

(Practice) Ss forget previous learning so there needs assessment in between tasks

(Practice) T covers all SBMs

(Practice) not enough time to over SBMs

(Practice) T had to cut some tasks

(Practice) Ss didn't have high-level thinking to deal with some tasks

(Practice) T streamlines job types to cater for Ss' needs

(Practice) Ask Ss about their interest before SBCD

(Practice) T may do some survey about jobs at the beginning

(Belief) T's role and discretion important

(Practice) T develops extra materials based on the

need to recognize words.

(Practice) Different dictation tasks for different levels

(Belief) Memorization

(Practice) Dictation with Chinese meaning

(Practice) Do it step by step

(Practice) motivate Ss by stressing the importance of English

(Practice) self-reflection, trying to make lessons more interesting

(Practice) use of videos and competitions to arouse interests at times

(Practice) Engage Ss by group discussion

(Practice) change the tasks every other 15 mins

(Belief) T is the key person to light up a lesson

(Belief) positive on SBMs as it saves teachers' preparation time and cater for

analysis

(Belief) T's interpretation is more important

(Practice/Belief) T must have flexibility, go back and forth at times

(Practice) Ss need to understand each step

(Belief) T needs to optimize SBM and use it at her discretion

(Practice) SBM provides interactions

(Belief) Ss should have a chance for interaction every lesson

Ss

(Practice) It's necessary to have something (SBMs) for Ss to study because of exam

(Belief) Exam is the greatest evil.

(Practice) T would have done different if without the assessment

(Belief – Summary) SBCD as a building block, a fallback for Ss. On top of that, project work designed by teacher.

(Belief) Teaching depends on types of students – cater for learning needs.

(Belief) SBMs as a ladder to pull Ss up

(Belief) SBC should fit the school's context

(Belief) Style – T in your own methods

(Belief) Implement own teaching styles and enticing the kids to learn

(Belief) SBM fits small context and population

(Belief) SBM provides basis; then T may do things on their own.

(Belief/ Practice) – Exams are the things that trigger

(Practice/belief) – School lacks

framework of SBMs (Practice) Ss had difficulty locating correct information from the SBMs (Practice) SBMs should include sentence patterns (Practice) T revises SBMs based on Ss' interest (Practice) Ss had difficulty transferring skills learned (Practice) Ss had poor common sense (Practice) Ss are very narrow-minded (Practice) Content needs tailoring (Practice) T needs to add background info (Belief) T needs to provide all info to weaker Ss but just hints for stronger Ss (Belief) Ss don't want to take risks (Practice) cutting down on some content for weaker Ss) (Practice) Ss need to speak before writing (Practice) hard for Ss to interact cos they need guidelines for all tasks) (Practice) Ss had difficulty substituting new info in the sample)	learners' needs (Reflection) needs better framing, Ss are concerned about exams but not the SBMs.) (Belief) Ss need to change their mindset about exam (Reflection) Go through the former tasks faster (Belief) a must for reflection (Practice) cover 100% of SBMs (Belief) SBMs cover different learning tasks (Belief) SBMs provide Ss with interaction opportunities (Practice) contradictory to belief as it's not a written task (Belief) provide sampling and analyze discussion. (Belief) modeling is very important (Practice) mainly follow the SBMs (Belief) better Ss may		autonomy because of exam

(Practice) T added further questions to help Ss write)	not need the framework		
(Practice) diversity in the class is small)	(Belief) depending on learners' abilities		
(Practice) Before discussion, give them a sample dialogue)	(Belief) SBMs to cater for learners' diversity		
(Belief) It's ok to copy)	(Belief) Use the SBMs again for sure		
(Practice) T couldn't reuse previous materials as Ss are too weak)	(Belief) teachers' styles more important than the materials		
(Belief) Depth of SBMs depends on Ss' levels)	(Belief) Materials as hardware, but it also needs good software – teaching		
(Practice) T would like to prepare bridging tasks to help Ss)			
(Belief) T will use the SBMs again)			
(Belief) SBC more aligned with Ss' level)			
(Belief) how much my Ss learn is more important then how much to cover			
(Belief) Whether using a textbook or SBMs, T needs to adapt to them			
(Practice) Ss are waiting T to spoon-feed them			
(Practice) T narrows down the job types for assessment to help Ss			
(Practice) T prepares Ss for assessment but Ss are still			

lost (Practice) T demonstrates the assessment once (Practice) Weaker Ss impossible to cope with unseen questions (Belief) SBA increases Ss' motivation and interaction (Belief) SBCD is positive as more controlled and catered to Ss' levels			

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