

Teachers' Perception of Middle Leadership in Hong Kong Schools

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Despite school middle leaders are growing in their importance in the school in recent years, the understanding of their leadership roles and practices are unclear. In addition, the changing expectations of middle leadership lead them into confusion of roles and an unknown space of practice. This paper intends to portrait the conception of middle leadership in schools in light of the teachers' perception and expectation of middle leadership. Data were collected from interviews of four subject department heads/coordinators and five subject teachers who worked with the middle leaders closely in three special schools in Hong Kong. Initial findings show that the middle leaders were struggling with role ambiguity – unclear positioning of work, which led to overloading and frustration in work as they often developed a symptom of doing this and that. Although both the middle leaders and teachers often had high and broad expectations for middle leaders, i.e. excellency in both professional and management duties, it is found that the middle leaders were usually ill-prepared for the multiple roles. The paper concludes that middle leaders have to understand the breadth, depth and substances of middle leadership in school so that they can be prepared well for performing their roles and responsibilities.



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