Dear Colleagues,

Knowledge Spikes is designed to give you a range of items which can help you think about your leadership. It’s not designed to provide any detail – but to offer a little stimulation and point you in the direction of more information if you want it.

Let me know what you think.

Take care.

Allan

Principals Facilitate Teacher Development

1. **Encouragement and experimentation.** Teachers are encouraged to try out new ideas and conduct their own classroom research on how well these work.

2. **The teaching professional must be at the center of staff development.** Teachers undertake primary responsibility for their professional growth.

3. **Staff development programmes must be characterized by mutual professional respect.** Teachers value the professional growth and professional skills and abilities of their colleagues.

4. **Education and training is a lifelong process.** Teachers think about education and development not merely in terms of initial courses but in terms of rhythms by which communities and individuals continually renew themselves.

5. **The primary focus of staff development should be on sustained long-term growth.** It is common place that one-shot quick-fix approaches to staff development have little to offer teaching professionals in terms of real growth.

6. **Learning to teach requires that professionals come to understand teaching in different ways from what they have learned from their own experience.** Teachers need not only to understand but also perform a wide variety of things, many of them simultaneously.


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**Loved this book**

**In praise of SLOW**

by Carl Honoré

How many times have you got to the end of the week (if there is such a thing) and asked yourself: Where did it go? What did I do? Did I achieve anything at all? If you’re anything like me these question pop-up because we are so busy rushing, rushing, rushing to get everything done; and get it done as quickly as possible. It’s exhausting — but we can’t slow down? It too often seems that ‘faster is better’ and those who respond the quickest are those who are rewarded.

If you are one of us who feels that everything these days is just a bit too ‘fast’ you might be interested in reading the book In praise of SLOW (how a worldwide movement is challenging the cult of speed by Carl Honoré).

Honoré’s thesis is that we now live in a culture that tells us that ‘faster is better’ and that anything that slows us down is considered an enemy. He further suggests that trying to do everything ‘faster’ is detrimental to our health, work and relationships. Does this hold for you as a principal?

The book explains a movement towards ‘slow’ that seriously questions the cult of speed. This questioning covers many areas of life – some of which will interest you more than others. I think you’ll enjoy the chapter focusing on the benefits of working less hard and striving for a balance. Honoré makes the argument that ‘slowing down does not mean reduced productivity, poorer quality service or more failure’. In fact, the opposite argument is made, and includes a call for the return of the afternoon nap for everybody.

If you’re interested in slowing down while still maintaining your standards and achieving your goals for better student learning, take the time to skim the book. More information can be found at www.inpraiseofslow.com

I recently picked up 2 extra copies of the book and would like to give them away. The first two Blue Skiers who email me and puts in the subject header ‘I’m slowing down and working better’ will receive a copy. Good luck. Allan

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I read a piece by Ben Levin from Canada recently that really hit me. It was nothing new, nothing we don’t all know deep down. What was it? That even a small amount of one-on-one caring human contact with students can literally change their life.

As little as 20-30 minutes of supportive adult attention can often move a student from the wrong path to the right one.

Our words and our attitudes to students really do matter! … How can each of us be confident that our interactions with students are moving them toward the right path?

Try asking yourselves the question when you next meet in Learning Squares.

I’ll be interested in hearing the answers.


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**Simple but True**

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Knowledge Spikes

Stimulus Learning Materials

Blue skies is founded by the Education Bureau, HK SAR
### Vice-principals’ dilemma

This study investigates linkages between job satisfaction and the career aspirations of vice-principals in Hong Kong secondary schools. Drawing from survey data of 331 VPs, the paper reports that professional commitment, sense of efficacy and sense of synchrony are the three satisfaction factors that shape the desire of vice-principals to become principals. Interestingly, while professional commitment and sense of efficacy are positively associated with career aspiration for becoming a principal, sense of synchrony is negatively related to career aspiration.

The negative association between a sense of synchrony and the desire to become a principal suggests that VPs who upheld the Chinese cultural value of workplace harmony had difficulties in maintaining a balance between a harmonious working relationship with colleagues and pursuing principalship. Thus, they tended to remain in their vice-principal positions. Kwan’s study suggests that it is critical to recognize the perceived tensions facing VPs given the current shortage of principal applicants in Hong Kong schools.


### What Effective Classroom? Towards a Paradigm Shift

Cheng and Mok illustrate key characteristics of effective and ineffective classrooms in Hong Kong schools in terms of three-paradigm waves — i.e. internal effectiveness (1st wave), interface effectiveness (2nd wave), and future effectiveness (3rd wave). The study encompassed 30 principals, 1,119 teachers, and 7,063 students in 201 classrooms from 31 secondary schools. Using empirical data, they suggest that key concerns in ensuring classroom effectiveness are distinguished by the following questions:

1) **1st Wave:** How can learning and teaching be well organized in order to deliver planned knowledge, skills, and values? How can students achieve the given standards in internal and external examinations?

2) **2nd Wave:** How can the performance of teaching and the outcomes of learning meet key stakeholders’ expectations and needs? How can the classroom become internally and externally competitive to provide quality services in the education market?

3) **3rd Wave:** How can the environment (“classroom”) for learning and teaching be simultaneously globalized, localized, and individualized? How can students’ contextualized multiple intelligences be continuously developed by students themselves in their learning environment?

This thought-provoking study raises another related question for school leaders: How can school leaders respond effectively to the three paradigm shifts?


### Middle-level leader & Teacher EQ

The authors touch on an emerging issue in educational leadership research and practice — i.e. emotional intelligence (EI). This refers to an individual’s ability to:

1) understand their deep emotions and the emotions of people around them;

2) keep behaviours under control when experiencing extreme moods;

3) use emotions toward constructive activities. The authors gathered survey data from 3,866 primary and secondary school teachers to investigate the impact of EI on job satisfaction.

One of their major findings is that the EI of middle-level leaders (i.e. senior teachers with official leading roles in school administration) has a significant impact on ordinary teachers’ job satisfaction. Wong and his colleagues’ suggest that EI should be seriously considered and integrated into teacher education and training programs given its positive association with teacher job satisfaction.


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1 If you’d like to read more about professional development you might like to read the Mini-Module written by Prof. Paul Bredeson - Leading Professional Development: The 3rd key to curriculum change. Let us know if you haven’t got it.