



ASIA LEADERSHIP  
ROUNDTABLE

亞太領導圓桌會議  
Hangzhou 2018 杭州

# The West Wind vs. The East Wind: Understanding Leadership for Teacher Learning

## 東風、西風：促進教師學習的教育領導



香港教育大學  
The Education University  
of Hong Kong



國際領導發展基金  
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江干教育



## Qualitative Dimension on Principals' Role to Support Teachers in Assessment and Grading

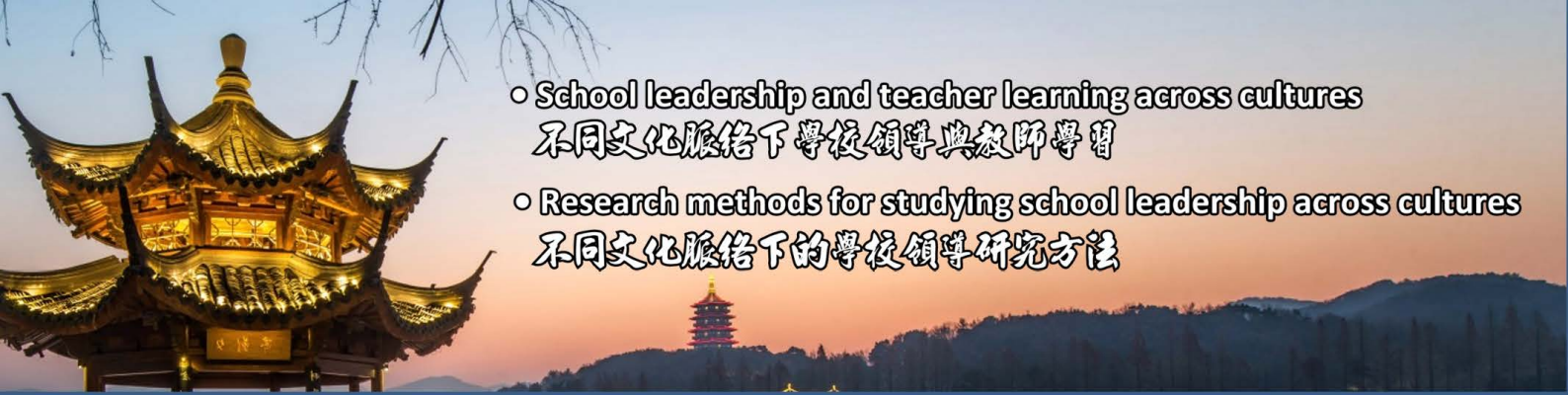
Helene Ärlestig

### Objectives

This study focus on how principals support teachers in their work with assessing and grading their students. Existing studies indicate that there are qualitative differences in the ways that principals do their work. The purpose of this article is to use ideal types to identify qualitative differences in the leadership provided by principals in supporting teachers' assessment and grading work. It is based on two research questions: What qualitative differences in the leadership provided by principals in support of teachers' assessment and grading work can be identified through a deeper analysis of the studies empirical data? What methodological considerations are needed in order to work with ideal types to describe such qualitative differences?

### Perspective(s)

Principals importance as pedagogical leaders to form prerequisites and support teachers in their teaching is widely recognized (i.e. Ärlestig & Törnsen, 2014; Day, 2007; Day, Gu. & Sammons, 2016; Leithwood, Sun & Pollock, 2017). In more and more countries policy highlight principals' importance to work with schools core mission; students learning. Discussing the principal's role and duties in supporting the work of teachers makes it possible to assess and develop the principal's own work. How and what kind of activities that are prioritized gain different results and focus. Assessment and grading and how it is performed has a direct link to teaching quality and school results. Teachers have different prerequisites and support to manage this important task. Using a method that create character groups differences in leadership style can be visualized.



○ School leadership and teacher learning across cultures

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○ Research methods for studying school leadership across cultures

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## Method

The study has a mixed method design where both electronic surveys and interviews were used. A total of 464 principals responded to a survey containing 44 questions. Interviews with 20 principals were done after the first analyses of the surveys to get a qualitative understanding of the responses. The surveys used a 6 grad Likert-scale together with some open-ended questions. The interviews were about 1 hour each and all of them were recorded and transcribed.

The analysis performed to create character groups is based on combining empirical data with evaluations predicated on a holistic view and previous research, knowledge and experience. By combine the results for those who responded with choices at the extreme end of the scale and support active assessment and grading work (Group A), those who fell in the middle of scale (Group B) and those who landed at the other end of the scale and reported that assessment and grading do not constitute a priority task (Group C), then three entirely different types of leadership emerge with respect to assessments and grading.

## Results

Dividing the empirical results into three groups identifies different leadership styles that exhibit qualitative differences. The interviews show that the principals' rationales and ways of thinking also differ, and exhibit many similarities to the way in which Timperley (2013) categorizes differences in collegial learning.

It is evident throughout that the issues surrounding assessments and grading are complex, and depend upon a greater whole. It can be difficult to distinguish between person and function in matters pertaining to work initiatives and attitudes. There is one group of principals, group A, that manages this work in a clear and enthusiastic manner. The principals who belong to group B set high expectations in criticize and support teachers work since they have a nuanced picture of what is going on.



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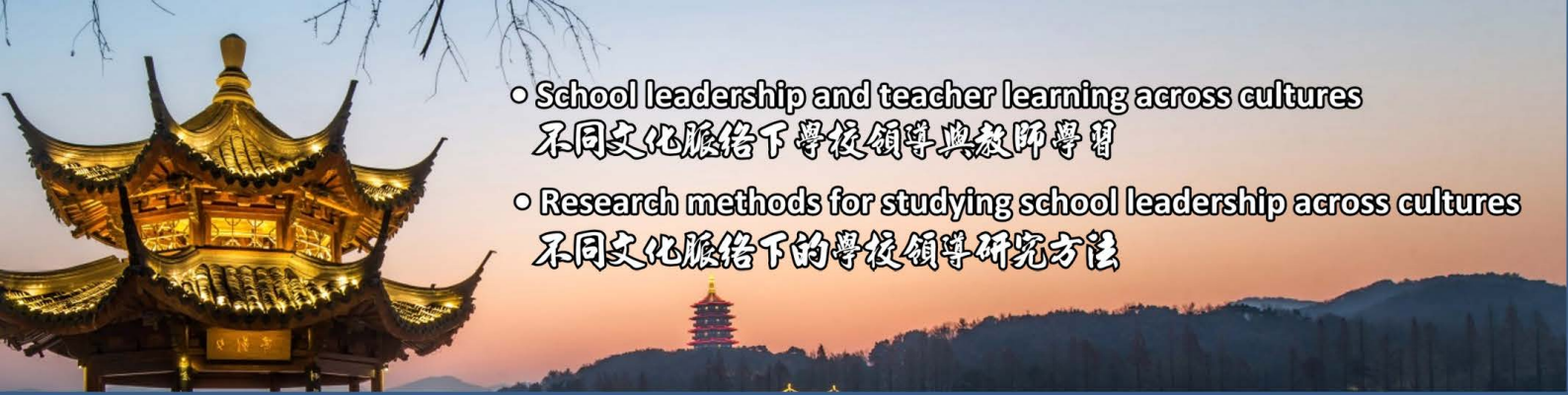
The principals in group B do not give themselves the time to, or have the knowledge of how to combine their duties working towards national goals, while at the same time succeeding in creating a climate where the teachers as a group take responsibility and challenge individual teachers' notions regarding assessment and grading work. There is also group C, which fully prioritizes issues other than those associated with assessment and grading work.

### Importance for theory, practice, and policy

Even if many agree that school leadership is important, there is a need for more qualitative understanding of how leader actions is executed. Using ideal groups to show differences awake new questions and possibilities to understand leadership actions in relation to practice and policy, which in turn can create new theoretical insights. Even though these depictions are based on characteristic features, they can among practitioners serve as the basis for conversations about values, routines, priorities and knowledge. These depictions may challenge or validate personal perceptions and priorities in the day-to-day operations of a school, reflections that can in turn contribute to learning and changed practice.

### The connection to the conference theme

The conference theme 'The West wind vs. The East wind: Understanding leadership for teacher Learning' fits well with my proposal and what I will present. Methods to understand qualitative differences in pedagogical leadership is an area that needs further attention in all kind of contexts.



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- Research methods for studying school leadership across cultures  
不同文化脈絡下的學校領導研究方法

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