

Change Facilitators and Curriculum Innovation in Foreign Language Education in Japan

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I. Introduction

It is frequently reported in Japan that some "fresh-off-the-boat" native language teachers with full of knowledge of ESL/EFL curriculum development often come to Japan only to fail to accomplish the "mission" they had dreamed of : introducing a curriculum in which foreign languages are taught in a truly communicative way and helping students to start producing and comprehending the language within a year or two.

However, experienced language teachers, both native and non-native, know that curriculum change is a complex task fraught with obstructions because it involves such myriad factors as individual responses and expectations, logistical and professional ramifications of innovations, and communal and institutional context (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin and Hall, 1987). Educators are often not accepted as partners in change and as a result are not given enough inservice training, creative input and preparation time to be able to handle change (Nunan, 1993; Candlin 1993). More specifically, curriculum change involves a teacher's ability to understand how an innovation is to be used, why an innovation is to be used, or how innovations have failed in the past.

Keeping in mind the fact that dropping enrollment is a reality that is taking place now and will be expected to continue in every school in Japan for the next decade or so, it is vital for each language teacher and school administrator to examine the best way to implement academic innovations and find out what types of people, in the positions of change facilitators are more likely to succeed in this competitive environment.

This paper has two primary objectives: (1) to introduce two major studies conducted in the U.S.A: the Berman report and Principal-Teacher Interaction Study (PTI), which examine the styles of curriculum and administrative change and (2) to try to find

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out some of the key factors for a successful curriculum change and change facilitator. In addition, there is a contextualising objective of pointing out some implications for Japanese school settings.

II. Seven Factors for a Successful Change

Many reports have been written about educational change in the last fifteen years (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, 1978; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Hall, Hord, & Griffin, 1980; Fullan, 1982; Hall, Rutherford & Griffin, 1982; Huling, Hall, & Rutherford, 1983; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Hord, Huling, & Stiegelbauer, 1983; Rutherford, Hord, Huling, & Hall, 1983; Hall, Rutherford, Hord & Huling-Austin, 1984, Sizer, 1984; Goodland, 1984; Hall & Hord, 1987; Sekiguchi, 1993; Yonally, 1992). One investigation, which needs to be noted, is the one reported by Paul Berman and Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin (1987).

Berman and McLaughlin (1987) prepared a report for the United States Office of Education in which they reviewed the findings of a four-year, two-phase study conducted by the Rand Corporation to examine and evaluate a national sample of education innovations funded by federal programs. In addition to analyzing the effects of federal policies, they examined characteristics of new educational projects and how school districts managed educational innovations. They studied the projects' educational methods, resource levels, scopes, and implementation strategies. The district characteristics they analyzed were school climate and leadership, teacher attributes, and district management capacity and support. (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). Although the research was primarily conducted in the United States, the conclusions are by no means limited to communities in the U. S. A because those communities are collective, in nature, socially complex, and represent an aggregate of variables manifested globally.

The conclusion of the Berman & McLaughlin report follows:

1. The choice of educational methods and resources available determined the projects' outcomes and continuation to only a small and limited extent.
2. Expensive projects were generally no more likely than less expensive ones to be effectively implemented, elicit teacher change, improve student performance, or be continued by teachers.
3. Ambitious and demanding innovations promoted teacher change and teacher continuation of project methods without causing unmanageable implementation

problems or diminishing gains in student performance.

4. Locally chosen implementation strategies strongly influenced both the projects' short-run outcomes and their longer-run fates.
5. Leadership was a vital factor at both the school and the project level.
6. Teachers' attributes, years of teaching experience, sense of efficacy, and verbal ability significantly affected project outcome. The number of years of experience had a negative effect.
7. A supportive district environment was necessary for an innovation to be effectively implemented and sustained.

In other words, methods, resources and expenditures did not predict success. But, teacher empowerment, utilisation of the local expertise and creativity, the quality of leadership, the teachers' attributes and community and administrative support were paramount in predicting project outcomes and duration.

It is surprising to find out that the choice of educational methods and resources available determined the projects' outcomes and continuation to only a small and limited extent. Hence language teachers should not over emphasise the way language is taught. They should pay more attention to the overall quality of language curriculum, the overall quality of teaching and teachers, the relationships between teachers and administrators and the teachers' empowerment to function professionally.

There are other examples in various EFL/ESL environments to support these findings. An outstanding example of such an approach to quality and teaching in an environment that presupposes the teachers' authority in education and the high quality of leadership is the Midwest Science Foundation Health Sciences Program administered by Delta Gier, Audra Gier, and Robert Wagnon (Personal communication 1990-93). The Health Sciences Program is accredited through Donnelly College in Kansas City, Kansas in the United States. It has a mixed student body of Asian non-native speakers of English and American native speakers of English. They are prepared for the entrance exams into professional health sciences schools of medicine, chiropractic, osteopathy, dentistry and podiatry. The rate of entrance and successful completion of professional schools is in excess of 99% -- a figure that places it at the top of all undergraduate programmes in the United States. The primary role of the teacher is to teach and the teachers' are given ultimate authority to do whatever it takes to accomplish the goals set out in their contract with the students. Class sizes, individual tutoring, instructional materials and all other aspects of the programme are modified and developed at the edu-

cators' discretion with the ultimate goal of seeing the students successfully complete the programme and enter professional school prepared to deal with the tasks they find there. This can only be possible with administrative support and a high quality of leadership that empowers and coordinates the teachers' endeavours.

To return to the Berman & McLaughlin report, an interesting aspect is that ambitious and demanding innovations promoted teacher change and teacher continuation of project methods without causing unmanageable implementation problems or diminishing gains in student performance. This suggests that if the curriculum change should take place, it should be a rather drastic change, because this marked change promotes professional development of the teacher and improves the quality of teaching.

In what is demonstrably an attempt to exploit a better model of innovative curriculum change, Keio University in Fujisawa (Sekiguchi, 1993) is reportedly investigating drastic changes in their new curriculum: significantly reducing the number of part-time teachers and replacing them with full-time teachers, developing their own textbooks for their students, introducing semi-intensive language programs, hiring native language teachers, and introducing a variety of different foreign language courses among other changes. It may turn out to be one of the most radical curriculum changes taking place in Japan.

This aspect of promoting professional development was a primary part of the message presented by Chris Candlin at the JALT Conference on Omiya, Japan in 1993. In emphasising the teachers' needs, Candlin insisted that a programme must include a pay off in terms of career improvement — placing standards of competence on the teachers' shoulders and then holding them responsible for those standards is pointless unless the teachers receive professional dividends. Candlin also emphasised the point so well fulfilled at the Health Sciences Program at Midwest Science Foundation; teacher performance is determined in direct relation to improved learning outcomes which, we would add, should be measurable and eschew authoritarian agendas that preclude or curtail teacher empowerment and quality leadership.

The Keio program would also embody an arguably constructive departure from the use of transient part-time instructors who are unable to employ the proper attention needed in improving learning gains because they are categorically underpaid, unsupported and uninvolved. Historically, the damage this has caused is well documented by Nagai (1971, pp. 35, 68-69, 228). The use of part-time teachers to cut expenditures is a common practice in Japan. Part-time teachers do not usually get unemployment insurance, health insurance, retirement insurance, research funds, travel funds or any of the

number of social and professional benefits that permanent employees have in Japan. By 1969, part-timers composed 45% of the faculties at private universities and this practice has dogged educators since the early part of the 20th century. Nagai cites this as a leading problem adversely effecting all of education in Japan. (Nagai, 1971: pp. 249-250)

The current state of affairs has not changed in most schools. Shiozawa, Simmons and Noda (1993) delineated the problems inherent in employing full-time teachers of limited duration and part-time teachers including exclusion from the administrative and creative process as well as the general destabilising nature of their employment which interferes in long-term commitment to their professional roles.

For these reasons, if Keio 'abrogates their reliance' on non-tenured educators, with a corresponding boost to academic freedom and administrative support there will certainly be greater freedom for the development of a constructive language programme.

Berman and McLaughlin's study also concluded that leadership is a vital factor (5) and the teachers' attributes significantly affected project outcomes (6). This suggests that local academic administrators play key roles in curriculum change. Second language teachers in Japan must realize that their leadership quality is vital to any project's success.

In addition, expensive projects are no more likely to be implemented than inexpensive projects. This suggests even a single teacher can and should start with a small inexpensive project, and that if it is successful, it might trigger a bigger project in curriculum change in the future. In this sense, it is extremely important that informed language teachers take the initiative in whatever field he/she feels comfortable with and contribute to academic innovations in every way possible. It should also be obvious that such enthusiasm and freedom should receive the support from the administration and they should join together as a team.

In the ever tightening second language market, there is little or no room for innovation failure. Time and money are prized commodities in Japan as well as in the United States. Professional language educators with experience, a commitment to efficiency and high verbal ability will aid in the implementation of an innovation. With this in mind, second language change facilitators must construct, implement and continue to provide a supportive environment for innovation to become an integral part of a new education program. Innovation requires active involvement of the teacher and in return innovation promotes teacher professional growth and the continuation of the project. Everyone wins: the administration, the teachers, and the students.

Ⅲ. Change Facilitator Styles

The Berman and McLaughlin report suggests that a programme leader must play a key role in the change process. This key person is called a "change facilitator" in curriculum development nomenclature. A change facilitator refers to a person working directly with people who are expected to change (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin & Hall, 1987). Researchers for the Research and Development Team for Teacher Education at the University of Texas at Austin have identified three change facilitator styles (Hall, Rutherford & Griffin, 1982). They are described in operational terms and are referred to as initiators, managers, and responders (Hall, Rutherford, Hord & Huling-Austin, 1987).

A. Initiators

The first group of facilitators are initiators. They hold clear, decisive, long-range goals for their schools that transcend, but include, implementation of current innovations. They have a well-defined vision of what their school should be like and of what teachers, parents, students, and the principal should be doing to help the school move in that direction. They tend to have strong beliefs about what constitutes good schools and teaching. They listen to their teachers, then make decisions. The decisions are based on input from those who will be involved. Each decision is made in relation to the long-term goals they hold for the school and what they believe to be best for students (Hall & Hord, 1987).

Initiators push: they have strong expectations for students, teachers, and themselves, and they push to see that all are moving in goal-oriented directions. They convey and monitor these high expectations through frequent contact with teachers and clear expectations of how the school is to operate and how teachers are to teach. When they feel it is in the best interest of the school, particularly in the students' interest, initiators will seek changes in district programmes or policies or they will reinterpret them to suit the needs of the school. They will be creative in interpreting policies at times and strive to capture as many resources and as much capability for their schools as possible. Initiators tend to be adamant, but not unkind (Hall & Hord, 1987).

B. Managers

The second type are called managers. They exhibit a different set of behaviors and orientation. They demonstrate responsive behaviors to situations or people, and they

also initiate actions in support of a change process. Variations in their behavior seem to be linked to their rapport with teachers and the central office staff, as well as to how well they understand the purposes of a particular innovation. They are efficient in administering their schools and work without fanfare to provide basic support to teachers. They keep teachers informed about decisions and are sensitive to teacher needs. A particularly significant characteristic is that they protect their teachers from what they perceive as excessive demands. They question changes at the beginning and tend to dampen their entry. Once they understand that outsiders, such as the central office, want something to happen in their school, they become very involved with teachers in making it happen; yet, they do not typically initiate attempts to move beyond the basics of what is imposed (Hall & Hord, 1987).

Managers try to do everything themselves. They try to do all the different tasks associated with the principal's role rather than delegating jobs and responsibilities. When they do assign jobs, they monitor very closely what the designated person is doing rather than work with him/her or letting go (Hall & Hord, 1987).

C. Responders

The third type of change facilitators are called responders. They emphasize the personal side of their relationship with teachers and others. They are concerned about how others will perceive decisions and the direction the school is taking. They therefore tend to delay decisions, to get as much input as possible, and to be sure that everyone has had a chance to express their feelings. They view teachers as strong professionals who are able to carry out instruction with little guidance from them. As a consequence, they will allow others to make decisions, if they wish. They believe their primary role is to maintain a smoothly running school by focusing on traditional administrative tasks, keeping teachers content, and treating students well. Another characteristic of responders is the tendency toward making decisions based on immediate circumstances rather than on longer range instructional or school goals. This tendency seems to be due part to their desire to please others and to their more limited vision of how their school and staff should change in the future. As a consequence, decisions tend to be made at a time and to be most heavily influenced by the last person(s) they talk to. A further characteristic of responders is that, once a decision is made, it is set in concrete. A great deal of new information and extended discussion are required to bring about major modifications (Hall & Hord, 1987).

The characteristics of these three classification of leader types overlap each other

and it is hard to divide leaders in three categories in actuality, but this classification will help us to understand what kind of characteristics they may have and whether or not leaders we have are likely to succeed in implementing innovations.

IV. Principal-Teacher Interaction Study (PTI)

Naturally, strong relationships were found between the change facilitators' styles and the implementation success at the classroom level (Hall, Hord & Griffin, 1984). The Principal-Teacher Interaction Study (PTI) indicated that the initiator was the most successful at implementing an educational innovation. The managerial type of change facilitators were the next most successful, and the responders were the least successful (Hord, Huling & Stiegelbauer, 1983).

The PTI study involved an investigation of change facilitators. Identified in this study were almost two thousand interactions between teachers and principals. In the nine schools involved in this study numerous people played significant roles in the implementation phase; principal, innovation personnel (either district or school site), site resource personnel, the individual teachers, the assistant principal, district decision makers, and resource leaders. A wide range of personnel are involved in the process in various roles.

The data were collected from May 1980 to May 1981 in nine elementary schools and involved principals and other change facilitators. The principals were selected from each of the school districts involved in Colorado, Florida, and California. The principals served as the primary subjects and informants on the interventions in this study. Researchers contacted the principals and assistant principals bi-weekly by telephone throughout the 1980-81 school year to collect data on interventions related to the innovations being studied. Each study site had three to four on-site visits. During the on-site visits, intervention data were collected from administrators and teachers. The analyses of these interpretations resulted in seven conclusions.

1. The quality of day-to-day incident interventions are critical to overall implementation success.
2. Change facilitators need to use various techniques and procedures to monitor their intervention behavior.
3. A complete set of intervention functions must be performed.
4. Various types of interventions are needed if a change process is to be successful but do not need to be provided by the principal or any other single change

facilitator.

5. There needs to be an assessment of teachers and other targets before intervention occurs.
6. All incident interventions are not pre-planned.
7. It is fun to think about everyday names for certain classes of interventions (Hall & Hord, 1987).

Intervention is a multi-faceted process. Judging from the above results, facilitators must be aware of their day-to-day interventions as well as having various techniques and procedures to monitor their intervention behavior. They also need a variety of types of interventions and must be able to assess their teachers and other targets before intervention can occur. The development of successful change facilitators is a continuing process.

What language teachers and their change facilitators need to know is that changing teaching environment, curricula, quality of teaching and its results involves a tremendous amount of temporal, financial and psychological support. Furthermore, the change cannot occur overnight. It takes a long time. Also, change may not take place as it is expected. The direction of the change may also be totally different from the direction they originally planned. However, if the language teachers know these factors involved in innovations, they need not be disappointed by the different results from those they planned. If they know the change process is dynamic, they can continue to work on the innovation rather than be depressed with the short term result. They must realize that they should enjoy each small change taking place on campus rather than deplore the results they have not yet produced. Candlin made the same point (1993) when he said that quality in education is a process of continuous improvement rather than a standard for failure. Nunan (1993) also described teacher innovation as a continuum in which there is continuous reassessment and improvement rather than the do-or-die type of punitive evaluation that robs teachers of their ability to deal with the day-to-day routines as well as the exigencies of students and education.

Gene Hall and Shirley Hord (1987) claim that one of the main premises of constructive change is that principals and other change facilitators can be more effective and change can be more successful if the concerns of teachers are addressed. The personal side of change is crucial. In other words, change facilitators should value the input from each teacher although he/she may not be an expert of innovations. This is especially true in Japan where the cliquish dynamics of teachers' groups makes it extremely

important in implementing any task or change (Nagai, 1971). If the change facilitators ignore this critical factor of teachers' input, it is obvious that they will fail to accomplish their goal. Thus, change facilitators play a critical role in Japanese school settings. Candlin (1993) stated strongly that all parties effected must be involved in the process. Otherwise, the tensions normally inherent in any group are not properly dealt with when people are not cognisant of lines of accountability and these projects come unstuck.

V. Conclusion

From the several research findings the authors have examined, it can be summarised that any language teacher in an administrative position, serving as change facilitator, should be well-informed, goal-oriented and a decisive leader. They should have good rapport with teachers and they should protect the faculty from what they perceive as excessive demands or from unnecessary criticism when they fail to produce short-term results. The change facilitator should also respect teachers as strong professionals who are able to carry out instruction with little guidance, but when they need help, facilitators should always be ready to offer what is needed to accomplish realistic goals. The change facilitator should also keep in mind that change is a dynamic process and it may lead in an unforeseen direction. Moreover, if facilitators should seek a change, they may as well try to seek a rather drastic change rather than a small one, because the chance for professional development for each teacher becomes bigger and the success rate will increase when change needs to be drastic and innovative.

Some traditional leaders in Japan seem to be more concerned about how others will perceive decisions and the direction the school is taking. They therefore tend to delay decisions and lack the leadership quality in innovation implementations. Their primary role seems to be to maintain traditional administrative tasks, keeping teachers content. However, we now know these leaders tend to fail in significant academic innovations. It seems that Japanese educational institutions need more academic "initiators" rather than "managers" and "responders" when the time is as urgent as today.

The authors hope that the change facilitator's style introduced in this paper can serve as design for successful language curriculum development. Since competition among schools has become more severe in Japan, the ability to implement needed innovation successfully has become a necessity and is often an added responsibility for every language teacher. Also, knowing, understanding and having the ability to accomplish these tasks will increase the professional educators' repertoire and their effectiveness.

The factors for successful curriculum change and styles of change facilitator presented here are only two samples of the concerns found in the literature for innovation implementation. However, the authors believe this summary will present a clear picture of what characteristics are needed for a change facilitator and what factors need to be addressed while implementing curriculum innovations.

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