

**LOCAL CURRICULUM AS A MEDIUM FOR TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL
DIGNITY IN PHITSANULOK, THAILAND AMORNRAT WATTANATORN,
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Abstract

Since 1999, Thai Education Reform has brought about vast change in Thai schools and growth in local knowledge. Thai teachers are then allowed to screen, identify and determinate what should be taught in school due to educational decentralization policies. Acquiring autonomous control as curriculum worker, teachers could mutually work among schools themselves. Thus, the derived collective wisdom which could shift teachers from practitioner to professional performers emerged during their engagement in action. In addition, recently knowledge management (KM) has been accepted as a key tool for efficient learning community. Then the author imposed the conceptualization of curriculum development with KM network in the study. Based on the research project , “ Networking for Local Curriculum Development Using Knowledge Management in Schools Located on Tourist Areas in Phitsanulok, Thailand (2010)”, conducted for the purpose of creating and presenting the model of networking local curriculum development on tourist areas in Phitsanulok. Qualitative Research has been used in the study. Thirty schools; 5 node schools and 25 members of each node in Phitsanulok, were involved in the study. Thus, 150 school teachers are research target groups. Fieldnote, journal log, after action review form and also descriptive analytical tables are research instruments in the study.

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The research results acquired 25 documentary local curricula constructed with the content of local resource integrated within 8 subject content areas learned in school. Nonetheless, the major result was school network model which was composed of 3 main components ; KM-activities, processes and results gained from the process of curriculum development.

Keywords : Local Curriculum Development, Knowledge Management, Teacher Professional Development, Teacher Network

Introduction

It has been found from the study of Wattanatorn (2010) that Knowledge Management (KM); the strategies and practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of teachers' personal insights and experiences, could stimulate Phitsanulok teachers' intellectual curiosity to acquire new local knowledge themselves on their teaching subject work. As curriculum developer teachers, not only new local knowledge drawn from the integration of local resources with teaching subjects but documentary curriculum could be obtained during the practices. Apart from this, social interactions among teachers within the same school and others outside have also been developed. In practice, KM-related activities, knowledge and experience exchange for local curriculum development were conducted in the process of curriculum development. Sharing and Caring among teachers occurred in two channels ; formal and informal exchanges for learning. Teacher community of practice

within school then gradually formed up during KM activities in the process of local curriculum development.

New local knowledge in a particular form of knowledge maps representing the understandings of local attraction integrated with 8 subjects content areas learned in school; Thai Language, Social Studies Religion and Culture, Vocational Work, English Language, Mathematics, Sciences, Art, and Hygiene and Physical Education has emerged. By this way, Phitsanulok students could learn to know the value of their community through the context of local tourist attractions. Curriculum documents; curriculum guidebook, lesson plans, instructional materials, rubrics etc. used for student's learning have also been gained during the process of curriculum development. Apart from this, 4-6 teachers in each school teamed up during working. Thus, school teachers learned together how to develop local curriculum through knowledge management activities while university researcher took a role as facilitator not trainer. Both formal and

informal exchanges for local curriculum development were found in three steps of curriculum development ; the steps of construction, implementation and evaluation. Two formal sharing activities; knowledge promotion and knowledge creation and informal sharing activities; teacher's actively teamworking and thriving in online webblog occurred through the study. This also revealed process of 3 step working of 5 schools; Step 1 : Indicating shared-goal for working, Step 2 : Co-learning of curriculum developer teachers and Step 3 : Expanding the success of curriculum development in public.

In this sense, curriculum is not only an output of curriculum development, but rather the interactive key tool for mutual learning within the same school teachers and among other school teachers. The new teamwork in school could be strengthened themselves with teacher expertise in their daily work. Local curriculum development practice then could be said as the greater support of teacher potential in school and at the same time could bring about an active process linking teachers and their schoolwork in a particular form of specialization. The success derived from the process of curriculum development should have brought not only productive tasks but individual satisfaction to teachers. This could lead to

teacher profession development and eventually to teachers' pride and dignity.

In consequence, this KM strategic practice not only produced an effective local curriculum for school but also the community of practice. This might lead to the effective network of practice in curriculum development which could be built up in the context of practice to prolong reciprocal relationship for professional growth. Thus, I continued my further study on, "Networking for Local Curriculum Development Using Knowledge Management in Schools Located on Tourist Areas in Phitsanulok, Thailand" (2010) to investigate if this growth could occur as teacher moves forward to work with curriculum development. KM-network would then have been used as community of practice in developing curriculum. I would like to examine the content of the experience, the process by which the professional development would occur, the contexts in which it would take place. How to build up KM-network of curriculum development beyond schoolwork on scholarly activities became my interest. As good practices, these five schools might repeatedly accomplish curriculum tasks for larger numbers of school teachers in other adapted particular condition.

Objectives

To initiate KM-network for local curriculum development and to present the model of the network.

Research Methodology

Qualitative Research has been used in the study. Field research method based on the participant observation with direct and open-ended interviews were used through the study. Data collected from teachers in various settings through field-notes, journal logs and other KM-tools; story-telling, AAR (after action review) and the descriptive analytical tables and then compared and checked for the consistency to provide the conclusion.

The process of local curriculum development was also used as steps for obtaining data in the study. In general, curriculum development process composed of the three main steps; curriculum construction, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation. Thirty (30) schools; 5 node schools and 25 member of each node in Phitsanulok, were involved in the study. Thus, 150 school teachers were research target groups.

Research Findings

1. A set-up of KM-network for local curriculum development

Phase1 Preparation for setting up

KM network for curriculum development

1. Investigation for SFS (Key Success Factors) of 5 node schools

Key Success Factors (KSF) of 5 Node Schools in developing curriculum found in the study were; **Roles of key persons, Effectiveness of self-management and Usage of well-known local resources.** The five levels of performance assessment, ranging from the least to the highest frequency of tasks and time undertaken (Level 1 to Level 5) of these KSF's in developing curriculum in real working conditions were defined by 25 teachers from 5 node schools.

2. Learning exchanges for curriculum development learning among 5 node schools

Formal and informal exchanges for local curriculum development learning conducted in the process of curriculum development which generally comprised 3 respective steps ; curriculum construction, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation. However, from this study, it was found here '5-step process' curriculum development ; preparation of curriculum construction, curriculum construction, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation and curriculum dissemination.

Four formal-exchanged activities for **Knowledge Promotion** were held up by

university researcher by means of three workshops; workshop for curriculum construction, workshop for using online web log, workshop for curriculum evaluation and an event of knowledge exhibition. Five informal-exchanged activities; investigating and selecting individual local context, working on curriculum development, preparing lesson plans with instructional materials, arranging for teaching and learning and working in curriculum evaluation for **Knowledge Creation** were used for teachers' learning exchange in the network. Apart from this, in – school **teachers' team learning** and in school & inter-school teachers' **web-blog posting** for knowledge exchange usually conducted by teachers through the process of curriculum development.

Phase 2 Selection of node member schools

Previous relationship with node schools was key reason for selecting network members. Each node school selected 4-6 schools as node members. Three respective levels from least to highest of relationships found in the study were; Level 1. **Personal Relationship** : working group in major teaching subject, Level 2. **Academic Relationship** : administrative group working in academic affairs and Level 3. **Professional Relationship** : school cluster-based group.

Phase 3 Working in the network on local curriculum development

KM-related activities have been used for working with curriculum development tasks in the network. Five-step curriculum development ; preparation of curriculum construction, curriculum construction, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation and curriculum dissemination have been used for data collection. As community of practice, network member teachers learned to know how to develop local curriculum from node 's experienced teachers through **KM-related activities and processes**. University researcher in a role of facilitator had arranged four **formal exchanges** for node schools and network member schools. Five **Informal exchanges** among schools themselves were used for achieving curriculum development tasks in each node school. **Individual** and **small group** learnings were found as their way of learning.

KM-networks for local curriculum development in Phitsanulok required 2 **two types of processes** used for working in the network ; The **5-step process of Curriculum Development Process**; preparation for curriculum construction, curriculum construction, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation and curriculum dissemination and **KM - Process** reflecting collaboratively learning among in-school

teachers and inter-school teachers with best practices and with themselves through the study.

2. Three main components used in the KM-network model were : activities, processes and results

Activities : Two types of activities teachers actively engaged in learning were formal exchange activities and informal exchange activities. The range of activities network teachers involved were; Curriculum Development Workshops, Investigation and selection of individual local context , Tasks of curriculum development, Preparation for lesson plans and instructional materials, Workshop for using online Web log, Arrangement of teaching and learning, Workshop for curriculum evaluation, Tasks of curriculum evaluation and Event for Knowledge Exhibition. Learning exchanges collaboratively occurred during the practice with 3 key action factors; team learning, knowledge sharing and communication.

Processes : Apart from 5-step curriculum development process ; Preparation of curriculum construction, curriculum construction, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation, curriculum evaluation and curriculum dissemination, KM-related process for sharing knowledge and experiences has also been used for working in the network.

Results : Output and Outcome derived from the study were as follows; Though twenty five (25) documentary local curriculum constructed with the content of local resource integrated within 8 subject content areas for student's learning in school possessed by teachers participated in the network.

The major result was school network model composed of 3 main components ; activities, processes and results gained from the process of curriculum development. The following table would represent model of KM-Network for curriculum development.

Model of Phitsanulok KM-Network for Local Curriculum Development in Tourist

Area

Table 1: Step 1 Preparation of Curriculum Construction

| Activities | Processes | Results |
|--|--|--|
| Activity 1 : Formal Exchange | | |
| 1. Workshops for "Local Curriculum Construction" | <u>Part 1</u> | |
| | 1. Providing 'knowledge market' for learning exchange from; - Success stories from best practices - Local curriculum exhibition - Local curriculum documents and instructional material | 1. (Output) Teachers have got draft local curriculum outline for individual school.(The total was 25 copies for Phitsanulok Province) 2. (Outcome) Interactive learning space was opened for teachers' knowledge and experiences exchange; |
| | 2. Knowing and learning from best practices | - Learning to know how to develop local curriculum from experienced teachers |
| | <u>Part 2</u> | |
| | 3. Brainstorming for selecting theme or topic 4. Practicing in drafting curriculum outline | - Learning from the curriculum documentaries and authentic evidences of teaching and learning - Learning from the exchanges with 5 Node schools. |

Table 2 : Step2 Curriculum Construction

| Activities | Processes | Results |
|--|--|---|
| Activity 1 : Informal Exchange | | |
| 1. Investigation and selection of individual local context for curriculum construction | 1. Teaming up for the practice | 1. (Output) Local knowledge has been explored and collected for student's learning. 2. (Outcome) Teacher collaboratively worked with community. - Profoundly understanding local resource value. - Utilizing local resource as student's learning resource |
| | 2. Investigating community knowledge | |
| | 3. Gathering collective local wisdom | |
| Activity 2 Informal Exchange | | |
| 2. Tasks of curriculum development | 1. Identifying local knowledge as learning content | 1. (Output) Draft outline of local curriculum was obtained for individual school. 2. (Outcome) Teachers developed local |
| | 2. Formulating objectives | |
| | 3. Selecting the content and learning | |

| Activities | Processes | Results |
|--|--|--|
| | experiences | curriculum development as learned from the workshop. |
| | 4. Selecting means of evaluation | |
| | 5. Documenting in draft outline | |
| Activity 3 Informal Exchange | | |
| 3. Preparation for lesson plans with instructional materials | 1. Designing instructional plans | 1. (Output) Guidebook and lesson plans with instructional materials have been gained for class |
| | 2. Selecting methods of teaching | |
| | 3. Arranging learning activities | |
| | 4. Preparing learning materials and evaluation | 2. (Outcome) |
| | 5. Organizing and presenting teaching and learning | 1) Teachers worked individually and in group |
| | 6. Examining learning results. | 2) Teachers participated real practice. |

Table 3 : Step3 Curriculum Implementation

| Activities | Processes | Results |
|---|--|---|
| Activity 1 Formal Exchange | | |
| 1. Workshop for using online Weblog | 1. ICT practice | 1. (Output) CoP - Teachers' online community of practice via Web blog was set up. (Planet : Phitsanulok Local Curriculum Development.) in GotoKnow.org. |
| | 2. Applying to be a web blogger | |
| | 3. Setting up CoP of local curriculum Development | |
| | 4. Knowledge and experiences sharings; | |
| | - Sharing within node school | 2. (Outcome) Teachers become a blogger in 'gotoknow.org' for knowledge learning and sharing. |
| | - Sharing across the network | |
| Activity 2 Informal Exchange | | |
| 2. Arrangement of teaching and learning | 1. Stimulating / Motivating students to learning | 1. (Output) Teachers learned about their teaching potential from students' achievement scores or other's students' outputs. |
| | 2. Implementing activities to promote a sense of community | |
| | 3. Arranging students to participate in activities. | 2. (Outcome) |
| | 4. Managing a conclusion for the learned lesson. | 1) Teachers arranged their instructional works. |
| | | 2) Teacher evaluate their own teaching and learning. |

Table 4 : Step 4 Curriculum Evaluation

| Activities | Processes | Results |
|---|--|---|
| Activity 1 Formal Exchange | | |
| 1. Workshop for "curriculum evaluation" | 1. Providing with curriculum evaluation instruments | 1. (Output) Teachers had curriculum evaluation instruments. |
| | 2. Learning how to design evaluation instruments | 2. (Outcome) - Teachers could construct instruments for curriculum evaluation. |
| | 3. Practice constructing evaluation and using instrument | - Teachers had experience in curriculum evaluation. |
| | 4. Exchanging evaluating curriculum | |
| | 5. Improving curriculum | |
| Activity 2 Informal Exchange | | |
| 2. Tasks of curriculum evaluation | 1. Selecting types of curriculum evaluation | 1.(Output) Local curriculum could be constructed by school teachers. |
| | 2. Conducting evaluation | 2.(Outcome) Teachers learned to know how to work with curriculum evaluation. |
| | 3. Analyzing the results. | |

Table 5: Step5 Curriculum Dissemination

| Activities | Processes | Results |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Activity 1 Formal Exchange | | |
| 1.Event for Knowledge Exhibition | 1. Providing 'knowledge market' for learning exchange from; - Success stories from best practices - Local curriculum exhibition - Local curriculum documents and instructional material | 1. (Output) Phitsanulok local curriculum development network has been known as teachers 'academic community' in Phitsanulok. |
| | 2. Knowing and learning from one another in the network and others outside network. | 2. (Outcome) Interactive learnings among experienced teachers and the new interested ones occurred; - How to develop local curriculum - Curriculum products and processes used. - Curriculum documentaries and authentic evidences of teaching and learning etc. |

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article aims to identify local curriculum development practice as a key tool promoting concept of teaching as a profession. Apart from curriculum documents, products of developing, its process let teachers mutually and equally work with peers with best practices and with university - researcher in the network. Teachers' pride and dignity then has been brought along the processes. Series of curriculum practices held by university researcher as a facilitator and school teachers as an active practitioner that gave teachers opportunities to share and learn in real settings. With KM-related activities and the process, teacher's autonomy has been developed on steps of curriculum development. It means they worked with the ones from the similar background who always motivated them to work efficiently. Thus, It will take less time to achieve any tasks without much difficulty.

It was also said that no longer possible for a single person to master all

current knowledge. The speed of emerged-knowledge, specialization and fragmentation that we have to limit ourselves when confronting with a changing society and adapting to it. In this regard, practical knowledge can be transmitted through social interactions or socialization, and made explicit through externalization. (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Individual and organizational knowledge shouldn't be hidden but circulates in organizations as professional relationships. By this way, university-researchers generate formal knowledge and theory for teachers to use in order to improve practice. Teachers who possessed curriculum knowledge should have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and use its process in context to learn. Thus, progressive teachers, would happily be engaged in academic activities with intellectual curiosity and reflected to develop on their own work. This is what I did strongly agree and then launched it in my study.

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