

**Teacher's Emotional Map in Curriculum Implementation:
A cultural-individual analysis of the Senior Secondary School Curriculum
Reform in Guangdong, China**

YIN, Hong-biao

LEE, C. K. John

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract: It is notable that research on curriculum reform and implementation has recently recognized the importance of teacher emotion. The emotional geographies of teaching and cultural-individual perspective are employed in this study to understand the interactions between teacher emotion and curriculum implementation in the context of a top-down, systemic, and large scale reform.

We concentrate on 7 teachers' emotional experiences in one school during the Chinese nation-wide senior secondary school (SSS) curriculum reform. Using interview as the main tool of data collection, we categorize teachers' positive and negative emotional experiences in their implementation, analyze the sociocultural, moral, professional, political, and interpersonal roots of teachers' emotions.

Finally, the implications for research on teacher emotion and curriculum implementation are discussed.

Keywords: teacher emotion, emotional geographies; curriculum implementation; cultural-individual perspective

Introduction

Teaching is an emotional practice and a form of emotional labor (Hargreaves, 1998a-c). However, there was surprisingly little literature about the emotional aspects of teachers' lives before the middle of 1990s. Educational researchers were more, if not exclusively, interested in teachers' cognitive factors with a great deal of research aimed at their knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, opinions, planning, thinking processes, and decision-making (van den Berg et al., 1999, p.340; Lee & Yin, 2005), which in large part resulted from the rise of cognition research in psychology and education that prevailed in 1970s and 1980s. So, while what teachers do and how they think is a more familiar territory to researchers, we know much less about how teachers feel while they teach and about the emotions which motivate and moderate their work (Hargreaves, 1994, p.141). The similar tendency also appears in the theoretical views and practice of educational change. Most researchers, educators, parents, and administrators focus on the rational and technical elements of change, and plan or manage the change processes

following a linear, rational model. They significantly underestimate the complexity of educational change by ignoring the emotional experience of those involved in the change processes (Marshak, 1996). That is the reason why Hargreaves (1998a-c) thinks emotion is one of the most neglected dimensions in educational change. As Hargreaves(1998c, p.558) remarks, “Educational and organizational change are often treated as rational, cognitive processes in pursuit of rational, cognitive ends...The more unpredictable passionate aspects of learning, teaching and leading, however, are usually left out of the change practice”.

It is notable that research on curriculum reform and implementation has recently recognized the importance of teacher emotion and put some lights on this black box. From the mid-1990s, a lot of exploration has been made on teacher emotion and its roles in teachers' lives. Jeffrey & Woods (1996) describe the negative emotions that teachers experience during the inspection of OFSTED, arguing those emotions are unavoidable effects of “deprofessionalized” educational change and thus are socially constructed. Nias (1996), Little (1996) and Kelchtermans (1996) address the linkage between teacher emotion and issues of ethics, morality, school politics, etc.. Researchers also explore the “emotional labour” done by teachers or school leaders. Winograd (2003) examines teachers' feeling rules, the functional and dysfunctional dimensions of teacher emotion, and the strategies teachers employ in emotional labour. Blackmore (1996, 2004) shows the dilemma and emotional labour women principals experience in Australian educational reform, and reveals the connections between the market, gender, and emotion. In her opinion, leadership is exactly a demanding emotional management work in change times (Blackmore, 2004).

While there are some studies on teacher emotion in the West, there is an exiguity of studies in East Asia, especially in China. This study attempts to address this gap by examining teachers' emotional experiences under a cultural-individual perspective in the context of a national curriculum reform, the senior secondary school (SSS) curriculum reform, in Mainland China. We hope that the findings of this study can enrich our understanding about teacher emotion and its interactions with curriculum implementation, and thereby inform various facilitators' and educators' planning of or interventions to the SSS curriculum reform.

In short, instead of only viewing teacher emotion as an individual psychological process, we think it is also a social construction. Emotion plays the central role in teacher's commitment to curriculum reform, but at the same time it is shaped by social and cultural contexts of curriculum reform, as well as teacher's beliefs, knowledge, and expertise. For this reason, we try to address the following two questions in this study: (1) what are the teachers' emotional experiences in the implementation of this Chinese national curriculum reform? (2) which factors influence teachers' emotional responses to the curriculum reform, especially the non-personal ones, such as sociocultural, political, and professional, etc.?

In this study, we first introduce the framework of “the emotional geographies of teaching” advanced by Hargreaves(2000, 2001a, 2001b) and the cultural-individual interpretation of

curriculum and teacher emotion. Then, we locate this study in the context of senior secondary school (SSS) curriculum reform in Mainland China. Using interview as the main tool of data collection, we analyze the emotional experiences of 7 teachers in one school during implementing the reform.

Conceptual Frameworks

Emotional geographies of teaching

In the past decade, increasing attention in educational research has been put to the role that teacher emotion plays in teaching and educational change. Although there were also some research topics related to teacher emotion in 1980s and the early 1990s, for example, stress and burnout, Stage of Concerns(SoC), but they were not emotion *per se* but only a few emotional fragments. And those researchers did not use the term of “emotion” at all in “the first wave” of research about teacher emotion, named by Zembylas(2003). Since the decade from the mid-1990s, research on teacher emotion has been entered a new stage which Zembylas(2003, p.107) calls it as “the second wave”. In this stage, “emotion” has been brought forward as a special academic issue in the educational literature. An important and significant theoretical shift appears in the research on teacher emotion, too. That is, putting teachers in the world of social interaction to understand the processes of being emotional (Carlyle & Woods, 2002, p. xiv) rather than using well-defined psychometrical instruments to measure teachers’ emotion, which prevails in the research on teachers’ stress and burnout, and SoC. Primarily inspired by sociological thoughts about emotion, for example, Hochschild’s(1983) social constructionism, Denzin’s(1984) social phenomenological and interpretive perspective, educational researchers become to attend the linkages between the forming and transforming of teacher emotion and the broader social contexts, such as local and professional culture, morality and ethics, power and status, and so on.

Among those studies in this period, it is worthy to discuss in detail about the series studies conducted by Andy Hargreaves and his colleagues. In the project *The Emotions of Teaching and Educational Change*, Hargreaves (2000a, 2001a, 2001b) defines “the emotional geographies of teaching” to understand the sources that shape teacher emotion in teaching and educational change. Using this concept, he and his colleagues analyze the human interaction between teachers and parents, students, leaders, and their peer teachers (Hargreaves, 2000a, 2001a, 2001b; Lasky, 2000; Schmidt, 2000). We can draw a lot from their outstanding insights.

In their opinions, teaching and educational change are both forms of inter-personal work, so they inevitably involve the issue of emotion. In fact, emotions are at the heart of teaching. “Good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge, and joy” (Hargreaves, 1998b, p.835). Based on the concepts of “emotional labour” (Hochschild, 1983) and “emotional understanding” (Denzin, 1984), Hargreaves(1998a, 1998b) argues, teaching is an emotional practice and a form of emotional labour. Teaching and learning involve emotional

understanding, moreover, teachers' emotions vary with culture and context.

Taking a social-constructionist and contextualized view of emotion and drawing on social psychology, symbolic interactionism, feminist theory and postmodern geography, Hargreaves (2000) develops the idea of "the emotional geographies of teaching", which mean "the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other" (Hargreaves, 2001a, p. 1061). Specifically, five main forms of emotional geographies in teaching and educational change are examined by Hargreaves(2000, 2001a, 2001b) as following:

- sociocultural geographies where differences of culture, race, gender and class can create distance between people, and lead them to be treated as stereotype;
- moral geographies where people pursue common purposes and feel sense of accomplishment together, or where they are defensive about their own purposes and unconcerned about the purposes of others;
- professional geographies where teacher professionalism either set professionals apart from their colleagues and clients, or open them up to exploring professional issues together;
- political geographies where hierarchical power relationships distort the emotional as well as cognitive aspects of communication between teachers and those around them;
- physical geographies of time and space which can bring and keep people in proximity over long periods so that relationships might develop.

Hargreaves (2001a, 2001b) thinks it is emotional geographies that result in emotional understanding/misunderstanding in teaching, and these can help us identify the supports for and threats to the emotional relationships of schooling that arise from forms of distance or closeness in people's interaction.

Curriculum implementation and emotion in cultural-individual perspective

Research on curriculum change and implementation can be classified into three phases(Richardson & Placier, 2002, p.907). In the first phase of 1960s and the early 1970s, substantial amounts of money and resources went into the development of curriculum package, with amazingly little attention to the teachers and the realities of schools. In the second phase, the characteristics of school organizations become the focus of implementation research, exemplified by the Rand Change Agent Study. More recently, attention has moved in two directions: one is toward a concentration on organizational and structural factors, and the other is toward a concentration on individual teachers and the factors influencing changes. Goodson(2001) argues the educational changes in the new millennium should pay increasing attention to the personal missions and purposes which underpin commitment to change processes. "Educational change works most successfully when reform sees these personal commitments of teachers as both an inspiration for and a necessary object of reform" (p.60).

Recently, some researchers suggested that implementation theory should shift from a structural-functional perspective to a more cultural-individual perspective (van den Berg & Slegers, 1996; van den Berg et al., 1999; van den Berg, 2002). The former views change as a strategy in which school operate rationally and goal-oriented. Systematic and methodical methods, co-ordination and steering are central to the process of implementation. In contrary, the latter advocates more organic forms of co-operation and active engagement of teachers in the change process; schools will be better equipped to take advantage of the professional relationships(van den Berg et al., 1999, p.323). Figure 1(see next page) depicts the cultural-individual interpretation of the process of curriculum implementation.

As shown in this figure, the process of curriculum implementation is a product of the interactions among three functional areas: (1) teacher as mediator, or individual teachers’ impact on implementation; (2) school as organization, or the way school is organized; (3) interventions, or those activities undertaken by the facilitators to implement the change. In the first area, the attachment of meaning is the key word of the functional area of teacher, and emotion lies at the center of teachers’ subjective theory and meaning about curriculum implementation. According to Fullan (2001, p.32), the anxieties of uncertainty and the joys of mastery are central to the subjective meaning of educational change, and to success or failure thereof. In the second area, school organization also should be considered as emotional arenas which provide the social, cultural, power relations for eliciting teachers’ emotions(Fineman, 2000; ven den Berg, 2002, p.582). In the third area, teachers’ interactional world is enlarged by the facilitators’ interventions which might transform the territory of emotional arena in school organization, and bring new impacts on teacher emotion. In short, the cultural-individual perspective calls for increased attention to individual teachers’ interpretations and experiences of situations along with increased attention to the interaction of such interpretations with the context in which teachers live and work everyday(van den Berg, 2002, p.617). It is obviously more useful to consider the potential and possibilities of individual teachers for the implementation of educational change.

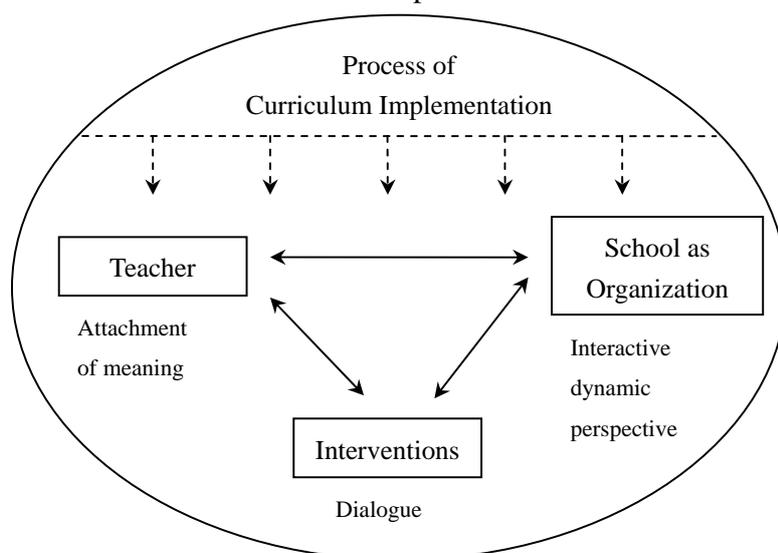


Figure 1: *Curriculum implementation in the cultural-individual perspective*
(van den Berg et al., 1999, p.344; van den Berg, 2002)

The cultural-individual perspective is also of much help for us to understand the nature of emotion. It reminds us to see teacher emotion as social construction as well as individual mental process, and to understand it in the interactional world of curriculum implementation. Undoubtedly, the individual is the locus of emotion in which we can measure emotion nowhere but in the individual, however, the social matrix determines which emotions are likely to be experienced when and where, on what grounds and for what reasons, by what models of expression, by whom (Kemper, 1993, pp.41-42). That is why Lasky (2000, p.845) says although partly biological in nature, emotion is also a social construction and embedded in socially established structures of meaning.

In order to understand such kind of complex phenomena as emotion, we should probably adopt the perspective of cultural-individual one. In this view, emotion on one hand has substantial biological and psychological bases, and is motivated or regulated by some instincts, drives, or neuro-physiological mechanisms. On the other hand, emotion is shaped and influenced by social and cultural contexts, and reflects some given local cultures, institutions, and power relations. Coincidentally, Hochschild (1990) happens to have the same view about emotion as that of cultural-individual interpretation. She defines emotion as an awareness of four elements that we usually experience at the same time: (a) appraisals of a situation, (b) changes in bodily sensations, (c) the free or inhibited display of expressive gestures, and (d) a cultural label applied to specific constellations of the first three elements (pp.118-119).

Context of this Study

At present, curriculum reform is a central agenda of basic education in Mainland China. Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) initiated the eighth round of national curriculum reform since the new century. As for the stage of senior secondary school (SSS), MOE issued the new curriculum project (experimental draft) and 15 subjects' curriculum standards (experimental draft) in 2003. Then, the nation-wide SSS curriculum reform has been putting into practice since September 2004 and curriculum experiments were conducted in selected provinces such as Guangdong, Shandong, Hainan and Ningxia. This ambitious innovative effort attempted to bring a systemic change to Chinese SSS curriculum, especially in the following aspects (MOE, 2003):

- replacing the existing subject-based SSS curriculum structure with a three-level structure consisting of learning fields, subjects, and modules;
- adopting an elective course and credit system;
- granting choices to students for SSS curriculum;
- improving students' generic skills of independent study, cooperation, communication and problem-solving;
- establishing a formative evaluation system and connecting students' academic performance with their growth record;

- decentralizing the existing educational system and encouraging school-based curriculum development.

The SSS curriculum reform could be considered as a large-scale reform because it was a reform focusing on the entire system and more than 50 schools and 20,000 students were involved, which were suggested by Fullan(2000, p.8) as the two main criteria of this kind of educational changes. Interestingly, there were few empirical studies on the implementation of this national reform after it had been enacted for more than one year. What we know about its operation in schools and classrooms is still very limited.

Teachers in this national reform shouldered the high expectation from curriculum developers, educational administrators, parents, and so on, to implement the reform successfully. With regarding to SSS teachers, their working loads were intensified further by the national curriculum reform. Wei (2004) pointed out that with carrying out the reform, teachers were no longer as passionate as they had been at the beginning of the reform. Most teachers frequently experienced the negative emotions such as strain, anxiety, and depression, which led them to suspect, resist the reform, or to perform their duty in a perfunctory manner.

Design and Method

Against this background, the research seeks to explore some teachers' emotional experiences during the SSS curriculum reform in one school located in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. The reason why we choose this school is that it is one of the Guangdong's 100 "sample schools" selected by Guangdong educational department, and the administration section expects those sample schools can play the roles of fugleman and the provider of experiences or lessons during the process of reform. In this school, we asked the principal to identify some teachers who had been involved in implementing the new curriculum since the beginning of the reform. Up to the time we conducted the research in October 2005, they all had carried out the reform in their classroom for at least one year. As the result of informant selection, we got 5 teachers (Teacher A-E) by the principal's nomination. All the 5 teachers differ in gender, teaching experiences, and subject speciality, and one of them(Teacher A) is not only a Chinese teacher, but also a middle administrator taking charge of school's routine teaching affairs. Besides those 5 teachers, we selected another 2 teachers (Teacher F and G) through sample snowballing because of their distinctive responses to the SSS curriculum reform and the richness of their interview data. Table 1 shows some background information of our 7 informants.

Table 1: *Basic background information of 7 participants*

Teacher	Gender	Teaching ages	Subject & Administrative post
A	Male	18	Chinese; Director of the office of teaching affairs
B	Female	3	Chemistry
C	Female	2	Politics
D	Male	8	Physics
E	Male	15	Mathematics
F	Male	10	Chemistry
G	Female	6	Chinese

Face-to-face interview was individually conducted between the researchers and every teacher. Each interview lasted for one hour or so, which concentrated on eliciting teachers' conversation about their feelings or emotions they experienced during the process of implementing the reform, the strategies they employed when they were coping with those emotional experiences, and their opinions on the roles of emotion in teaching and the curriculum reform. Following Kelchtermans' (1996) and Hargreaves' (2000, 2001a, 2001) suggestions, we asked teachers to describe particular incidents that involved their positive or negative emotions in their implementation. In order to clarify and enrich some information, we conducted second-round interviews with 2 teachers (Teacher B and F), which lasted about 20 minutes.

Table 2: *7 teachers' emotional experiences during the SSS curriculum reform*

Emotional geographies	Valence of teachers' emotions	Themes of teachers' emotional episodes
Moral	Positive	Excited about the innovations of the reform because they are consistent with teachers' personal educational values
	Negative	Loss of happiness, passion, and sense of value because of the distorted purpose of being a teacher, which is caused by the stress to deal with the challenges brought by the reform
Professional	Positive	Professional support from colleagues in the teaching culture of collegiality
	Negative	Textbook designers distrust teachers' professional ability to implement the reform
Political	Positive	Recognition from colleagues, experts by successfully delivering demonstration lessons, or from students' praise
	Negative	Hurried caused by the tight schedule set by the reformers or educational administrators

Physical	Positive	Physical closeness of personal interactions between teachers and their students
	Negative	Having less time to stay with students and no deep communication with them
Sociocultural	Negative	Sociocultural distance between teachers' and students' generation
		Social expectation and emphasis on the ration of passing the college entrance exam and teachers' concern about students' learning outcomes, especially their score of exam

All interviews were transcribed and analyzed inductively. The overall analytic process was an ongoing cyclical process in which categories and patterns emerged from the data and were later cross-checked (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In our analysis, those incidents that stirred teachers' emotional experiences were first grouped by the valence of emotions, e.g., positive or negative, and the themes of those incidents were listed. Then, the influencing factors of teachers' emotional experiences in those incidents were extracted, which have some similarities with the existing conceptual framework, namely, the emotional geographies of teaching. In accord with the closeness and distance in emotional geographies, we also found some positive and negative emotional experiences have the same kind of influencing roots. Finally, we drew the emotional map based on our analysis of 7 teachers' emotional experiences by using of the concept of emotional geographies. Both researchers coded and analyzed those data independently, and lastly came to consensus about the results. This investigator triangulation also helps to check the reliability of this qualitative inquiry (Denzin, 1989, p.237; Stake, 1995). In short, table 2(see last page) shows some typical and common issues of 7 teachers' emotional incidents.

As a case study, it is obvious that it is difficult to claim the generalizability of our findings, especially when the sample school is unique. However, we try to find some sensitizing clues for further research by putting teacher emotion in the context of top-down, systemic curriculum reform rather than daily classroom teaching.

Results and Discussion

Moral geographies

Positive: be excited about the coming of the reform

The traditional SSS education has been criticized for long times in Mainland China. Researchers list many shortcomings of the previous traditional curriculum, such as teaching for examination, depending on rote learning and drilling, no opportunity for student choices, etc. (Zhong et al., 2003, p.60). The reform tries to overcome those shortcomings and establish a new SSS curriculum system. In fact, most teachers are very familiar with the disadvantages of the traditional SSS education. So, some teachers are quiet excited about the coming of the new reform. Teacher B and Teacher D are two examples of them. Teacher B said she is "very excited" at the beginning of the reform, because she knew "there are many disadvantages in the traditional

education. It should be changed.” Teacher D reported “the reform is exciting! It is definitely imperative, because with the development of the society, our old curriculum is not seasoned with the requirements of our society any more.” Furthermore, teachers are excited also because some innovations advocated by the reformers are consistent with their own educational purposes and values. Teacher B said “maybe the reform will bring some deep and fundamental transformation. As to me, I strongly hope I can have this chance to put it into practice.” Teacher A said:

Episode 1

My opinion on the function of curriculum reform to teaching and teachers is it can help us continually optimize our teaching methods and continually mobilize students’ initiative spirit, especially in classroom teaching, by using of the new curriculum standards and the new ideas advocates by the reform. We can be more audacious to change on those aspects today. Previously, these changes were only our teachers’ personal trials, but now it is clearly that we should change our teaching like this, and what we did is right. (Teacher A)

Negative: loss of happiness, passion and value being a teacher

The curriculum reform brought many challenges and increased a great deal of workload to SSS teachers, including adopting the new materials, preparing the unfamiliar contents or lessons, organizing learning activities with new methods, evaluating students’ by different criteria, etc.. Most of them, especially the ones with many years of teaching experiences, felt stressful to follow the ideas and teaching methods it prescribed. In our interviews, Teacher E reported he was “at a loss” of how to teach the new textbooks. Teacher G said it was “a heavy pressure” for teachers to adapt to the reform. Under this heavy pressure, teachers became more and more tired in their one-year implementation (Teacher B, C, E).

Many researchers emphasize teacher emotion has a great deal with morality (Kelchtermans, 1996; Hargreaves, 2001a). In Hargreaves’ moral geographies, negative emotions can occur when teachers feel their purposes are being threatened or have been lost. Besides the physical and psychological stress, teachers also experienced moral degradation which inspired negative emotions. In China, teaching profession contains a lot of moral implications and teacher usually represents moral model for students and ordinary people. However, enslaved by the heavy pressure and burdensome workload brought by the reform, teachers found they lost the happiness of communicating with students and improving their learning effectively, which had ensured their moral sense being a teacher. Just like what Jeffery & Woods(1996) found in England, in our study, some teachers thought they had been degraded as a “commodity seller”, not a respectable “gardener” or “candle” that is used to depict the moral image of teachers in China, and lost the happiness and passion being a teacher(Teacher F):

Episode 2

I am weighed down with the reform! It is so boring! Previously I was happy to see

my students improve their learning, but I can't feel this happiness now. I am teaching for living, not for happiness. The feeling is very strong!Beforetime we described teacher as "a hardworking gardener", "a candle that burns itself but lights the others", but now I am only a tool for making money! Teaching is a job involves the communication among people, but I lose the pleasure of communication. You have no time to communicate with other people, what you need to do is teach, give lessons or speeches, and then get your wage. So, is there any difference between you and commodity seller? Although I am still teaching, but I don't have the passion which I used to be! (Teacher F)

Professional geographies

Positive: peer support and collaboration

For teachers, the reform does not only mean a huge challenge, bus also provides many opportunities for their professional development (Teacher A). So many teachers, especially the young and less experienced teachers, want to grasp those opportunities. In fact, some teachers improved their professional expertise and felt joyful in their implementation. For example, teacher B said she felt "lucky" to grasp those chances, and were "happy" about her improvement.

Peer collaboration and support are another resource of teachers' positive emotions. Our informants frequently mentioned the importance of collegial relationship. In order to cope with the challenges postulated by the reform which are unfamiliar to teachers, the school we investigated established many regulations to facilitate teacher collaboration, such as mentoring, peer teaching, collective lesson-preparing, etc., and teachers who taught different subjects and classes but the same grade were all arranged in a big common office, which also helped keep them closely in space and facilitated their communication. Then, teacher cooperation is fairly prevalent in this school. Teachers told us their feeling about that:

Episode 3

The relationships among my colleagues can't be better! Old teachers can get along well with young teachers. We often fiddle each other, and never play a deep game to block you off. Never! The old teachers give away many opportunities to the young. If there are any chances to bear a reward, young teachers go first. Whatever you ask the old teachers, they tell you all they know without any reservations. So great relationships! I enjoy very much to be in this environment! (Teacher G)

Episode 4

I'm glad that they will answer all the questions I ask. We are collective lesson-preparing, and they are willing to tell me whatever question I ask. (Teacher C)

For long times, teaching is a lonely profession because of the individualist teaching culture(Hargreaves, 1992). In schools, egg-crate classroom, separate timetable and curriculum schedule make teachers have little time and space for communication or collaboration, which causes it is difficult for teachers to cope with the complicated reform. So, large-scale reform

usually calls for a new professional culture that encourages teacher collaboration and support. In Hargreaves' (2001a, 2001b) professional geographies, most teachers experience positive emotions when they can explore professional issues together, and when their expertise, instructional knowledge, or judgments are supported or enriched by people around them. Favorable collegial relationships not only make teachers feel well, also boost up their capacity to implement the reform, which in turn reinforces teachers' positive emotions, e.g. gratification, confidence.

Negative: suspicion of teachers' professional ability

In curriculum reform, what teachers need is the appreciation and encouragement rather than unfair condemnation against teachers' expertise from people around them (Leithwood et al., 2002). However, teachers' professional ability is always at stake in reality. As Hargreaves (2001, p.1069) puts it in his professional geographies, teachers experience negative emotions when their expertise, instructional knowledge, and judgments for which they felt uniquely qualified are questioned by other people.

In our study, our informants told us the negative feelings they experienced in their interactions with educational administrators and textbook designers. In the eyes of those reformers and facilitators, teachers' attitude to the reform were always more conservative than expectation, and there were many defections in teachers' professional ability, so they could not implement the reform satisfactorily, both of which inspired teacher negative emotions.

Episode 5

They (educational administration sectors) always think what we teachers do is not enough, and we need to renew our ideas. It is their way of thinking. They hope we teachers ceaselessly reform our ideas and action! It's their thoughts. I previously took part in this kind of activities to communicate directly or indirectly with those textbook designers. They thought "you teachers should not implement the new curriculum in that way. How could you do like that?" I feel it seems that those textbook designers distrust us.....They just say "you teachers should implement the reform as we expect", but they don't know the hardships we experienced during the implementation process. (Teacher F)

Political geographies

Positive: be recognized by the people around teachers

According to Hargreaves' (2000, p.816) political geographies, teachers' positive emotions come from the feeling of empowerment, or from where their status is acknowledged or affirmed by the people around them. In our study, we found in two cases teachers felt their political status being reinforced: one is successfully delivering demonstration lessons, and the other is getting the praise from students. In the former case, teachers were empowered by the ones with higher status, such as veteran teachers and experts; in the latter case, teachers obtained the recognition from the ones with lower status.

In the reform, delivering demonstration lessons is a main way of teacher development in which teachers must have a lesson in front of many colleagues or experts for public comments. Though teachers think it as a pressure, they also make great progress from reviewers' suggestions and critiques. Teacher B reported she learnt a lot from delivering demonstration lessons, and "felt be known, recognized" by others, so she gradually "established self-confidence":

Episode 6

In an experience-communicating meeting of Guangdong Province, I presented my proposal to innovate teaching, and then this lesson was video recorded by a famous educational press. In that demonstration lesson, more than 100 experts, including veteran teachers from various provinces, curriculum experts from universities, and some chief editors from the press, came to evaluate my teaching, and I knew some of them.....I thought many of them really cared about me. When I saw those either familiar or strange faces, I felt "it is happiness to see friends who come from far away"¹, and my lesson earned their recognition..... I think it is a kind of precious experiences in which I meet all kinds of people and scenes, so I will be never afraid of whatever I meet in the future. (Teacher B)

Students' recognition is another important source of teachers' positive emotions. Many studies repeatedly show teachers' most important rewards are gained from students in classroom (Nias, 1989; Hargreaves, 2000). In teachers' eyes, teaching is "a job about heart" (Teacher F). It is worthy of teachers' efforts and hardship if they can be recognized by students, and "even one smile from students can comfort teachers' suffering" (Teacher C). Classroom is "the main position to embody teacher's value" (Teacher A). They could be easily inspired or discouraged by students. Although students' status is lower than that of teachers in the hierarchical power relationships, their praise can also inspire teachers the feeling of empowerment. Teacher C recalled an incident concerning what she felt when she was praised by students:

Episode 7

Once I asked my students to give me some notions what they think about my teaching. There is some good news among those suggestions advanced by students. Some of them said, "As a new teacher, your teaching is quiet attractive". They commended me, "you are a diligent teacher". When I read that, I was very joyful, because it means your merits are acknowledged by students. (Teacher C)

Negative: be hurried caused by the tight schedule set by the reformers

In teachers' eyes, the SSS curriculum reform was not their own reform but an up-to-down large scale reform issued by educational administrators. Teachers did not have much ownership about the reform, and they had little voice about whether and what the reform should be implemented but to follow the plan set by the reformers. The communications between teachers

¹ It is an old Chinese saying put forward by Confucius.

and “the people with higher status” was so limited that it was difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to implement the reform. According to our informants, tight schedule of the reform was one of those unreasonable arrangements which caused teachers’ negative emotions.

Although the new curriculum plays down its requirements on mastery of subject knowledge, it enlarges considerably the knowledge in textbooks, and requires teachers to teach 4 textbooks in one school-year. Compared with finishing 2 textbooks in one school-year, teachers felt more stressful and hurried. They were “going forward in running”(Teacher A). They had no time to review what they taught, just like “going hurried without stop”(Teacher G). A teacher described that feeling by using some metaphors:

Episode 8

“Authoritative will” plays a big role in the reform, that is, the people with high status (e.g. government officers) determine the reform, but I think many teachers in secondary schools do not accept it, even resist it. The new textbooks are like “compressed cookies”…… No one less of the knowledge, but the time we have is much less than before. All of us, including teachers and students, feel we are “hurried visitors” …… Teachers suffer the strain of classroom teaching, and students sicken badly at the indigestion of too much knowledge. (Teacher E)

Physical geographies

Positive: physical closeness of teacher-student interactions

Besides political geographies, we found some incidents concerning teachers’ positive emotions in their interaction with students corresponding to physical geographies. Hargreaves(2001a, 2001b) defines the term from the closeness and frequency of direct personal interaction. Emotional understanding and the establishment of emotional bonds between teachers and people around them require proximity and some kind of intense, frequent, and continuing interaction. In our interview, teachers consider they can get much emotional return in their personal contact with students. Teacher D told us a story about his interactions with one of his students:

Episode 9

Last year, one of my students was injured in school’s sports meeting. I sent him to the hospital to do the X-ray examination and called his parents to pick up him back home. When he returned, I asked other students to look after him, to help him up stairs or do something else. From that time on, it seemed that he had some closer emotional communications with me, and he would tell me a lot if he has any difficulties. Every time I talked something with him, our conversation goes smoothly and easily……I think it will be of great help for your work if you have deeper communications with students. (Teacher D)

Although this story may not have direct connections with the SSS curriculum reform, and it

also can happen in the context of teaching, this episode illustrates the important roles physical geographies play in teachers' lives. The benefits brought by physical closeness between teachers and students are not only emotional, which facilitates the emotional understanding, but also professional, which helps teachers diagnose and solve students' problems. Just as teacher A put it, "the impact of emotion on teaching is not tiny but prodigious.....If teachers help and care about our students when they face difficulties, they can also feel the caring from you, which might be internalized by them as a learning motivation".

Negative: having less time and energy to communicate with students

However, when the physical closeness and emotional understanding between teachers and their students are disturbed or interdicted by the new arrangements, added workload, and pressures brought by curriculum reform, teachers suffer many negative emotions. Compared with the traditional secondary school curriculum, the new curriculum project added some brand new learning fields, e.g. technology (including informational technology and general technology) and integrated activities (including inquiry learning, service learning, and social practice). Then, teaching hour had been reassigned to different subjects in the reform. As the result of this time re-allotment, the teaching hour chemistry teachers gained decreased from 6 lessons per week to 2 lessons per week. So, chemistry teachers had to teach more classes in order to complete the fixed teaching tasks and get their payment. As a chemistry teacher, now teacher F has to face almost 3 times of students than before. Facing the greatly enlarged students number and heavier workload, he has less time and energy to communicate with his students, which brought strong emotional impact to him. In the teacher F's opinion, the communication with students is the source of pleasure to teachers' professional life.

Episode 10

I delight to stay with my students, but now the situation is totally different. Previously I taught 2 classes, 6 lessons every week. It is OK because the students I need to teach are only 100 or so. I knew everyone of them, and I could tell the problem that every student faced. We had many opportunities to face-to-face communicate. I could see you at least one time every day, or even see you several times a day. But now, I teach 5 classes, more than 350 students! How could I know them? Although I am their teacher, I can't remember their names! I don't have the time and energy to communicate with so many students. I would rather to teach 2 classes. I'd rather to teach every class 7 lessons, even 8 lessons a week, so I can see them every day. However, now I have no deep communication with the student I teach, and I have less and less pleasure of teaching.....I am less happy than before.
(Teacher F)

Sociocultural geographies

Negative: sociocultural distance between teachers' and students' generation

When teachers are implementing the curriculum reform, they are inevitably influenced by the

macro-social context. With the rapid change of the society, more and more children belong to cultures that are unfamiliar to those of their teachers. The sociocultural gap between teachers and students expands much further, which causes teachers' anxiety and nostalgia (Hargreaves, 2001a). In our study, the sociocultural geographies worked again:

Episode 11

Now the whole society has changed! We teachers have to control every pieces of students' time, have to force students to complete certain tasks, or else many of the students here would not learn at all.....I always miss our times! At that time, teachers hardly ever examined our assignments, but we always finished them. All of us had our own goal of life. I think it would be painful to me if my teachers forced me to learn as what I do now at that time. However, today students are numb with teachers' coercion. They think "it is OK! It has always been happening everyday since I am young!" In our times, I considered teachers' critique as a kind of help, but today students don't think so. We are very powerless, very helpless! In many cases, our words and deeds can't affect students. Especially in a modern society like Guangzhou, students are influenced much more by network, society, and their family. Maybe we teachers are really pedantic, rigid, and our demands are over-perfect. Maybe what this young generation pursues is relaxation or easiness, but they would rather be passive on their learning. (Teacher B)

The sociocultural gap leads teachers to be stereotyped by their students, and at the same time, they can not understand their students emotionally as well as cognitively. All of these strongly impact their images of self. Kelchtermans' (1996) research shows limits to teachers' efficacy is a major source of teacher vulnerability. That means teacher can only determine a part of student learning outcomes, but many other factors, over which they have little or no control, determine student learning, too. In curriculum reform, teachers need not only to deal with the challenges advanced by reform, but to endure the emotional misunderstanding caused by the sociocultural distance between them and their students, and the latter might deteriorate teachers' self-image and add more pressures to their implementation. So, teacher B felt powerless and helpless although she is still trying to implement the new curriculum.

Negative: social expectations on the ration of passing the college entrance exam

The curriculum reform aims at releasing the curriculum and teaching of SSS from the restriction of open examination, but in Chinese society, the examination culture is still a dominant ideology in Mainland and other Chinese community (Lee, 1996; Wong & Wong, 2002). In the opinions of parents and ordinary people, the results of open examinations, especially the ratio of passing the college entrance exam, are the primary criteria for judging one school's quality. The expectation on high examination score hold by parents is not congruous with that of teachers and the reform, which is to cultivate the all round developed students, but teachers and schools have to deal with their clients' expectation with great care. In our study, the situation is

more complex because those teachers had no idea about whether the college entrance exam would be changed according to the new curriculum and what it would be. So, almost all the informants mentioned they had always been in uncertainty since the beginning of the reform. They felt “puzzled, confused, absentminded, or even fearful” about what on earth students learnt from various activities, and suspected whether those activities might impair students’ mastery of knowledge (Teacher E, G). More frankly speaking, they worried whether they would be negatively influenced by the unknown college entrance exam, because for teachers and schools, “the ratio of passing the college entrance exam is bloody!” (Teacher A).

Episode 12

Our society imposes heavy expectation on key secondary schools. You can ask what the ordinary people concerns. I am sure what they care about are this school’s outcomes, not what kind of experiments the school carries out, nor what the school has done in curriculum reform. By which will they evaluate the effects of school teaching in future? College entrance exam, but we know nothing about what it would be! It is dreadful! The ratio of passing the college entrance exam is bloody for teachers and schools! We implement the reform in an active manner, but we are more and more uncertain about what it will change.....Now, we are indeed going across a river by touching the cobblestone! (Teacher A)

Brief summary of findings and implications

This study seeks to explore teachers’ emotions and their influencing factors within the context of Chinese SSS curriculum reform. After reviewing 7 teachers’ emotional incidents in their implementation, we know teacher emotion exists and matters in curriculum reform. However, as Fullan(1997) says, the emotional side of change has been neglected or mistreated for long times, which in turn increases the alienation, burnout, and balkanization among teachers. In Teacher B’s words, “everybody in our society knows we teachers have a lot of complaint, but nobody seriously takes it into consideration!” If we wish to successfully implement the reform, we must pay attention to teachers’ emotional experiences, especially the complex synthesis of joy, happy, anxiety, worry, loss and grief, etc.(Marshak, 1996).

In sum, this case study informs us a lot about teacher emotion in curriculum implementation. First, the cultural-individual perspective(van den Berg et al., 1999; van den Berg, 2002) is a useful lens for us to understand teacher emotion in curriculum reform. In this perspective, teachers’ emotions are more than individual psychological phenomena, but socially constructed in teachers’ interactions with people around them and contain substantial sociocultural, moral, professional, political, and interpersonal roots. With the help of Hargreaves’(2000, 2001a, 2001b) emotional geographies, we find the 7 teachers’ emotions are not so inscrutable as we ever thought, however, naturally, they are the products of teachers’ social relationships in curriculum reform, as shown in Figure 2. In this emotional map, we can see that the interactions between teachers and the reformers or students are the most influential processes in this curriculum

reform, in which most complex, even paradoxical emotional experiences occur.

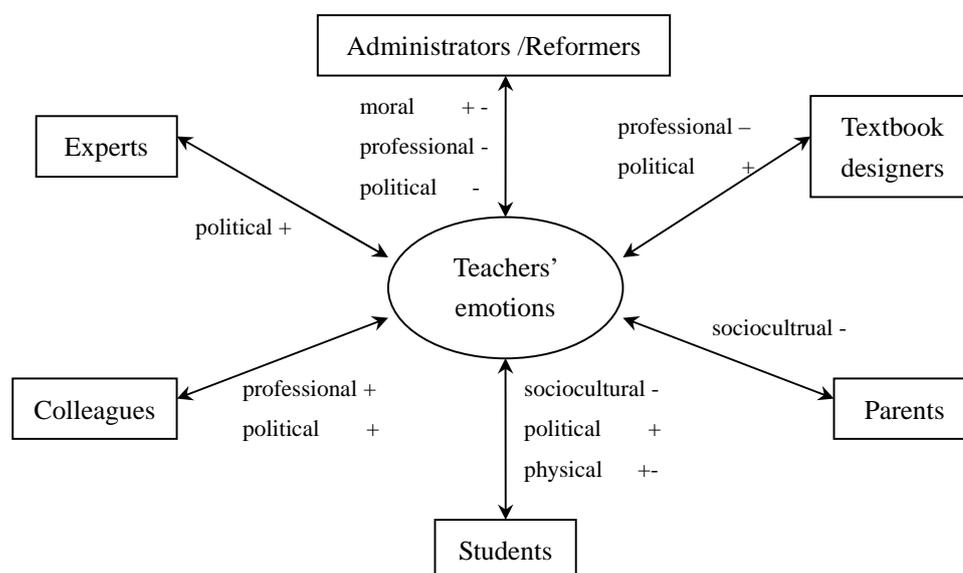


Figure 2: 7 teachers' emotional map in the Chinese SSS curriculum reform

Second, besides providing an illustration of applying the conceptual framework of emotional geographies into the context of curriculum reform in Mainland China, this study also find there are maybe some interactions among various emotional geographies. For example, professional distance maybe is the result of political distance, and in turn, the reinforcement of political status is also by reason of recognition of teachers' professional ability. In our interview, the professional distance between teachers and the administrators/reformers, that is, teachers felt the suspicion from the administrators about their professional ability to implement this reform, maybe was caused by the political distance and lack of emotional understanding between teachers and the administrators/reformers. In turn, when teachers were recognized by the veteran teacher, experts, or students because they successfully delivering demonstration lesson or had outstanding teaching skills, they felt they were more qualified to be a teacher. In another example, in order to follow the "authority will" (political distance), teachers had to modify the schedule and reduced the teaching time of some subjects, which also decreased their communication with students (physical distance). Without the happiness brought by the deep communication between teachers and their students, teachers felt they were demoralized as a "commodity seller" under the heavy workload (moral distance). Although Hargeaves' (2001a, p.1075) mentioned increasing physical and professional closeness are not sufficient to develop strong emotional understanding, the topic of interactions among various emotional geographies is still left for further and deeper inquiry.

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