Examining The Impact of a DSP Project through a Comparative Adult Education Lens: A Snapshot of Principal Professional Development for Education Internationalization in Beijing, China

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Abstract

Through the lenses of comparative adult education and international educational leadership development, this study explores the learning experiences of local school principals after they participated in a professional development program named "Domestic Study Program" (DSP) in Beijing. A qualitative narrative inquiry was applied and four school principals who self-reported as experiencing personal and professional improvement through the DSP program were interviewed. Their lived learning experiences as adult learners through the DSP project were sorted, categorized, grouped, and regrouped following the qualitative research data analysis protocols suggested by Rossman and Rallis (2003) and Creswell (2014). The research indicates that the four local principals experienced major changes in the areas of self-perception, ways of thinking, and ways of doing. The findings are interpreted through the lenses of comparative adult education and international educational leadership development.

Introduction

In the past decade, more than 30 international schools have been established in Beijing, China to address the need of delivering quality education to foreign employees' children and those children born in countries outside of China but live in Beijing area. Because of using International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum and other countries' national curriculum and hiring principals and teachers with rich international education background, these international schools provide a unique learning opportunity for local schools to understand how to connect local education practice to the world.

To internationalize education, principal leadership development is important because "the total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of total school effects (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p.5). From 2011 through 2015, therefore, Beijing Education Commission organized a principal leadership development program to provide local

principals with the opportunity to systematically study the school systems and curriculum of nine international schools in Beijing. Because Beijing local principals gain international principal leadership development experience without leaving the country, this professional development program was named "Domestic Study Program" (DSP).

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of DSP on local principals in Beijing, China by critically examining these school principals' learning experiences after they participated in the DSP project as an adult learner. In this study, professional development is defined as "educational activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes that will improve the performance for a future role." (Retna, 2015, p.525). Professional development has long been part of adult and continuing education and shares a great deal of the nature of adult learning (Knowles, 1980, 1984).

Conceptual Frameworks

Comparative and international education has historically performed significant roles that not only facilitate effective global interactions and understandings with people who are geographically and culturally different, but also enable people to learn and discover new ideas from others that help improve one's own educational practice or avoid making similar mistakes (Bogotch and Maslin-Ostrowski, 2010). Thus a comparative education lens provides this study with a clear understanding of the need for China to learn from the West about the strengths and limitations of Chinese principalship practice. This approach helps examine what Beijing local principals have learned from international schools through the DSP project.

Further, principal leadership development is evidenced as a refinement in principalship through sustained and incremental innovation, based on understanding why and how to make changes in school practices (Barnes, 2010). Successful school development and high profile student achievements all rest upon the ability and capability building of school leaders (Heck & Hallinger, 2009). Therefore, this study also adapts Green's (2010) 4-dimensional principal leadership development model to interpret the changes occurred in principals' understandings of the role they play in school development and effectiveness. Dimension One emphasizes the importance of understanding one's own beliefs and values as well as the beliefs and values of others, enabling the emergence of a shared vision and goals. Dimension Two points out the need to understand the complexity of organizational life. The awareness of the social interactions with others allows school leaders to access conditions and develop plans for goal attainment. Dimension Three is about developing and maintaining relationship that exist within and across all stakeholders in the school community. Dimension Four emphasizes the necessity of understanding and using best practices to improve and transform their schools.

Because of the connection between professional development and adult and continuing education (Knowles, 1980, 1984), an adult education approach is taken. To understand what and how principals, as adult learners, learn, change, and make impact through individual efforts as school leaders, it is needed to not only understand how principals learn as an adult but also understand the context in which these adult learners and their learning are situated. Thus, Caffarella and Merriam's (2000) integrated adult learning framework that links the individual and contextual perspectives together is applied. Their framework looks at "each learning situation from two major lenses or frames: An awareness of individual learners and how they learn, and an understanding of how the context shapes learners, instructor, and the learning transaction itself" (p. 62).

Literature Review

Principal Leadership Development in the Context of Education Internationalization

The world has become increasingly interconnected, multicultural and diverse. The need to connect global-local educational practices to promote and enhance understandings at local levels and learning from each other are becoming essential to today's principal leadership development. Achieving school goals is highly dependent on the ability and capability of school leaders (Heck and Hallinger, 2009). Therefore, today's principal leadership development needs to focus on leadership capacity building for new changes that would enhance school effectiveness and student achievement in the globalized world to develop global citizenship.

Bogotch and Maslin-Ostrowski (2010) report that much literature on educational leadership internationalization focuses on personal academic travel and international educational opportunity than on the on-going, comprehensive, and multifaceted integration of internationalization within local school systems. According to Hourani and Stringer (2015), Hirsh (2009), and Nicholson, Harris-John and Schimmel (2005), successful principal leadership development needs to be on-going, job-embedded, connected to school improvement and site-specific. They also indicate that there should be opportunity for principals to be engaged in real life educational problem solving with colleagues and education content should accommodate both individual principal's needs and school demands.

In China, education internationalization equals to changing traditional education mindset and practices around educational goals, educational philosophy, learning content, teaching pedagogy, and education evaluation to becoming more inclusive and flexible. The purpose of education internationalization is to improve students' international consciousness, international vision, international communication skills, and become international learner-citizens (陈如平, 2010; 顾明远, 1992; 刘文华, 2014; 谢新观, 1999; 赵峰, 2010). In this global context, principals in China are faced with the following challenges: Internationalizing education philosophy, control over school governance, localizing international education philosophy and methodology, lack of experience designing and implementing international curriculum (翁艳, 2004; 高光, 2012; 傅林, 2014; 倪闽景, 2014). In China, principal leadership

development is based on 60 principal leadership standards issued by the government that encompass the following six dimensions: Planning of school development, humanity culture development, instructional leadership, teacher professional development, school internal management, and adapting school external environment (褚宏启, 2015; 夏杨艳, 2016; 冯慧, 2016). These standards tell principals what they should do to be in compliance with the government's education policy and regulations, to fulfill their principalship as expected, and to lead future school development. "Though used as the guidelines and serve as the base for principal professional development, these standards mainly reflect the government's expectations not students' needs" (褚宏启, 2015, p. 5-7). Not much language is included about student learning and what a school should do to help improve students' learning. Accordingly, these standards focus more on school development without articulating student learning objectives and the connection to school management. These prescribed standards make principals focus on doing things in the "right" way as defined by the government at the cost of overlooking the importance of individual student growth and development.

Principal as Adult Learner

In Western adult learning literature, how adults learn is mainly discussed from three perspectives. One is the individual perspective that focuses on the learning process of the individual learner. The other is the contextual perspective that includes two dimensions – interactive and structural. In the 21st century, Caffarella and Merriam (2000) added the third perspective that is the integration of the individual and contextual perspectives because neither one alone is able to capture the full picture of adult learning knowing that adult learners are influenced by many socio-cultural factors.

Individual perspective. Understanding adults learn differently from children, Knowles (1968, 1980, 1984) popularized the concept of Andragogy from Europe (the art and science of helping adults learn) to distinguish adult learning from pre-adult schooling pedagogy (the art and science of helping children learn). The core of andragogy rests upon the following six assumptions about adult learners: (1) Adult's self-concept grows from that of dependent personality toward one of a self-directed learner; (2) An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a rich resource for new learning; (3) The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role; (4) There is a change in time perspective as people mature–from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Thus, an adult is more goal and problem centered than subject centered and future orientated in learning (Knowles 1980, p. 44-45); (5) Adults are most motivated internally than externally (Knowles & Associates, 1984); (6) Adults need to know why they need to learn something (Knowles, 1984).

This "model of assumption" (Knowles, 1980, p. 43) insightfully helps understand the nature of adult as individual learners, why they participate in adult learning, what motivate them to learn, and how them learn (Brookfield, 1984; Darknwald & Merriam, 1982; Gardner, 1983; Garrison, 1997;

Knowles, 1980, 1984; Merriam & Brockett, 1999; Merriam et al., 2007; Mezirow, 1991; Tough, 1971; Wlodkowski, 1998). SDL (Tough, 1971), for example, rests upon humanistic philosophy and focuses on learning for personal development. Merriam et al. (2007) indicate that SDL learners usually pursue one or a combination of the following three different goals: Goal one is to enhance the ability to be self-directed in their learning by accepting responsibility and being proactive in learning with personal autonomy and individual choice; Goal two is to foster transformative learning as indicated by Mezirow (1985) that we "…participate fully and freely in the dialogue through which we test our interests and perspective against those of others and accordingly modify them and our learning goals" (as cited in Merriam et al. 2007, p. 108); Goal three broadens the scope of adult learning by promoting emancipatory learning and incorporating collective social action for social change.

Contextual perspective. The contextual perspective, from sociocultural standpoint, displays two key elements – the interactive nature and structural aspect of adult learning (Caffarella and Merriam 2000). Learning does not happen in a vacuum thus it cannot be separated from the context in which learning takes place. Our daily lives and prior knowledge and experiences all play a role in learning. In other words, what we learn and how we learn are all situated in the context that we are a part. We also learn through reflective practice while interacting with various contexts, which enables our experience and prior knowledge to work together to make appropriate judgment in complex situations. The second dimension of the contextual perspective is the structural aspect of learning that emphasizes that contextual factors contributing to identifying individual learner need to be taken into consideration in all adult learning process (i.e., race, social class, gender, ethnicity, etc.).

Integrated perspective. Expanding on the individual and contextual perspectives, Caffarella and Merriam (2000) developed a third view to gain fuller understanding of learning in adulthood in the 21st century. That is, we should not only be aware of individual learners and how they learn, but also understand how social context affects learning process and how adult learners identify themselves in the learning process. In China, "shadowing training" for novice principals is one of the main approaches of principal training. This approach reflects the nature of this integrated adult learning perspective. In the process of shadowing, novice principals are observers and conduct critical reflection but not action (涂三广, 2014). Through shadowing, novice principals gain experience and have opportunities to integrate the contextual knowledge into their own existing practice knowledgebase (汪文华, 2013). They then undergo a process of reflection to improve their leadership philosophies which, in turn, help them improve their leadership identity.

This perspective is practically useful when it comes to understanding how principals learn as adult learners in different learning contexts and how they apply what they have learned to school contexts that differ from one another. This perspective makes clear that principal leadership strongly influences a variety of school outcomes and contributes to

both school development and school community growth (Oleszewski, Shoho, and Barnett, 2012). Yet, meaningful change cannot be delivered using existing structures, existing ideas or existing capabilities. As can be argued that the widening expectations of a principal's role under the globalization starts to demand even broader skills and knowledge from today's principals.

Principalship in Action in China

In China, principal's role as school leader who determines school development and success is recognized as well. "In today's globalized world, principals need to transition from a traditional gatekeeper to a change agent such that they can truly play the role of an initiator, leader and resource provider for school reforms." (孙翠香, 2014, p. 45-49). In reality, however, principal's role as school leader is restricted because of the unique socio-political context. The bureaucratic education system and principal appointment mechanism are important factors that affect school development. Therefore, principals in China fall into the dilemma of not only needing to be responsible to school development but also having the responsibility to satisfy the expectations of the government (吴康宁, 2012; 南纪稳, 2002). Research studies indicate that "Chinese principals' approach to day-to-day problem is similar to a firefighter and their problem solving is more of blinded and randomized than systemic" (胡瑞士, 2012, p. 15-17). This is largely due to the heavy workload they carry and the complexity of the problems they have to deal with by constantly shifting between different roles and mindsets (石一, 2005). Being tied up with a lot of ad hoc administrative tasks leaves principals little to no time to systematically think through the future of the school and the goal of education (夏杨艳, 程晋宽, 2016) .

The literature review above indicates a lack of principal leadership research that looks at principal as adult learner and lack of studies that offer best practices to help principals enhance their internal capacities building in order to manage the complex demands of learning, teaching and leadership (Drago-Severson, Maslin-Ostrowski, Hoffman and Barbaro, 2014, p. 8). Many research studies also call for programs that should be "focusing on enhancing relational skills and collaborative leadership capacities, and increasing the understanding of how to create contexts that incorporate reflective practice" (Drago-Severson et al., 2014). In China, school principals' everyday practices are mainly guided by the notions of "national standard", "supervisor-oriented", and "efficiency first." Principals in China have developed fragmented ways of thinking by giving most attention and priority to enrollment rate and exam results and less attention to the essence of education and sustainable human development in the 21st century. In the context of education internationalization, it is suggested that today's principals should focus on developing open, inclusive, free, and democratic school culture and respecting needs from individual teachers and students.

This study, therefore, is to fill in the literature gap by taking an international and comparative adult education view point to understand what knowledge and skills principals in Beijing China are acquiring through leadership development program in the context of education internationalization.

Research Methods

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of DSP on local principals in Beijing China by answering the following question: What changes have local principals in Beijing experienced after attending the DSP project?

A qualitative narrative inquiry, in-depth interview, was applied because "qualitative interview is a uniquely sensitive and powerful method for capturing the experiences and lived meanings of the subjects' everyday world. Interviews allow subjects to conveys to others their situation from their own perspective and in their own words" (Kvale, 1996, p 70). Other researchers also indicate that an effective way of knowing one's reality is through hearing experience and stories (Janesick, 2011; Merriam 2009; Seidman 2006). Further, "reality in qualitative research inquiry assumes that there are multiple, changing realities and that individuals have their own unique constructions of reality" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25).

Participant inclusion criteria were: Participation in the DSP program between 2011-2015 and self-reported as experiencing personal and professional improvement after the DSP project. Four school principals were recruited (see Table 1). Semi-structured questions were developed in Chinese to guide narrative conversation. Each interview was 60 to 90 minutes long and conducted at a distance using Zoom video conferencing technology with the interviewees in China and the researchers in the US. All interviews were done by one researcher in Chinese and video recorded. The interview videos were later transcribed and translated into English by the three researchers who are bi-lingo and bi-cultural. Chinese version of the transcripts were sent to the interviewees for confirmation and approval. Information potentially linking to research participants' identities have been removed and pseudonyms are used in this paper.

Data analysis was conducted following the 4-step process that Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggested for analyzing qualitative research data. The four principals' lived learning experiences as adult learners through the DSP project were sorted, categorized, grouped, and regrouped. Creswell's 6-step data analysis strategy (2014) was also consulted, including organizing and preparing data, reading through all data, coding the data, search themes and descriptions, interrelating themes and descriptions, and interpreting the meaning of themes and descriptions. Following these steps allows the researchers to identify the perceived changes principal participants experienced through the DSP project, which helped with member check for accuracy. The meanings of different themes and thick descriptions collected from the three researchers were compared and combined to address the above research question.

Findings

After participating in the DSP project, the four principal participants experienced changes mainly in the following three areas: Self-perception, ways of thinking, and ways of doing.

Table 1 │ Participant Information

Pseudonym Name	Age	Gender	Level of Education	Position
Principal LiW	49	Female	Master Degree	Principal
Principal XiaW	50	Male	Bachelor Degree	Principal
VP LiY	38	Female	Bachelor Degree	Vice Principal
VP DongCh	47	Female	Master Degree	Vice Principal

Self-Perception

Self-perception is what individuals know about "their own attitudes, emotions, and other internal states" (Bem, 1972, p.2). Green (2010) emphasizes in his educational leadership model that school leaders' self-perception is an important dimension of school leadership skills. The importance of self-perception to adults is also well recognized in adult education theory. Knowles' first assumption (1980), for example, indicates that "as a person matures, his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being" (p. 44). Being charged of bringing about school change, principals are expected to be self-directed and should know what they are doing and in what direction they are leading the schools.

After the DSP project, the four principal participants view themselves as a change agent than a school administrator. As a change agent, they see themselves as the catalysts for change to occur in their schools. Principal LiW reflected on her identity as a school leader that "the higher your position is, the greater responsibility you will have, and the more challenges you will face, all of which will force you to keep improving yourself and become a lifelong learner". Therefore, a qualified principal needs to be a "visionary leader who pulls herself out of daily administrative tasks to focus on bigger pictures of school development," said Principal LiW. She and Principal XiaW think a visionary leader should possess the following characteristics: Being engaged in lifelong learning because "the higher you stand, the clearer you see the direction"; mastering good resilience skills because "giving up should not be an alternate plan for a school principal"; being a people person because "as the head of a school, one has to think and act in the shoes of the students, parents, teachers, supervisors, and other stakeholders by showing respect and trust"; increasing cultural consciousness because "teachers, students and parents are different (It's not that you treat them differently but that they are different by nature so you have to find different ways to work with them)"; and, emphasizing on shared governance and distributed leadership. Principal LiW shared that she established several committees after going back to her school and how much incredible support her school has received from those committees.

This change agent approach is well documented in Western educational leadership literature as well (Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs, and Stokes, 1997). For example, the characteristics of leadership effectiveness summarized by Principal LiW and Principal XiaW above fit nicely into Fullan's five essential characteristics of an effective school leader (2001, 2003). Positioning themselves as the change agent of school development, principals are able to develop respect and trust based on school culture/climate, intentionally execute distributed leadership to change and transform the school as a whole (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Spillane, 2005; Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003; Stroble and Luka, 1999).

To illustrate the importance of principals being a change agent, Principal XiaW shared an analogy of managing a vegetable garden vs. managing a vegetable storage bin. The difference between a garden and a vegetable storage bin is that vegetables will grow by themselves if the gardener provides decent fertilizer and rich soil and water regularly; However, the amount of vegetables won't change and the storage bin will become a mess if the manager does not put more fresh vegetables into the storage bin and not organize the bin. A change agent is like a gardener who produces good school culture for teachers and students to grow and develop whereas a traditional school principal is like a manager who dictates school policies and micromanages teachers' teacher practices. Principal XiaW indicated that "the fundamental difference between being a gardener and a storage manager is that the former enjoys his everyday work, plants respect and trust, harvests [teacher and student] growth and development, and does not see managing a garden a burden whereas the latter does."

Ways of Thinking

People's ways of thinking are deeply rooted in their everyday life and work experiences and, therefore, greatly influenced by the socio-cultural contexts in which they are situated. This is the contextual perspective discussed in Caffarella and Merriam (2000) that is highly valued in traditional Chinese culture. Influenced by Confucianism, Chinese people have a tendency for social harmony that is reflected in their readiness to find their own place within the hierarchical social order and strictly follow the chain of

command to contribute to social harmony than creating chaos. As socio-culturally constructed adults, principal participants demonstrated this Chinese culture norm in their responses to the interview questions. VP LiY shared that she was pretty much supervisor-centered principal before the DSP project. Whenever her supervisor gave her a task, she had a tendency to try her best to get it done within the shortest time as possible so that her supervisor could see the results. She shared, "before the DSP project, if my supervisor tells me that I should plan some student activities this semester, I would want to finish planning the same day and start to conduct student activities within a week." When being asked why she was so supervisor-centered, her response was that "… because of the social context. It's impossible to do anything if you don't take into consideration the social context you are in."

After the DSP project, the four principal participants all started to look at their practices as a school leader through Caffarella and Merriam's (2000) integrated perspective and Green's (2010) 4-dimensional principal leadership model. Principal LiW shared, "[after the DSP project] I began to put myself into the shoes of different stakeholders to look for win-win solutions than strictly implementing school policies passed on from my supervisor." She continued that "I've found myself more comfortable now and am willing to stretch school policies to benefit individual students and teachers." VP LiY learned through the DSP project not to be anxious about issues and challenges in front of her. She said "Now, I can sit down and spend more time analyzing the real causes of these issues and challenges and look for optimal solution to benefit the majority." She noticed that this change in how she approaches issues and challenges has helped her move from focusing merely on the context to focusing on both individual and the context in which the individual is situated. She said,

> After the DSP project, I have shifted my focus from micro-managing day-to-day administrative tasks to showing trust and respect to the individuals involved and affected… instead of focusing on how to quickly finish the tasks given by my supervisor, I'm now taking a more dialectic approach by slowing down to give me time to think and by continuously communicating with my supervisor my own thoughts and suggestions.

The key to this shift in ways of thinking, according to VP DongCh, is to recognize that there exists different value systems and people even have different understandings and different approaches to the same value system. Though the DSP project, VP DongCh was impressed by how the international school he visited responded to a student's car accident and a PE teacher's death differently than what his school would do even though everybody values lives. Principal XiaW was impressed by how the international school she visited respects each student's uniqueness. He said,

> One thing I've learned through the DSP project is that commending someone because he does a good job is not what respect entails. Respect, …..means giving adequate attention to each individual student's

personality, respect their learning characteristics, and utilize available resources and school system to provide each individual a personalized curriculum tailored toward this student's unique learning need.

After the DSP project, Principal XiaW changed his ways of thinking by giving more respect and trust to her teachers. "Resting on respect and trust", Principal XiaW said, "my focus now is on realizing the potentials in each individual teacher and creating a culture that is supportive of collaboration and teacher advocacy." He said his teachers now see him more of a friend and are willing to exchange ideas and give suggestions to him than before. VP LiY indicated "[after the DSP project] I feel that I can see things deeper and my decision making skills greatly improved, and so does my logical reasoning skills."

Ways of Doing

Leadership differs from management in that leaders "do the right things" and managers "do things right." Leadership behavior is a specific act of leadership in the process of directing and coordinating the work of group members, such as establishing professional working relationship to address both organizational concern and personal relationship concern (Bernard, 1985; Cartright & Zander, 1968; Getzel & Guba, 1957; Katz, 1989; Bales, 1958), evaluating group member performance, and addressing welfare and emotional concerns of group members (Fiedler, 1981). As a school leader, therefore, principal participants of this study are expected to guide the direction of school change and impact and shape the teaching and learning behaviors of teachers and students by developing a shared vision and goals, developing plans for goal attainment, building relationship with all stakeholders in the school community, and introducing best practices to improve and transform their schools (Green, 2010; Caffarella & Merriam, 2000; 贾轶峰, 1994; 王芳, 2005).

The four principal participants all experienced significant changes in their ways of doing through leadership behavior change to address the concept of "organizational care." Principal LiW shared how she implemented a change at the school level to make class hours uninterrupted. In the past, her school followed calendar-based 5-weekday schedule and all classes had fixed date/time schedules (i.e., PE teacher x always teaches on Monday and Wednesday afternoons). If a national holiday falls on a Monday, all classes schedule for that day were cancelled and no arrangement was made to make up those classes. After the DSP project, she has implemented changes to school class cycle by following a 6-weekday schedule (i.e., PE teacher x teaches on Days 1, 3, 6). Doing so, national holidays or special school events no longer interfere with school class schedule. She said "My teachers think this new way of scheduling classes is more fair and humanistic!"

Through the DSP project, VP LiY noticed the ineffectiveness of the bureaucratic aspect of her school management and decided to move from managing school to "do things right" to providing leadership to "do the right things". In the past, she asked her teachers to give priority to ad hoc tasks given by her supervisor over their everyday school activities. She said "before the DSP project, if my supervisor tells me that I should

plan some student activities this semester, I would want to finish planning the same day and start to conduct student activities within a week." Therefore, she and her teachers' school days were always filled with ad hoc tasks and it was very common that routine school activities were changed and cancelled because of receiving an "urgent" ad hoc task from her supervisor, as she said, "plans cannot keep up with changes!" After the DSP project, she realized the importance of aligning school activities with the school goals, creating a detailed plan and sticking to it. She said "I asked our teachers to develop their own plans for the entire school term, which means developing a plan from now [January] to July. Their plans need to be detailed to week, day, and hours." She now asks her teachers to make their teaching plans their first priority by modeling how she gives priority to her own plan.

The four principal participants also shared how they have changed their school practices to address "personal relationship concern" an important component of leadership behavior they learned through the DSP project. Principal XiaW said he used to audit his teachers' class in an accusatory manner. If he was not happy with a teacher's teaching, he would be angry. He would criticize the teacher and sometimes even penalize the teach for not up to his expectation. After the DSP project, he no longer "polices" teachers' classes. Instead, he begins his classroom visit by first making an appointment with the teacher. After visiting the class, he will schedule a time with the teacher and share his thoughts and observations with him or her in a more professional way by showing respect and trust. He said "I'm now visiting classrooms more through the appreciative approach than criticizing one. In the past, the teachers didn't want me to visit their classes and were very nervous when seeing me walking into their classrooms. Now, many of them invite me to visit their classes. This indicates a fundamental change in my relationship with them." Principal LiW implemented similar change in her shared governance effort. After the DSP project, she starts to invite students to school planning meetings and guides students to take responsibility for some aspects of school change. She said "We have student representatives at most of our planning meetings. If their suggestions and ideas are good, we will support and provide necessary resources to implement. Because of this change, students know that we recognize the role they play in the school development and their voices are heard by the school leadership team. Now I feel that our students are becoming more independent and are willing to be engaged in school development than before."

Conclusion

School is an organization built on cooperative relationship. Its success and effectiveness rest upon a system of interactions among individuals and also between individuals and the school community (Caffarella and Merriam, 2000; Green, 2010; 黄云龙, 1993). In the context of education internationalization and recognizing the instrumental role principals play in school development, this study looked at the impact of DSP project, a principal leadership development program, on local principals in Beijing China. A comparative

education approach, Green's 4-dimensional leadership development model (2010), and Caffarella and Merriam's (2000) integrated adult learning framework were used to make sense of the lived study experiences of the four local school principals and vice principals in Beijing. In comparison to what they had learned through the DSP project, the four local principals and vice principals interviewed critically reflected on their traditional principalship practice and all indicated experiencing major changes in the following three areas: self-perception, ways of thinking, and ways of doing.

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