



## A Distributed Perspective on Middle Leadership in International Baccalaureate Continuum Schools in Northeast Asia

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## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their appreciation to IB Research for funding this project and to Dr. Bradley Shrimpton, IB's Head of Research, for his support throughout the research process.

We thank Chair Prof. James Spillane of Northwestern University for his feedback on the research proposal and work as project advisor.

Parts of sections 1.2-1.6 draw on an unpublished research proposal (Bryant, 2014, No. 28611215) funded by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council and the following published paper:

Bryant, D.A. (2018). Conditions that support middle leaders' work in organisational and system leadership: Hong Kong case studies. *School Leadership & Management*, DOI: 10.1080/13632434.2018.1489790.

This project has contributed in part to several outcomes that include:

1. Two conference paper proposals accepted for the 2019 *IB Global Conference* in Hong Kong,
2. One conference paper proposal accepted for the *American Educational Research Association's 2019 Annual Meeting*.
3. One paper presentation delivered at the *2017 Asia Leadership Roundtable* held in Hangzhou, China.
4. The conceptual framework for this research, a substantial refinement of the Hong Kong grant, first appeared in the proposal for this project and has now been published in:

Bryant, D.A. (2018). Leadership in Asian international schools: Mapping a research agenda. In K.J. Kennedy & J.C.K. Lee. *Routledge Handbook on Schools and Schooling in Asia* (pp. 293-306). London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

5. Qualitative data for the China School Case Study (Chapter 3) was collected, analyzed and reported by Mr. Anthony Adames as a subset of his doctoral research.

December 2018

The Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change,  
The Education University of Hong Kong

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## Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Expansion</b>
ATL	Approach to Learning
CAS	Creativity, activity, service
CLT	Collaborative Leadership Team
CP	Career-related Programmes
CSL	Cross-School Leaders
DoL	Director of Learning
DP	Diploma Programme
DPC	Diploma Programme Coordinator
GLL	Grade Level Leads
HoD	Head of Department
HoL	Head of Library
HoS	Head of School
IA	Internal assessment
IB	International Baccalaureate
ML	Middle Leader
MSVP	Middle School Vice Principal / Assistant Principal
MYP	Middle Years Programme
MYPC	Middle Years Programme Coordinator
PC	Programme Coordinator
PP	Personal Project
PSP	Primary School Principal
PSVP	Primary School Vice Principal / Assistant Principal
PYP	Primary Years Programme
PYPC	Primary Years Programme Coordinator
SAC	Subject Area Coordinator / Special Area Coordinator
SL	Senior Leader
SSP	Secondary School Principal
SSVP	Secondary School Vice Principal / Assistant Principal
TA	Teaching Assistant
TOK	Theory of Knowledge
TUS	Time-use survey

## Executive summary

This research engaged 105 senior, middle and teacher leaders in individual and focus group interviews for the purpose of examining how four International Baccalaureate (IB) schools in Northeast Asia conceptualize and operationalize middle leadership. The study examined the positions of IB Programme Coordinators and Subject Area Coordinators, and also considered other roles identified by schools as important such as grade level academic and pastoral care leaders or leaders with cross-school responsibilities. Additional qualitative data were collected in the form of documents and observations. Although the study was qualitative, time-use and advice network surveys provided further descriptive data that further illuminated or illustrated the qualitative finding—indicating the proportion of middle leadership time and advising applied to actual leadership activities. All data collection instruments served to distinguish between classroom and administrative responsibilities and three levels of leadership: (1) instruction/learning, (2) organizational/capacity building, (3) system/external. The study's key findings include the following:

- Middle leaders engage in a range of leadership activities that collectively include each level of leadership, although there are variations within schools in levels of leadership engagement in the aforementioned leadership activities. In all schools, Level One invited the highest investment of middle leadership, followed by Level Two.
- A variety of leadership roles provide focus for middle leaders' leadership activity. In many instances, individual leaders have more than one area of leadership responsibility, or multiple team memberships. This creates a highly complex web of leadership, and for a broad distribution of leadership activity across the school.
- Programme coordinators' specific expertise in the standards and practices of their respective programmes and roles such as liaising with the IB account for much of their capacity building and work in response to system / external contexts. They invest a substantial amount of work in leadership activities related to capacity building, liaising with the IB, and interpreting IB standards and practices in the school context.
- Although individual middle leaders, particularly subject area coordinators, spend relatively less time as individuals engaged in leadership activities, collectively, their work accounts for the largest proportion of leadership activity. This suggests the importance of building their capacity as leaders.
- The position of Programme Coordinators as senior leaders, typically Vice-Principals, or as middle leaders reporting to senior leaders varied from school-to-school in their different organizational structures. Although not always mutually exclusive, the main trade-off is among breadth of influence across different dimensions of schooling and degree of authority or responsibility for decision-making on the one hand versus in depth focus on the needs of specific programmes and necessary capacity building work on the other hand.
- The design of appraisal systems and formal organizational structures influenced the work of Programme Coordinators and other middle leaders in building capacity and developing expertise.

- The programme coordinators and middle leaders draw on a range of tools to support their work. These can be classified as IB-designed, School-designed, Self-designed and Borrowed and adapted tools.
- The IB provides a strong and supportive framework for middle leadership to function in schools. This includes the Programme Coordinators and other members working in formalized middle leadership positions within the schools.
- The distinctive features of IB programmes are leveraged to develop middle leaders and enhance their influence. This was evident when schools identified and supported the development of individuals with specific expertise in areas such as Approaches to Learning, Extended Essays, Personal Projects or Creativity, Activity, Service.
- Membership in a consortium of schools tends to enhance the impact of middle leaders beyond their own school. IB regional networks and workshops can provide outlets for this influence.
- School culture and school organization play a critical role in enabling the functioning of middle leadership. The unique missions of the schools and resulting unique organization structural designs influence the work of Programme Coordinators and middle leaders.
- The positioning of the schools in different societal cultures had little influence on the work of Programme Coordinators and middle leaders, although transmitting the IB ethos to parents emerged as an important factor.

These findings, amongst others, led to the following propositions about middle leadership in IB schools:

Proposition 1: Middle leadership accounts for the largest proportion of leadership activity in schools, which middle leaders enact through a wide range of strategies—although their influence may be of less impact than that of senior leadership. Senior leaders can influence the direction of middle leaders’ work and their capacity development through school-based aims, structures and initiatives.

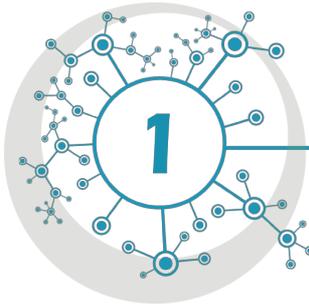
Proposition 2: Designed organizational structures, such as the relative positioning of middle leaders in formal school hierarchies and on teams, or formal responsibilities for mentoring or appraisal, can provide scaffolds for leading and opportunity to developing middle leadership capacity.

Proposition 3: Participation in IB programmes serves to enhance leadership opportunity for middle leaders, particularly for those in independent international schools, by specifying areas of expertise, linking middle leaders to networks (formal and informal) with leaders in other schools, and providing the opportunity for leadership at policy, system and external domains.

Proposition 4: Programme coordinators, subject area coordinators and grade level leaders draw on a range of strategies to do their work. Where effective, this tends to emphasise developing team and individual capacity.

Proposition 5: Middle leaders pragmatically but strategically employ a range of borrowed, adapted, and school- or self-designed tools to meet their responsibilities for implementing programmes and developing individual and team capacity. They use formal and informal processes that include scheduled meetings and spontaneous opportunities to provide feedback and mentoring. Much of this can be supported through formal school structures.

Proposition 6: Formal school organizational structures, mission, organizational cultures, stages of development and maturity of experience with the IB can influence the work of middle leaders across the three levels of leadership and can be utilized to hone leadership capacities.



# Introduction

Introduction 

## Introduction

This report presents an analysis on the enactment of middle leadership in four International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum schools from a distributed leadership perspective.

Middle leaders (MLs) play a pivotal role in IB continuum schools. Typically, in most schools, MLs are teachers who hold positions with responsibility for teacher supervision, curriculum administration, and/or programme coordination. They may include Subject Area Coordinators (SAC) who lead the delivery of curriculum and instruction in a particular discipline, Cross-School Leaders (CSL) with responsibilities across the curriculum such as coordinators of Special Educational Needs or Information and Communication Technologies, or grade level leaders (GLL) who coordinate instruction and/or pastoral care at grade levels (Bryant, 2018a). As such, MLs have the formal positional authority and are increasingly viewed as essential to the work of schools beyond curriculum administration (Irvine & Brundrett, 2017).

The middle leadership positions stated above are commonly found in state and private school systems. In IB schools, Programme Coordinators (PCs) are pedagogical leaders with responsibility for implementing the Primary Years, Middle Years, Diploma and Career-related Programmes (PYP, MYP, DP and CP) are mandated by the IB through its Standards and Practices (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2016). PCs potentially form a pivot point, given their scope of interactions with Senior Leaders (SLs), MLs, and with teachers across a range of subject areas and year levels. As this research makes clear, PCs are variously deployed in schools' organisational structures as MLs who report to Principals or Vice-Principals (VPs), or as SL who hold vice-Principalships or directorships. This variation seems to relate to schools' stages of development of needs as perceived by senior leadership.

Continuum schools offer three sequential IB programmes: PYP, MYP, and DP or CP. With the intention of providing a coherent primary through the secondary course of study, continuum schools require complex interactions among leaders and teachers across programmes (Bryant, Walker & Lee, 2016; Lee, Hallinger & Walker, 2012). How these interactions support student learning and embody effective leadership practices are not well understood (Hallinger, Lee & Walker, 2011). Aside from continuum schools, one or two programme IB schools often work to align the taught IB programme with other curricula, such as IGCSE or the International Primary Curriculum (Bryant et al., 2016). Accordingly, it seems plausible that insights from findings on continuum schools may have relevance for one or two programme schools as well.

International research has established leadership as a critical factor that contributes to improved student learning outcomes and which explains variation in student achievement across schools (Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Leithwood & Kington, 2008; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Walker, Lee & Bryant, 2014). As successive waves of reform around the world have pushed schools and systems towards instructional change in support of lifelong learning and 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills coupled with decentralisation of school management, the roles of school leaders have become more complex (Caldwell, 2003). As a result, senior leaders are increasingly reliant on MLs and teacher leaders to effectively manage existing programmes and organisational structures and to lead change that contributes to school improvement

(Dinham 2007; Harris 2004; Leithwood 2016). This re-allocation of leadership has contributed to the emergence of the theory of distributed leadership, which aims to account for leadership behaviours by examining leadership as interactions among senior, middle and teacher leaders—the latter includes teachers without formal leadership roles who influence the professional practices of other teachers and consequentially contribute to school improvement efforts (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2015). Spillane and Coldren (2011) contend that studies in distributed leadership need to account for formal and informal leaders (the “leaders-plus” aspect), leadership practices with a focus on interactions among formal and informal leaders (the “practice” aspect), and the context of leadership (the “situation” that is inclusive of tools and routines designed to facilitate leadership activities). We expand on these concepts below.

### 1.1 The research questions

This study sought an improved understanding of middle leadership (defined here as programme coordinators, subject area coordinators, and grade level leaders) in IB continuum schools by pursuing the following research questions:

- What leadership activities do MLs engage in?
- How do MLs enact their leadership through interactions with other formal and informal school leaders?
- How does the complex context of IB continuum schools impact on middle leadership activities?
- How do MLs further distribute their leadership?
- What strategies, tools and routines do MLs design or adopt to enact their leadership?
- What situational factors impact on the work of MLs?

This investigation adopts a multi-site qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2003). The cases are located in Northeast Asia, a region encountering rapid expansion of IB programmes. Data are derived from interviews, documents, end-of-day logs, and advice networks. The four IB continuum schools in Northeast Asia include: one in Hong Kong, one in China, one in South Korea, and one in Japan. All selected schools offer the PYP, MYP and DP. No school offered the CP at the time of sampling. Continuum schools were selected because of the potential impact that their contextual complexity, requiring coordination across multiple levels and curricula, wields on leadership activities. In accounting for context, the study considered middle leadership activities at three levels: leading teaching and learning within programmes, subject area or grade levels, building capacity across the school and programmes, and responding to external contexts, influences, and policies (Gurr, 2015).

### 1.2 Distributed and teacher leadership<sup>1</sup>

International research points to leadership as crucial to the implementation of educational reforms (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008). Increasing demands

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<sup>1</sup> Much of section 1.2-1.6 appeared in the unpublished research proposal for this project. The developed from an earlier version that appeared the unpublished research proposal by Bryant (2014), funded by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council No. 28611215. An update has been published in Bryant (2018a).

placed on school leaders' time, energy, and capacity (Caldwell, 2003; Day et al, 2008; Muijs, 2011) have propelled research on the potential for improving schools through a distribution of leadership across organisations (Harris, 2008; Leithwood et al, 2009; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). In particular, such distributive models have emphasised the role of teachers as leaders who share expertise, re-culture schools, and model "professional dispositions and behaviours" (Fairman and Mackenzie, 2015, p. 73), rather than exclusively as classroom instructors who implement curricular programmes (Leithwood et al, 2009; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Research on teacher leadership contends that teacher-leaders support school improvement by taking ownership of school improvement initiatives, acting as sources of expertise to whom colleagues look for advice, fostering collaborative learning, and guiding colleagues towards a common purpose (Harris, 2002). Teacher leadership emphasises that all teachers may participate in leading school improvement, and exercise leadership "regardless of position or designation" (Frost & Harris, 2003, p. 480). Although not holding formal leadership titles, the efficacy of teacher leaders may be encouraged by SLs who build formal organisational structures supported by other leaders with formal authority. This is observed in state schools (Bryant, Ko & Walker, 2018; Bryant & Rao, in press) and IB schools (Bryant, Walker & Lee, 2018) alike.

These conceptions distinguish between teacher leaders whose "informal leadership" directly impacts the classroom and those holding "formal" positions "moving away from the classroom" (Muijs & Harris, 2003 p. 438), that is to say, MLs. Although the concept of distributed leadership encompasses MLs (Spillane, Camburn & Pareja, 2007), some researchers argue that the work of MLs is inadequately understood (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013). This report made a case for a study of distributed leadership focused on middle leadership in IB schools. In answering the research questions, the data collection considered all MLs in each school and their interactions with others, but with a particular emphasis on the pivotal role of Programme Coordinators. This becomes apparent in our methodology section.

### **1.3 The changing role of middle leaders**

In a context of change, such as programme implementation or implementing curricular reforms (e.g., MYP the Next Chapter), MLs are asked to hold a broader purview and take up "new responsibilities outside their traditional areas" (Bennett, Woods, Wise & Newton, 2007, p. 464). For example, MLs have been conceived as holding multiple roles such as (a) "instructional leaders" who improve teaching and learning and support teachers' professional development (PD); (b) "learning area architects" who guide change and curriculum development and facilitate a collaborative culture; (c) "curriculum strategists" who set direction for a subject in line with school-level vision and goals; and (d) "administrative leaders" who manage a learning area (White, 2001, pp. 138-139). Conventionally, MLs have held the latter role. Enacting the other responsibilities represents a role expansion congruent to areas of instructional leadership, i.e., leading the instructional programme, setting direction, and restructuring the organisation (Leithwood et al, 2008; 2009), with expectations to lead school improvement endeavours (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017).

Asserting that MLs' jobs are increasing in complexity, Gurr and Drysdale (2013) contend that MLs require leadership capacity, the desire to lead, and the support of SLs. Often teachers, they point out, neither desire to be formal school leaders nor have developed the capacity to do so. To analyse middle leadership, we employ a three-level framework on leadership that they derived from the International Successful School Principals Project (Gurr, 2015):

**Level 1**, Leading teaching and learning includes leading instruction in areas around pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, pastoral care and student leadership;

**Level 2**, Leading for capacity building engages leadership in developing personal, professional, organisational and community capacities in schools;

**Level 3**, Leading at the systems level addresses external influences such as technical, social, educational, demographic, political, and economic. In the IB context, this might include engagement with IB Standards and Practices, and mediating these to the school community.

Each of these levels of leadership may be distributed among a range of actors such as senior, middle and teacher leaders, with contributions from teachers, students and community partners. Moreover, the levels are interrelated (Gurr, 2015). For instance leading instruction may require capacity building, and the work of leaders in each is layered (Day et al., 2011), developing progressively within and across each level.

This study aims to uncover how MLs operate within the network of school leadership activities. Conventionally, MLs' roles have been understood as highly involved in Level 1, partially involved at Level 2, with little to no involvement at Level 3. This would be the expectation of many schools. Given the interface that MLs play between school-wide leadership and the classroom context, effective school improvement requires MLs to be fully engaged in both Levels 1 and 2 and at times in Level 3 (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013). Engagement across the three levels requires an expanded set of leadership skills (Crane and De Nobile, 2014) that shape interactions with formal and informal school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders (Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Because of this broad leadership activity, inquiries into areas of leadership enactment requires a distributed leadership perspective. Before showing how such a vantage can frame this investigation, we explore some challenges that MLs face in enacting leadership at these three levels.

#### **1.4 Level 1 challenges in leading teaching and learning**

MLs hold formal positions in school leadership structures which are themselves sources of micro-political tension between MLs' role in the management hierarchy and their beliefs about professional collegiality (Bennet et al., 2007). Collegiality impedes Level 1 functions when MLs self-identify as curriculum administrators (Brown & Rutherford, 1999) or prioritise responsibility to colleagues over SLs (Wise, 2001). For instance, MLs may favour informal monitoring of assessment results but not of classroom practice, or peer learning over appraisal, which they view as interfering in teachers' autonomy (Wise, 2001). Part of the challenge concerns colleagues' perception that MLs' primarily relate senior management's decisions down the organisational hierarchy (Busher, Hammersley-Fletcher & Turner, 2007; Collier et al., 2002). Issues of hierarchy and authority remain strong, even in international schools (Javadi, Bush & Ng, 2017), but may be resolved through the development of communities of practice. Such involvement shapes MLs' relationships,

connections among communities, and “work-related identities” in ways that are not yet understood (Busher et al., 2007, p. 418). Likely this influence results from an efficacy located in the collegiality, trust, expertise and proximity to the classroom that teachers perceive in MLs (Leithwood, 2016).

### **1.5 Level 2 challenges in school capacity building**

MLs potentially play an important role in aligning departmental aims to school-wide strategic direction by clarifying school policies to staff and prioritising school interests and strategic goals (Koh, Gurr & Drysdale, 2011). However, MLs ineffectively enact school-wide initiatives when they identify as leaders of specific departments (Wise, 2001), resulting in resistance to “legitimate external demands” (Bennet et al, 2007, p. 463), which MLs moderate to colleagues (Dimmock & Lee, 2000). Here, MLs focus on departmental collegiality rather than on collegiality across the school and prioritize departmental needs over the school’s strategic development (Bennett et al, 2007). Adey (2000) found scant evidence of MLs’ engagement in contributing to “whole-school policymaking (p. 428). Similarly, Collier et al. (2002) found that MLs highly valued opportunities to develop teams and collaborative cultures within their subject areas and to contribute to school change, but were less likely to value work in curriculum development—or possess the necessary expertise (Handler, 2010)—and resource management; focusing on whole-school work was among the roles least valued by MLs (Collier et al., 2002). Hammersley-Fletcher & Strain’s (2011) examination of changes in ML from 1996 – 2007 found that while MLs emphasised consensus, collaboration and teamwork, there was little movement from a focus on subject administration towards initiating change or “generat[ing] new practices”, that is to say building capacity. Although the IBO intends for MLs, such as programme coordinators, to take a school-wide vantage, factors that encourage and inhibit such a role in practice need further study.

### **1.6 Level 3 challenges in leading beyond the school**

Highly effective MLs are found to develop professional and community networks that extend beyond the school (Dinham, 2007) and engage stakeholders at both the school-wide and systems levels (Szed, 2007). However, MLs’ capacities are seldom recognised or galvanised to lead outside the school (Dinham, 2007). A plausible explanation concerns the relationship of MLs’ work in contexts of systemic reform and school restructuring when schools’ hierarchical structures, and MLs, are utilised to implement mandated tasks and to sell school and government policies to teachers (Fitzgerald, 2009). In other words, middle leadership is constrained when external relationships serve to implement mandates from the top, rather than influence change from below. However, leaders of successful schools are found to select and mediate policies to teachers (Bryant, Ko & Walker, 2018) and create conditions for successful MLs who in turn interpret policy, advocate for their programmes to government, and initiate school-based work in response to changing political and social contexts (Bryant, 2018a). Hence, a line of inquiry concerns if and how connections with the IBO and related external networks stimulate change in MLs’ roles by fostering the development of networks that are adaptive, strategic and support MLs’ shared needs (Chapman & Hadfield, 2010). Alternatively, does such affiliation merely emphasise compliance with IBO standards and practices over stimulating advocacy or responsive innovation?

## 1.7 Micro-political challenges to middle leadership

The challenges to middle leadership enactment across the three levels mentioned above suggest the involvement of MLs in school micro-politics that occur in situated contexts impacted by formal and informal collegial interactions, norms and rules (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). The literature suggests that negotiating micro-political challenges require MLs dispositions that include demonstrating enthusiasm and dedication for their subject area and teaching, willingness to share expertise, empathy for colleagues, effective communication skills, clarity about values, capacity to motivate others, capacity to model professional behaviour, and flexibility and willingness to take responsibility for decisions (Dinham, 2007; Hammersley-Fletcher & Kirkham, 2007). These dispositions entail nuanced capacities that extend beyond conventional understandings of middle leadership as conduits between SLs and teachers whose role enactments are explained by positional power. Such capacities are essential as MLs straddle a line between responsibilities as leaders with particular expertise and their collegial social-professional status as teachers, desiring recognition of the former and maintenance of the latter (Struyve, Meredith & Gielen, 2014). Storey (2004) found that such situations could lead to tension between SLs and MLs around leadership responsibilities, school priorities and agendas. How ML roles are conceived and how MLs' enactment of wider leadership activities serves to alleviate or aggravate these tensions require further study.

## 1.8 The IB leadership context<sup>2</sup>

The above literature provides evidence of increasing complexity in MLs' roles, their interactions with other leaders, teachers and stakeholders, and the challenges that they face. This research on middle leadership in IB schools yields further insight for the following reasons: 1. The extant research base on middle leadership is derived predominantly from non-IB schools; 2. Unique IB situational features serve to stimulate effective middle leadership and account for challenges across the three levels discussed above; 3. The IB mission, standards and practices and programme frameworks impact uniquely on leadership distributions and with it on the work of MLs.

Accordingly, insights into how IB MLs operate within leadership distributions indicate factors that may support and inhibit their leadership. Unfortunately, the research base on distributed leadership in IB schools to date is extremely thin. In one recent study, IB MLs demonstrated responsiveness to teacher needs, and support for the IB philosophy by promoting the IB programme to the wider community (Lee, Hallinger & Walker, 2012)—roles that expand MLs' responsibilities beyond curriculum management. School leaders, including MLs, were typically engaged in coherence making exercises across different levels and curricular programmes (Hallinger, Lee & Walker, 2011). This makes for a “structural complexity” (Hallinger et al., 2011, p. 478) that involves interactions among formal and informal leaders. Challenges included effectively supporting collaborative planning and connecting the multiple layers of committees and teams. These findings suggest a key role for MLs in helping teachers to bridge the gap between actual and aspired practices in teaching and learning and in developing curricular coherence across the school (Hallinger et al., 2011). Importantly, leadership distributions were found to be emergent as schools

experimented “to see what works” (p. 688) and MLs held roles beyond their core responsibilities, particularly with ensuring curricular alignment within schools. However, this prior research emphasised the need “to parse out the specific role of formal leaders” and “how they sought to foster instructional leadership among others” (Lee et al., 2012, p. 688), indicating that the enactment of leadership roles in IB schools is not well understood. Opportunities for ML engagement in Level 3 leadership were not examined. Recent research in two projects has found tentative evidence of Level 3 engagement, with schools restructuring MLs’ positions in response to a combination of IB curriculum structures, state policy initiatives, and unique school priorities (Bryant & Walker, 2013; Bryant, Ko & Walker, 2018). How such structural variations differently stimulate change in the enactment of middle leadership and resulting leadership interactions requires further examination.

Additional particularities about International Baccalaureate school contexts make it appropriate for research on distributed leadership:

- a) IB authorisation requires the alignment of structures and practices related to leadership, teaching and learning to IB values, its Learner Profile, programme frameworks and authorisation standards (IBO, 2016). This provides a platform for the exercise of leadership. Research is needed to show how this platform, or situation, impacts on middle leadership. In addition, findings would also be relevant to non-IB school systems, such as the local system in Hong Kong, which are engaging in systemic reforms similar to those advocated by IB programmes.
- b) The IB mandates leadership roles in programme coordination to ensure that IB educational values and pedagogies are infused into instructional programs and aligned to school purpose. This implies a role for MLs beyond conventional subject area administration.
- c) An emphasis on the nature and function of MLs within leadership distributions addresses a research lacuna (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013), particularly in IB schools (Lee et al., 2012).
- d) The rapid increase of IB programmes in Northeast Asia suggests that understanding how middle leadership is enacted in IB schools is important for practice and theory.
- e) In-depth case studies of middle leadership distribution provide the potential for examining intra-school variations in leadership (i.e. how MLs further distribute their leadership), the factors that account for such variation and how they work to promote or inhibit middle leaders’ contributions to developing programme coherence.

### 1.9 The distributed leadership framework<sup>3</sup>

We have posited an argument for research on middle leadership in IB schools from a distributed leadership perspective. This stance entails examining how MLs enact their roles across three levels of leadership by examining MLs’ interactions, i.e., their leadership activities with others. Now we elaborate more explicitly on how a distributed leadership perspective frames this study and underpins the collection and analysis of data. The primary

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<sup>3</sup> This framework, which first appeared in the proposal for this project, has now been published in Bryant (2018b).

constructs consider (a) who the leaders are; (b) how they practice their leadership; (c) the contexts in which they enact their leadership. Respectively, Spillane and colleagues (c.f. Spillane et al., 2002, 2007, 2008; Spillane & Coldren, 2011; Spillane & Diamond, 2007) refer to these as the leaders-plus aspect, the practice aspect, and the situation. Consideration of each construct in turn drives methodological decisions.

### 1.9.1 The leaders-plus aspect

Distributed leadership recognises that in addition to the formally assigned leadership roles, such as that of Principal, VPs, SACs and programme coordinators, others in the school may demonstrate leadership. This leadership is seen when teachers take on *ad hoc* leadership activities, or when a teacher becomes the informal “go to” person who can effectively explain a new initiative to colleagues, or when teachers can influence acceptance or resistance to innovation. At times, informal leaders may have significant influence in a school, hence the “leaders-plus”. The study presented in this report uses middle leadership, paying particular attention to programme coordinators, as the focal point of studying leadership distributions in IB schools. However, the leaders-plus cautions us to examine the extent to which informal leaders may take up roles or responsibilities that we would expect of formal MLs. For instance, Spillane et al. (2008) examined the extent to which teachers sought the advice of mathematics and reading programme coordinators during a period of systemic reform in these areas. They found that the vast majority of advice seeking on the part of teachers were directed to other teachers, the informal leaders of these reforms. This finding suggests the need to identify informal leaders and examine the interaction between middle and informal leaders. We account for this in our methodology, while keeping the focus of this research on the work of formal MLs, primarily PCs, SACs, and GLLs.

Factors that shape, support, and inhibit effective leadership distributions			
	The Leaders-plus Aspect	The Practice Aspect	The Situation Aspect
L1 Teaching and Learning	The identification of leadership roles and responsibilities and the interactions of MLs with SLs, other MLs, informal leaders	The identification of how leadership is distributed across the three levels of leadership, the specific types of leadership distributions that	The tools, routines and contextual factors that shape the ways that MLs enact their leadership across the three levels.
L2 School Capacity			

L3 External influences	and teachers around the three levels of leadership.	are adopted and what MLs actually do as actors within those distributions.	
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Figure 1 Conceptual framework

### 1.9.2 The practice aspect

Distributed leadership views leadership not only as a set of activities undertaken by formal leaders, but as occurring in the interactions of leaders with each other, with informal leaders, teachers and other stakeholders. “Taking a distributive perspective means analysing how multiple leaders co-perform leading and managing, particularly those organisational routines that are critical for the fulfilment of core organisational functions” (Spillane & Coldren, 2011, p.35). Spillane (2006) identifies three clear distributions of leadership practice: 1. Collaborative distribution in which two or more leaders work together to lead an activity at the same time; 2. Collective distribution in which leaders “work separately but interdependently to co-perform a leadership function...at different times and in different places” (Spillane & Coldren, 2011, p. 37); 3. Coordinated distributions when leaders work either separately or together on multiple leadership tasks that occur in the sequential order in order to accomplish a routine. Given the vital leadership role of programme coordinators in IB schools, the practice aspect provides insight as to how they, for example, may accomplish leadership routines by working in collaboration with other leaders and teachers.

### 1.9.3 The situation

Spillane suggests that leadership is influenced by its situation, or the context in which leadership occurs. The situation, however, is inclusive of the routines and tools utilised to practice leadership effectively. In other words, the situation is not simply the surrounding environment. Preferably, it is inclusive of crucial elements that frame leadership practices and “the interactions among leaders and followers” (Spillane & Coldren, 2011, p. 41). In the IB context, this might include tools and routines developed by the IB, such as common planners (a tool) or collaborative peer review of MYP unit planners (a routine). The situation may also include tools and routines developed *in situ* to meet the unique needs of specific schools and programmes as identified by leaders. The three levels of leadership discussed above, therefore, may inform the situation. Further, the situation is inclusive of the IB stimulus: the values, beliefs, and pedagogies that schools take on board when determining to become an IB school.

The three aspects of distributed leadership, leaders-plus, practice and situation, suggest approaches to the analysis of middle leadership across the three levels of leadership: teaching and learning, capacity building, and external influences. Plausibly, the three aspects, which may reciprocally impact on each other, intersect the three levels. Melding these frameworks provides a unique perspective on the analysis of middle leadership in general and IB leadership in particular.

### 1.10 Report structure

This report is organised around an additional six chapters.

Chapter 2 explains the methodology of the study. Primarily, the study is qualitative by design comprising analyses of individual and focus group data. The analysis has been bolstered by documentary and observation analysis where access to such data was available. Schools were invited to participate in two surveys, an advice network survey and a time-use survey. As instruments run with small populations, their purpose is not to conduct inferential statistical analyses or to generalise to larger populations, but to provide additional descriptive data to illuminate the qualitative analyses for each case. The advice network results provide insight as to who teachers and leaders identify as leaders in practice based on whom they seek advice from around different leadership activities. This data also indicates proportionately, the amount of advice sought at each leadership level from different types of leaders. The time-use data provides insight as to how much time MLs dedicate to leadership activities in their schools. Given fairly small sample sizes, these instruments are used for their descriptive rather than inferential power.

Chapters 3 to 6 provide detailed reports on each case study. To support a coherent analysis, each case is organised by applying a common structure that examines the school context, its formally designed organizational structure, study participants, and expectations of middle leadership. The analysis then considers for each level of leadership, the key features of the conceptual framework: leadership plus, leadership practice, and the situation, as well as tools and routines found in each school. The designed organisational or leadership structure of each school is presented. A brief account of time-use results provide indicators on the extent to which different sorts of MLs engage in leadership activities. Sections on the network analyses serve to provide a means to further assess how leadership is distributed with reference to the qualitative analyses. Advice network maps provide indicators of how leadership is distributed in practice in each school. Each chapter concludes with a summary that distils major themes.

Chapter 7 presents a cross-case second-order analysis of the case reports that summarizes the findings across chapters by comparing the organizational situations, how middle leadership is conceptualised, the distribution of leadership roles, leadership practices at the three levels, tools and routines that are applied, and how leadership is distributed through collaborative, collective, coordinated and informal unplanned distributions.

Chapter 8 concludes the report by directly answering the research questions.

### **1.11 Chapter summary**

This chapter set out the intellectual consortiums for the research by arguing that the roles of MLs and the expectations of their leadership are ever increasing. It is contended that IB continuum schools provide a potentially insightful context for understanding the distribution of middle leadership by analyzing different levels or domains of leadership and how they are enacted in collaboration with other teachers or leaders, and the tools, routines and structures that support these interactions. The next chapter details the methods used to conduct the data collection and analysis.



## Methodology

Methodology

## 2 Research plan and methodology

This investigation adopts a multi-site qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2003). The cases are located in Northeast Asia, a region encountering rapid expansion of IB programmes. Four IB continuum schools were selected: one in Hong Kong, one in China, one in South Korea, and one in Japan. All selected schools are continuum schools that offer the PYP, MYP and DP. At the time of sampling, none offered the CP. Continuum schools were selected because of the potential impact that their contextual complexity, requiring coordination across multiple grade levels and curricula, wields on leadership activities. The research analyses documents, semi-structured interviews, observations, work logs, and advice network data. We conceive of the research as a qualitative-dominant study that utilizes work log and advice networks to confirm, illuminate, and illustrate the qualitative findings.

This chapter relates the sampling strategies and analytical procedures conducted in this research.

### 2.1 Multiple site case studies

Case studies provide apt strategies when issues of context are closely fused to the phenomena under examination (Merriam, 1998) and when questions of social process are of concern (Swanborn, 2010). Thick descriptions facilitate analysis of each case and cross-case comparison, an approach that enhances theory development within the contexts being investigated (Yin, 2003). The aim of case studies is not to generalise to all similar cases, but to explore plausible models of middle leadership and factors that inhibit or support their enactment that will have relevance for other schools or leaders in similar contexts (Stake, 1995). Selecting continuum schools in different societal cultures helped us to consider the broader societal impact on school leadership distributions as well forming an insightful analysis of leadership functions in each case.

### 2.2 Data collection and analysis

This research is framed as a qualitative study that, in addition to the analysis of documents, interviews and observations, utilizes social network and time-use data to illuminate the work of MLs—principally that of programme coordinators.

### 2.3 Documents

Document collection supported a preliminary analysis of formal leadership structures and school purpose to permit preliminary analysis of each school's organisational context (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976), the tailoring of interview questions, and the comparison of formal leadership. Primarily, these documents included formal leadership structures, staff lists, descriptions of school purpose, mission, and values, and contextual information about staff, students and the school programme. These documents helped to frame the description of each case context found in the case report chapters.

### 2.4 Semi-structured interviews

In each school, semi-structured interviews were conducted: (a) to uncover leaders' and teachers' beliefs about MLs' roles; (b) to identify strategies for *enactment* across the three levels of leadership and patterns of interaction among the various individuals (i.e., SLs and teachers) and communities (e.g., departments, year level teams, school-wide committees)

with which they engage; (c) to identify tensions that emerge from this engagement, and; (d) to identified perceived *attributes* that MLs need to enact their role in IB school contexts. Interviews with SLs, MLs and teachers were used to build multidimensional and complex cases of leadership (Fitz & Halpin, 1994). Appendix A shows how the interview questions conceptually relate to the theoretical framework by organizing them around leader-plus, the practice aspect, the situation, and strategies, tools and routines. Questions related to the three levels of leadership are addressed within each of these theoretical constructs.

Participants from each school were non-probabilistically selected to support the collection of interview data focused on leadership interactions among MLs and with SLs and teachers. Accordingly, we interviewed the senior leaders of each school (variously titled the Head of School or Principal), the respective primary and secondary sections, programme coordinators, and MLs that included SACs, year level coordinators, and specialists, such as coordinators for special needs or pastoral care. Further, we aimed to select teacher focus groups representing PYP, MYP and DP teachers. As participants were selected in consultation with senior leaders, there is some variation in participation across the schools that reflect the priorities of the respective schools. Each case report provides a detailed explanation of the respective sample. In total, 105 participants were interviewed for this research. Table 1 summarizes the number of participants.

Table 1. Summary of interview participants

	Senior Leaders	Programme Coordinators	Subject Area Coordinators	Other Middle Leaders	Teachers	Others	Total
China	5	4	9	10	13	3	44
Hong Kong	2	3	3	4	7	0	19
Japan	3	3	5	3	5	0	19
South Korea	6	3	4	10	0	0	23
Total	16	13	21	27	25	3	105

Interviews were transcribed in order to provide a fully auditable data set. Data reduction applied codes to interview data. Initially, the codes were derived from the conceptual framework that is informed by the literature reviewed in the previous chapter. This entailed coding the data first by the three levels of leadership and contextual/situational data. Within each level, the data were coded by specific leadership practices, tools and routines, challenges and supports, and IB-related influences. Codes were also developed iteratively through interaction with data, with new codes emerging and others being subsumed or clustered as themes developed (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The primary codes that we used are displayed in the codebook found in Appendix E. Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, supported the analysis by organising the data around defined

cases and creating links from the coded data to the raw data (e.g., documents and interview transcripts). NVivo enhanced the analysis by permitting the generation of data outputs and matrices focused on specific codes or participant type. The analyses were mapped on data displays, primarily tables, for each case and then compared across cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). Our analysis first targeted individual cases followed by cross-case analysis.

In writing up the findings, we worked iteratively between the coded data, transcriptions, and emergent themes, in order to account for unique features and leadership practices of each school as well as common practices.

## **2.5 Job shadowing**

Job shadowing captures MLs' day-to-day role enactment. Shadowing is a noted strategy for investigating participants' experiences of organisations by allowing for elaboration and insight through real-time questioning and probing of observed activities (McDonald, 2005). In particular, the strategy of the "mini-tour" (Spradley, 1980) permits focused observations of selected episodes of middle leadership activity, which we attempted to schedule in consultation with the Programme Coordinators. However, at the initial stage itself, we recognised that this approach is often considered intrusive and may not be practical for all sampled schools. Observation and job shadowing data were recorded in the form of field notes to capture participants' experiences and interpretations and analytic memos (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). A job shadowing instrument was developed to note and categorise leadership activities (see Appendix J). However, job shadowing was conducted only in three schools. In two instances, the Programme Coordinators' work schedule changed at the last minute and the shadowing activity was cancelled. Shadowing lasted from between two to four hours and was focused on discrete activities identified by the coordinators as relevant to their leadership. Although only limited data were collected through shadowing activity, they did provide insight that enhanced the analysis. For instance, job shadowing in Japan showed how one DP PC led mentoring and feedback activities, which illustrated how practices referenced in interviews played out in practice. In Korea, job shadowing focused on individual meetings held by the MY/DP PC with SACs to reflect on achievements and set goals for the upcoming year. Table 2 shows the numbers of job shadowing participants.

## **2.6 Time-use survey**

All MLs were invited to complete a simple online time-use survey to document daily leadership practices (Spillane & Zuberi, 2009). Participants completed the logs daily over what was identified as a typical school cycle, i.e., a period of time that encapsulates regularly scheduled team meetings and teaching cycle. The logs account for key leadership activities conducted between 7:00 am and 5:00 pm Monday to Friday. The data were used in a limited way to estimate the proportion of time that participants reported engaging in leadership-related activities, to categorise and classify the nature of participants' work, to compare reported leadership work patterns across MLs within each school and to compare patterns across schools. We asked the MLs to estimate the amount of time spent each day on activities related to classroom teaching and pastoral care, routine administrative work, leadership activities in each of the three levels, and other unclassified activities (See Appendix G). By doing so, we attempted to distinguish leadership activity from management and classroom teaching. By asking participants to estimate broad categories

of time through reflections at the end of the day (Spillane & Zuberi, 2009), we endeavoured to account for the time spent on the levels of leadership as distinct from teaching and administrative responsibilities.

Table 2. Participation in job shadowing

School	N	Roles	Observed Activities
China	3	DPC	Review of DP documentation School walk-around
		MYPC	School walk-around Viewing of Art Exhibition
		PYPC 1	School walk-around Review of PYP documents Ad hoc meeting with Primary Assistant Principal Ad hoc meeting with PYPC 2
Hong Kong	0	N/A	N/A
Japan	2	PYPC	Meeting with Principal; Meeting with PYP middle leadership team School walk-around Ad hoc meetings
		DPC	Meeting with Principal; Lesson observations; Meeting with Student; Routine work (scheduling, planning)
South Korea	4	MYPC/DPC	Annual debriefing with SACs (5 individual meetings)
		2 SACs	2 Subject Area meetings
		1 CSL	1 Grade Level meeting

We anticipated that most subject area coordinators would spend most of their time in classroom-related activities. Accordingly, in each case we focus our analysis on our research questions, to investigate time engaged in the three levels of leadership. In each case report, we relate the proportion of time spent on leadership, the distribution of leadership time for DPs, SACs and CSLs across the three levels of leadership, and endeavour to explain this in light of qualitative findings. In reporting the time-use findings, we indicate the percentage of total time spent on leadership activity (as opposed to teaching and learning, pastoral care,

and routine administration) and the range of leadership time-use by type of leader, and then use bar graphs to display average time spent engaged in leadership.

A limited number of participants completed the surveys as detailed in Table 3. In the Korean school, only one PC participated in the time-use collection. Therefore, the data from this school was considered only in the cross-school analysis, where we considered each type of ML as a separate sample.

Table 3. Time-use survey participation

Schools	Programme Coordinators	Subject /Special Area Coordinators	Other Middle Leaders	Total
China	4	8	6	7
Hong Kong	3	3	4	0
Japan	3	0	0	0
South Korea	1	4	1	2
Total	11	15	11	37

## 2.7 Advice network survey

All teachers and leaders in each school were invited to complete an advice network survey. The advice network instrument, adapted from validated instruments from Northwestern University (2010), asked participants to respond to simple questions enquiring as to whom they consult for advice in areas related to the three levels of leadership (see Appendix H. Advice network survey). The surveys were completed near the end of the 2016-17 or 2017-18 academic years.

Participants were asked to nominate three individuals that they most frequently sought advice from in each category of leadership during the current academic year. This fixed-choice approach was selected in order to limit the burden placed on respondents. A noted trade-off is the risk of distorting the number of network members and intensity among their relationships (Holland & Leinhardt, 1973). However, the alternatives of providing a roster of names of all school members, of not limiting the number of potential nominated advisees, and of asking participants to assess the intensity of each individual relationship are noted as problematic with larger networks (Butts, 2008; Carolan, 2014). The simpler, less burdensome approach for participants seemed justifiable given the corresponding qualitative data.

Data were utilized to construct advice network sociograms showing the relationship pathways of participants and their nominated advisees. This data is indicative of formal leaders who were key advice givers and those whom they influence (c.f. Spillane et al., 2007; Spillane, Healey & Kim, 2010).

Although we aimed to collect sufficient data to complete full sociograms of each school, in the end the low response rates (see Table 4) resulted in incomplete networks. Accordingly, we are wary of making claims about the nature of school-wide advice networks. Further, the response rate prohibited some inferential analyses. However, sufficient data were collected to examine ego networks around selected PCs and MLs in three schools and, although not reliable in itself, served useful as confirmatory data or to illustrate qualitative interpretations. Given the moderate response rate, the survey results are useful to illustrate or provide further insight into qualitative findings but are not statistically significant as a whole network.

For each school we analyzed the advice network analyses for indegree centrality for each level of leadership. Degree centrality represents the normalized quantity of advice seeking nomination for a particular person. In other words, individuals with higher scores tend to be the favourite 'go-to' person in the network. We calculated degree centrality as follows:

Degree centrality  $C_D(n_i)$  of an ego

$$C_D(n_i) = \sum_j x_{ij+}$$

Standardized degree centrality  $C'_D(n_i)$

$$C'_D(n_i) = \frac{C_D(n_i)}{g - 1}$$

Indegree or outdegree centrality

$$C_D(n_i) = \frac{\sum_j x_{ij+}}{g - 1}$$

Standardized indegree or outdegree centrality

$$C'_D(n_i) = \frac{\sum_j x_{ij+}}{g - 1}$$

In order to measure the engagement in different leadership activities by each category of nominee (SLs, MLs, and Teachers), we determined the total number of nominated leaders in

each category and total share of the proportion of advice giving for each individual and each category of leader for each level of leadership (instructional, organizational/capacity development, and system/external). For example, it is possible to have results that indicate that one individual may have the single largest proportion of advice giving. However, collectively a different category of leaders may have the largest total proportion of advice giving. A large proportion of advice giving shared across a large number of advisors may suggest a wide distribution of leadership activity.

Table 4. Advice network response rates

School	N invited	N of Respondents	Response Rate
China	150	48	32%
Hong Kong	63	33	52.4%
Japan	123	59	47.9%
South Korea	51	15	29.4%
Total	387	155	40.1%

## 2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented our approach to data analysis, referencing the instrumentation provided in the appendices. The data collection included documents, observation notes, interview transcripts, end of day logs, and advice network sociograms. Primarily, the analysis was driven by the qualitative data, whilst the surveys served confirmatory or illustrative purposes. Data from each of these serve to answer the research question as depicted in Table 5. However, as each school varied in size, organizational structure, and number of participants for different forms of data collection, we elaborate further on methodological decisions in each case chapter.

Table 5. Alignment of research components

Research Questions	Data Collection	Analytical foci	Outcomes
What leadership activities do MLs engage in?	Documents Interviews	The practice aspect across three levels.	Case reports of the leadership distributions in the four schools.
How do MLs enact their leadership through interactions with other formal and informal leaders?	Interviews Daily log Job shadowing Advice network data	The leaders-plus and practice aspects across three levels.	Maps of the leadership distributions in the four schools, inclusive of network analyses.
How does the complex context of IB continuum schools impact on middle leadership activities?	Interviews Documents Job shadowing	The relationship of the situation aspect to the practice aspect at all levels.	Identification of factors that facilitate or impede the effective distribution of leadership in IB continuum schools.
How do MLs further distribute their leadership?	Interviews Documents Sociograms	The leaders-plus and practice aspects at all three levels.	Maps of the leadership distributions in the four schools.
What strategies, tools and routines do MLs design or adopt to enact their leadership?	Interviews Documents Daily log Job shadowing	The interrelationship of the situation with the leaders-plus and practice aspects across all levels.	Identification of strategies, tools and routines designed or adopted by MLs to enact leadership.
What situational factors impact on the work of MLs?	Interviews Job shadowing	The situation and its relationship to the three levels.	Identification of factors that facilitate or impede the effective distribution of leadership in IB continuum schools



## China Report



### 3 China School

#### 3.1 School background

China School is located in Southern China and was established as a division of a highly successful Government school, teaches the local Chinese state curriculum with an international outlook and a focus on excellence in languages. China School aims to provide an IB Education for expatriates and permanent residents of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan residing in the region. The school is relatively new to the International Baccalaureate and has been authorized to offer the PYP and MYP IB curriculum for fewer than five years and, at the time of data collection, was seeking authorization to offer the DP curriculum. The school is very well equipped with a modern campus, an experienced, diverse and accomplished faculty and attracts a wide range of nationalities (albeit the school has a very high percentage of students from a Chinese cultural/linguistic background).

##### 3.1.1 Formal organisational structure

The School is a division of a local government school. As the ownership of China School is held by the regional government, the school board consists mostly of employees of the regional government, with various departments such as the Finance and Education Bureau representatives present. The leadership of the school in formal, appointed roles is displayed clearly on a huge billboard at the entryway of the administrative offices. Organizationally, it is divided into four sections: senior leadership, primary leadership, secondary leadership and whole school support. The Board Director (the School Board) along with one of the board members, a director, as the titular Head of School (School Director) are at level with two deputy directors (academics and operations). The School organizational structure is formally distributed with the School being divided clearly into two “schools”, both sharing a single campus. The staff handbook also shows a succinct organizational chart (see p. 3).

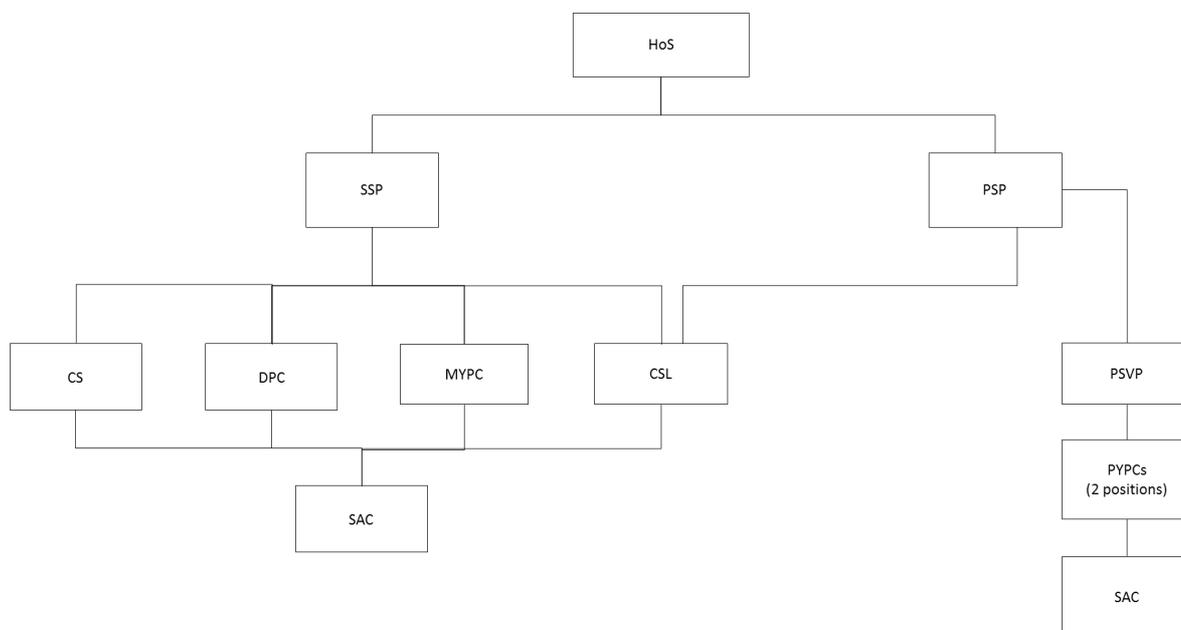


Figure 2 China School Leadership Structure

The Head of School (HoS) was a former Principal of the Government school, who had established a new campus that eclipsed the popularity of the main school within a short

period. Subsequently, the Principal was tasked to create an international school division and to lead a through-train three programme IB continuum school on a single, purpose-built campus.

The primary school is headed by an Early Years & Primary School Principal and an Assistant Principal, both being supported by two PYP coordinators. The secondary school is led by a Secondary School Principal (who is also the Deputy Director of Academics) and is supported by a MYPC and a DPC as well as a Secondary Student Affairs Coordinator and a College Counsellor. Operations and the administration of the whole school are assured by an HR Director, a Head of Logistics, a Head of Admissions, a Head of Marketing and a Head of IT. The School counsellor is also listed as being a provider of support across the school.

With the exception of Subject Area Coordinators (SACs) and Grade Level Leads (GLLs), who apply annually for their roles and are paid stipends for their leadership duties, the remainder of the senior leadership and middle leadership roles are permanent positions, allowing for a high degree of stability in these roles. The school director and the two Principals believe that the process of asking MLs to apply annually ensures their willingness to have formal leadership roles, to engage proactively in every year of their leadership, as well as to provide for greater accountability of job performance.

### 3.1.2 Participants

This case study involved interviews with the entire leadership of the school. The School Director, the Early Years & Primary Principal and the Early Years & Primary Assistant Principal and the Secondary Principal introduced the School and their views on distributed leadership across the School. The two PYP coordinators and the MYP and DP coordinators were also interviewed. As the interviews took place over three days, each of the respective programmes and the leadership within them were thoroughly explored. The interviews began on Day One with an interview with the School Director to provide an overview of the school’s leadership vision and then a focus on the DP leadership and staff. There was significant overlap between Day One and Day Two participants as all participants teaching in the DP programme are also teaching in the MYP programme, allowing for the convergence of evidence on demonstrated leadership within these two programmes. Day Two focused on the MYP Programme and Day 3 upon the PYP Programme. Thus, in this three programme IB continuum school, there is room for significant overlap and cooperation between teachers across the programmes. With that being said, there is considerably more cooperation between MYP and DP teachers than between PYP and MYP teachers (in part because of joint faculty as mentioned above), although this was being addressed.

A summary of the participants is listed on Table 6 below. Overall, 43 participants took part in the interviews.

Table 6 Interview participants and their positional roles within the school organisation (China)

Title	Code / Node No.	Level
Head of School	HoS	SL
Early and Primary Principal	PSP	SL

Early and Primary Assistant Principal	PSVP	SL
School Director	SL	SL
Principal (Secondary)	SSP	SL
DP Coordinator	DPC	PC
MYP Coordinator	MYPC	PC
PYP Coordinator (A)	PYPC_74	PC
PYP Coordinator (B)	PYPC_81	PC
PYP Music Team Lead / Teacher	SAC	SAC
Grade 2 / Language Lead	SAC	SAC
Science PYP Lead	SAC	SAC
PYP Visual Arts Team Lead	SAC	SAC
English Subject Lead	SAC	SAC
Individuals and Society Team Lead & DP Teacher	SAC	SAC
PE Team Lead	SAC	SAC
Secondary Math Subject Lead	SAC	SAC
Chinese Subject Lead	SAC	SAC
Student Affairs Coordinator	CSL	CSL
Athletic Director	CSL	CSL
PYP Grade 1 Team Lead	CSL	CSL
Grade 3 Team Lead	CSL	CSL
PYP Team Lead Grade 5	CSL	CSL
Pre-k Team Lead	CSL	CSL
Grade 2 Team Lead and classroom teacher	CSL	CSL
KG Teacher Team Lead	CSL	CSL
Grade 4 Team Lead / classroom Teacher	CSL	CSL
Maths Lead / Grade 1 Teacher	CSL	CSL

Grade 6 &7 PE Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
MYP Design Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Drama Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
PYP EAL Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Science Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Individuals and Society Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Pre-K Red Homeroom Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
English Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
DP Physics & MYP Science teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Grade 3 teacher	Teacher	Teacher
MYP English Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Grade 5 Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
KG Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
College Counsellor	Counsellor (A)	Other
College Counsellor Assistant	Counsellor (B)	Other
Head of Library	HoL	Other

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### 3.2 Middle leadership: expectations, beliefs and understandings.

In this section, we analyze SLs and 'MLs' and teachers' understanding and expectations of middle leaders in this school.

#### 3.2.1 Senior leaders' expectations of middle leadership

The SLs have high expectations of the middle leadership and this is related to formal and informal leadership. However, a dichotomy is revealed. Though the intention was that leadership is a shared task in practice this was sometimes not the case. Recognizing that in order for the school to meet future challenges, the culture of leadership in the school needed to change, a SL pointed out, "So, the [distributed leadership] culture was not there yet ... my vision is to help create a culture [and] to put a system there to help them (MLs) to grow." The data highlights that conscious steps have been taken to ensure that there is room for leadership to grow and for both formal and informal leaders to operate in the same space. This includes co-leading initiatives that have been enacted in this school.

The Senior Leadership believes that middle leadership development should be promoted within the School. The School Director, throughout her career, has been supported and so she said that she has adopted the same approach:

I've learnt how the Education Bureau invested in me and building this campus with me...[so I invest in others]. My successor [at my previous school] is younger and he stayed with me for ten years starting from the head of the class, then head of grade, then head of teaching affairs, then my VP and when I left, he took over. Now, I'm learning things from him now in return.

She has subsequently formalized this mentorship system through the provision of a targeted the PD Fund: "[We are] investing in them and allow them to try new things. [We] try to get them networking with other schools."

The senior leaderships' expectations for formal MLs was clear: mentoring teachers and promoting high norms of collegiality. The HoS created a second PYP Coordinator post with this vision in mind: "[There are] two coordinators now that allows them time to do more [collaborative] planning, enjoy the classroom more, modelling and to see what's actually happening in the classroom". Since introducing job descriptions for MLs, and requiring annual renewal of posts with formal proposals for school development, stakeholders can see improvement in the school. As the HoS clarified when asked about the trickle-down effect of their new ML selection policy on students: "You know there is more consistency within grade levels and departments... teachers feel more supported because of the middle [leadership] team. There is more trust from parents [and] when parents trust your teachers, you know the kids can feel it."

Although there is a very formal middle leadership structure in the school made up of PCs, subject leads and grade level leads and functional MLs such as a college counsellor, student affairs coordinator, there is significant informal leadership taking place as well. The reasons for this stem from the senior leadership's commitment to distributed leadership enactment. The HoS articulated this clearly in her interview when she said: "I always say to them everybody is a leader. You don't have to be in [formal] leadership in order to become a leader, so we try to create a culture [which supports that.]" She expressed her disappointment in a previous school leader who did not enact distributed leadership at the school and believed this held back the subsequent development of the school. She described this leader as someone who "didn't like to give freedom or didn't feel comfortable with distributed leadership". She went on to say such leaders "all declared that they had distributed leadership".

### **Engagement by senior leadership with teacher teams**

The support by senior leadership in ML-led teams was seen as invaluable in ensuring buy-in by staff. When this matter was discussed with MLs, the solution was unanimously given that more senior leadership engagement with frontline teachers was necessary, particularly in Teaching and Learning, although also in developing school capacity and external links. This further reinforces the data collected that highlights when teachers are engaged in decision-making, the implementation of these decisions is far more comprehensive than when they are imposed from above:

I think that's perhaps something that SLs need to (do) once in a while: come down to the transitions and see what classes are like and see what teachers actually do because it seems that once you're out of the classroom, it's very easy to forget what it's like. (CSL)

Decision-making aside, support from senior leadership was also necessary in order to deal with school administration, often in areas of logistics and procurement: "When it comes to dealing with the office staff, I feel that a [senior] administrator should be supporting us" ... [as] "I don't have the time to be sitting in the office where no one listened to me and [where] I don't have any authority." (PYP Team Leader)

### 3.2.2 Middle leaders' understanding of their roles

The structure of middle leadership at China School is clearly articulated in the school's organisational chart. The use of unambiguous job descriptions for each ML post enables the staff to understand their roles when they apply for them. While PYP, MYP and DP Coordinators' positions are internally and externally advertised and filled, even new teachers to the school may apply for subject leadership roles with a clear outline of what is expected.

Such clarity extends to the way in which the various middle leadership roles interact with each other. Within the middle leadership structure, there is a hierarchy of responsibility, with PCs supervising both programme implementation as well as curriculum articulation, both vertically and horizontally. They lead the SACs and advocate the norms of collegiality which enables individual SACs and the teachers to work together to provide a cohesive instructional programme. The culture described by the HoS of "everybody can be a leader" is evidenced in the freedoms given to informal and formal leaders to lead others.

The senior leadership gives the MLs space to operate within their teams. As a SAC stated:

I honestly like to be a very hands-off leader... I've worked with three or four, and the ones whom I respond best to are just the most supportive, the most helpful. They're organised and they're communicating with admin (and back) to you. (They) will help answer your question or help find it and help organise but they're not micro-managing your teaching individually and overstepping what I feel is our small leadership role, you know?

Communication is a very important tool for MLs. They must use various tools which not only meet their own personal and professional needs but develop rapport and sustainable links with those they lead. When this is not present, conflict may arise:

I think there have been some excellent examples of really getting in there and knowing all the kids and meeting with all the teachers and being involved and understanding the program and speaking a language that we all understand. I think the Drama Teacher made an excellent point. No matter how switched on a coordinator is, if they are not speaking the same language but literally and figuratively of the people to which they lead, it doesn't help. (HoL)

The leadership style of the middle leadership is a significant factor in their leadership efficacy. Those who engage their teacher teams, who can maintain focus on the shared goals and visions and ensure the team speaks with one voice after listening to divergent points of view tend to be more successful. This is particularly evident in the primary division

of the school, where catch-cries such as “voice and choice” are used to give stakeholders a sense that they have a say in the direction of the school. Nevertheless, there is a recognition that the challenges facing MLs are unique. While they are expected to oversee the instructional programme and ensure student learning outcomes, they must also be teaching colleagues who support and collaborate with their fellow practitioners:

Middle management can be very difficult... hard role because you are both on (an) equal path with the teachers, as you should be, but you have to, within your responsibilities, you have to make sure the teachers are doing as directed from above. So, it is a challenging role for those people. (SAC)

This SAC understood the needs of those teachers being led and had conceptualized how leadership should be enacted. A good leader, according to her, provides resources, access to the school’s vision and direction of development and support. Such a leader should give space to the teachers to do their work and to not micromanage every moment.

### 3.2.3 Teachers’ expectation of middle leadership

The data collected shows clearly that the senior leadership’s expectation and middle leadership understanding of their roles were in unison and supported by the school’s organizational structure. In the PYP programme, teachers believe that MLs play an important role in having their voices and ideas heard by the senior leadership and across the school:

...we’ve had a PYP meeting weekly starting from around Christmas I think. So, only for the past half a year, but it's been incredibly helpful to have someone from middle management to just communicate in the upper management and us to design this programme... it's been important to have that voice there and to have someone to communicate our ideas to and someone to reflect to that. (Teacher)

However, a few teachers and some MLs lamented their lack of perceived participation in decision making. Yet, upon reflection and discussion they were able to understand the process better:

Our feedback is asked for. I don’t know how much it’s listened to, but when we were talking about reporting, they did ask for an opinion. When we talked about portfolios, they did ask our opinion. (SAC).

How leadership is enacted at China School is discussed by teacher practitioners. They express strong opinions on what traits an effective ML has and what tools, routines and practices they should use in their leadership activities:

So, I think -- well that's one of the things that in our meetings with the coordinators is that they do make sure everybody has a voice. So, they all question and pull in everybody's ideas so we can hear everybody’s and then we will have the discussion and write down all the ideas and make sure that everybody actually has input so it’s not just the strongest voice that decides. (Teacher)

What became evident during the interview process was that participants were able to reflect not only on the actions of other leaders within the school but their leadership and their shortcoming in providing real guidance to their staff:

What I noticed is a bit of something that I could do better in my team: I feel like I am involved in some of these decisions that the team is annoyed about, and they feel like it's a top-down, when we've had one or two discussions about things. Moreover, I've been trying lately to be more clear to the team that this was something we talked about in our meetings, because at some point decisions do have to be made by a group smaller than the whole. (SAC)

The communication between the PYPCs, subject and grade leads and teachers exhibited interflow of ideas and suggestions. Teachers reported that resources and support can be accessed easily. They believed and expected that they are supported and their views are listened to. Sometimes, ideas from senior leadership come late when much of the work has been done, and, as a result, needs to be redone. This was common across the school. On the other hand, in the secondary school, MYP and DP teachers explained that the middle leadership should have more authority from the senior leadership to get specific tasks done and to work more with teams:

I think it would work best if the coordinator is working with the team and the teachers. It's kind of when you as middle management you're trying to implement something. Sometimes it needs the weight of that senior leadership team to get implemented. (Teacher)

This comment also significantly reflected the leadership routines, tools and style of the ML. While one PC was very hands-on, providing support, guidance and insight in a personal way, the other PC tended to use a less personal approach, resorting to the use of email and other written documents to provide support, guidance and work direction.

### **Middle leader selection**

Within this school exists a diverse matrix of MLs who are principally responsible for either creating curriculum and learning and teaching materials or supporting students' needs and developing the school ethos. SACs and GLLs are annually renewable positions, with a stipend and a formal designation. Such roles are open to all faculty to apply for:

It was just voluntary -- you apply if you're interested. You have maybe a short interview with the administration and then you get the position or you don't. It is a stipend position, so I know that a lot of people are interested in doing that for a little bit of extra money. They're not afraid of the leadership position *per se*. There're quite a few people who are go-getters in the school, so sometimes there's a bit of competition for roles. Other times we're quite diplomatic amongst ourselves and we have conversations. (Teacher)

This quote indicates that teachers perceive that MLs understand the needs of the teachers they are to lead and indicates that there are often many teachers capable of doing the job. This suggests an experienced teaching staff with strong leadership potential and potentially high expectations of leadership.

### **3.3 Level 1 leadership: leading for teaching and learning**

#### **3.3.1 Leadership plus: who are the leaders?**

The leaders of this school universally replied that Teaching and Learning were the foci of their leadership and believed that it should be so. As almost every ML in the school is a

classroom practitioner as well, much of their leadership activities revolve around classroom and assessment practices:

Well, teaching and learning, I mean, pretty much every team lead here is also teaching, and so that takes up the bulk of the time. Moreover, that's our number one responsibility I think as a teacher. (Teacher)

With the espoused emphasis of school culture on the distribution of leadership in the school, and the encouragement and development of informal leadership in the school, successful MLs recognize the need for team building and teacher empowerment and see this as an integral part of their roles:

Like there is some -- team building is something that I work on (with) my team to try and have -- to try and empower teachers within my team... organisational learning, trying to figure out the scope and sequence of the units and make sure everything is working, getting resources is a big thing. (Teacher)

### **Informal teacher leaders**

Coming from relatively small international schools previously, the Primary School Principal (PSP) is still “getting her head” around leading a huge Early Years and Primary Programme and the need for her to modify existing systems and practices to enable activities such as collaborative planning to be more efficiently enacted. Once again, in order to achieve organisational efficiency and to enhance teacher engagement in school development, the SLs and MLs create informal leadership opportunities by developing unique solutions to problems of practice:

I said before it's the biggest school that I've worked at. I believe any meeting with over six people is unproductive... (and) we're trying to have a collaborative planning meeting where some of our grade levels have ten voices. (PSP)

Thus, in this school teachers are often being asked to form sub-teams to support the work of MLs, as the senior leadership recognizes that larger meetings may be unproductive. Recognizing this as an unproductive practice that needed modifying, informal leadership, in many capacities, has been allowed to grow and has been encouraged with smaller, agile sub-groups being formed to enable more productive work practices, led by informal leaders:

So, a lot of the team leads have taken that on board. When they're doing collaborative planning they'll go off in little sub-teams. Somebody will look at [units of instruction], someone will look at language, someone will look at mathematics, someone will look at pastoral, they'll gather, talk together and then come back and then share. (PSP)

This has further strengthened the developing school culture “that everybody can be a leader” through the diversifying of voices being listened to as documents, curriculum and policies are being formulated. With the shadow of IB re-authorization looming, there is an added incentive to ensure that documents are not only formulated to mirror IB standards and practices but that they are inclusive of a plethora of viewpoints as well.

### **3.3.2 What and how do they lead?**

The middle leadership at China School can be further broken down into two sub-types; tenured and annually renewable positions. The tenured positions, such as Assistant

Principal, PYPC, MYPC and DPC have advertised positions which are often filled externally before arriving at the school. The annually renewable roles, such as Subject Specialist leads (PYP, MYP & DP), Grade level leads (GLLs) are open for application annually, have a stipend attached for the responsibility and are formal roles. Focusing on this role first and understanding the motivations behind its applicants for middle leadership roles may help better understand the role they play:

Sometimes admin will suggest, you still have to apply. Moreover, I was newly teaching ... actually it's a small department so I just thought that's a good chance to have leadership and help the department grow because the department is quite new, our school's quite new... (Teacher)

The role of these MLs is to ensure their subject areas grow and can receive support from, and access to, the senior leadership. Quite often, these roles require not only people who can make an improvement to their areas of concern but can also contribute to the school as a whole.

As the school is currently going through the authorization process for their DP as well as re-authorization for the PYP, MLs across the three programmes are refining and further developing unit plans and learning resources. These leaders are ensuring that the materials developed are both horizontally and vertically aligned across the three programmes while drafting, deliberating and confirming these documents within their cultivated communities of practice:

I spend at least an hour a day like as much as I can right now to (jointly) develop this curriculum that we're trying to use for next year. And to do that I have to be incredibly flexible to make sure that everybody is there, or have to, in some cases call people aside and be like, 'this is why you need to be involved in this, things like that'. (SAC)

The imperative of explaining initiatives to the community of practice members enables them to align the group's work and provides focus. This is important because most of these formal MLs have not had any formal leadership training or development.

### **Authorization and Re-authorization: shapes roles in Teaching & Learning**

There is recognition within IB schools that the external context greatly effects both Teaching and Learning as well as school capacity building. This will be further discussed later on.

However, with the process of the re-authorization of the PYP and authorisation of DP, the school's inward focus on developing, documenting and evaluating its instructional programme and building inter as well as intra-programme articulation has become its major priority and also the theatre for middle leadership enactment. The data suggest that effort needs to be placed in two distinct areas of school development: the use of reflective planning and recording lesson plans and also the vertical alignment of the curriculum between programmes, with significant back-planning underway between the DDP and the MYP in particular:

As developing the MYP and DP curriculum is the biggest focus, I have had to change a couple of units, which my team agreed to, and they realised that the students do not have [sufficient] background (and now) they are facing difficulties... there is a lot of

introspection and there is [a need for a] lot of background work that's happening to bridge those gaps and you need to consider all these lapses. (Teacher)

Similarly, in the case of assessment, there is a need to re-focus on this critical area and to develop internal instructional capacity. For background, assessment has proved to be the biggest challenge as many inexperienced teachers, and new teachers to the school, try to prepare students for a new programme while going through the processes of authorisation at the same time:

I would say assessment has been the big leap and I would call it the leap between MYP and DP particularly as in this group, the students weren't used to it so it took quite a lot of work in that first semester to get them up to scratch, to get them into thinking, well this is different [from the MYP... and we need to] move right now. So that will make you check yourself, you know. I heard lots of discussions about formative and summative assessments that work; I have never used that language with DP (Teacher)

### **IB coordinators & subject/grade leaders**

As mentioned above, without significant in-house or external leadership training, many new MLs need to use their social influence as well as the influence of their communities of practice to ensure the engagement of all teachers and a sharing of a common vision in the work that they are undertaking. It is interesting to note that many MLs perceived a lack of authority to implement changes in their work without collaborating with their relevant IB PCs. The roles of the PCs are clearly defined, and the leadership of their programmes is visible to all faculty members:

I think the DPC drives a lot of building the structure of what DP curriculum is going to look like, how things move forward in DP. The PYPC does a whole lot of driving the PYP curriculum and the POI creating opportunities for reflection on the POI and also creating a structure for the POI and providing that support for teachers who have not taught IBDP before. (HoL)

Just as the roles of the coordinators and what they do is clear to faculty members, so are the gaps in their leadership as well. There is a strong expectation that there is a vertical articulation across all three programmes, and not just within a single programme, which seems to have been overlooked in this school:

I think the MYPC should be looking at the scope and sequence and making sure there are no gaps in there, and if there are to kind of ask what about the teachers and the SAC and how to fill in and make it holistic and also to provide support to teachers and attend meetings to understand what's going on in the classroom as well. (Teacher)

This is where the culture of distributed leadership can be observed as still being a work in progress. Although SACs also have the responsibility for ensuring curriculum articulation, many believe such gaps are firmly within the purview of the PCs. Their ability to align their programmes with each other and to articulate this to their teacher teams is vital.

### **3.3.3 The situation: tools, routines and contexts?**

#### **Tools and routines**

The school is committed to ensuring that the middle leadership is supported with both time and tools. *ManageBac* software is used across the school in order to support the

documentation of teachers' curriculum planning, assessment, reporting and evaluation of their programmes across the continuum. Within the timetable, time is allocated in every 8-day cycle for Teachers to gather in grade levels and subject levels to collaborate and plan in the ML-led teams. MLs use this time to ensure that the teams remain on point regarding school and programme directions and goals through the professional interchange:

We have meetings every cycle, so we have an eight-day cycle. And we will have one MYP language and literature meeting and we'll have one MYP language acquisition meeting. All those teachers in language acquisition or language literature will meet to discuss unit planning and what assessments we're doing or students. Also, in DP we have one meeting every cycle to meet together. (Teacher)

These collaboration times also allow MLs to seek opinions and advice from teachers and informal teacher leaders and these can be shared in their regular meetings with the senior leadership team:

As a team we were trying to find a curriculum that would work with what we're already doing. (Teacher)

At China School, MLs' proximity to the classroom makes them ideal for ensuring that discussions reflect the reality of the classroom while also ensuring that teachers remain focused on the task ahead. As such, they must establish routines and practices which are inclusively and transparent yet ensure IB standards and practices are embedded in any outcome:

...and as a team we agreed that this one (curriculum) was the best one [collaborative decision-making]. And then it was all kind of agreed upon within the team, but I would say, yes, the team lead perhaps was driving that and if it [the decision] was left alone to the team, I'm not sure that there would be a cohesive plan in motion. (Teacher)

### **Teachers leading as routine**

The subject leads in the MYP programme constantly engage their staff to be responsive to the needs they unearthed in their practice. This allowed opportunities for informal teacher leadership to emerge, as clarified by one of the subject leads. It has indeed become part of the leadership enactment that teaching staff often take coordinating and leadership roles within their departments to ensure collective responsibility and decision-making. This routine was exhibited across the MYP as is evidenced below:

If we have four sections of Grade 6, and if a teacher is teaching two or three subjects, so I said, you take the responsibility of just making sure that the Grade 6 are -- all the assessments are standardised, everything is going well and all... so it's not putting all the burden on one people. And it's -- for me I think it works better because everyone feels like they have their own responsibility though they are not team lead. (SAC)

### **3.3.4 Supports and challenges**

Within a school going through re-authorisation in one programme, authorisation in another and trying to fill in the gaps in the programme in-between, there is a great deal of pressure and stress at all levels. Reports from inspections and ideas from the senior leadership are funnelled down to Teachers via their MLs:

I think that sometimes what we struggle with on the teacher level is when decisions have been made from above: that they should actually be put to us... because teachers have good ideas and there's a lot of these teachers at this school (who) were fantastic with great experience, and rather than leads -- the head coordinators asking the middle management, the leads to put it to the teachers, they collaborate, they come back with one voice that goes back to the leads and then decisions are made upon that feedback. If teachers were aware of this process as well it would be a much more relaxed and engaged atmosphere. (Teacher)

When MLs engage teachers within communities of practice, they foster discussions and include teachers in planning from the onset. In this way, teachers engage more in the discussions for and about planning, assessment and evaluation of programmes, and the MLs are better supported in their functions:

I see the DPC often, yeah, much more hands-on approach, very collaborative, always wants to know what you think, your feedback, checks things with you, how is this for you, has this scheduled, can you do this and will this be possible. So, very communicative, yeah, open to ideas. (Teacher)

### **Middle Leaders support for Teaching & Learning**

Through their ML-led communities of practice (COPs), teachers felt supported and listened to. This theme is repeated throughout the school. Those leaders who support and engage their teacher teams are seen as key personnel within the organization. Interestingly, informal leaders, who within their community of practice, engage with similar people, are also seen as key personnel within the school. Such practices enable the COP to better support every teacher member. It diffuses the views of the ML across the team, echoing the key points and providing multiple key-persons to seek assistance from when challenges are faced. Within many communities of practice, multiple MLs participate as leaders and as participants:

I'm thankful for having a team to be able to talk about the big problems at school. I'm thankful of the support of the other middle leadership. I'm thankful for the progress in curriculum development that I've seen in the time that I've been here because, again, I'll start earlier about that chasm and seeing that chasm between PYP curriculum and MYP curriculum grow smaller... it's actually a huge thing and I'm really, really thankful for it. (HoL)

### **Strategic Middle Leadership in Teaching & Learning**

The role of MLs is to focus teachers' attention on the task ahead. They also need to ensure that resources and time are best allocated when needed most and to ensure that systems are put in place significantly enable teachers to focus on their main roles in teaching and learning:

We have to do that maybe more like paperwork or all the document stuff now... For the school, for the students. I mean we know we work here, so we have to -- we're working here to make sure that we have all the matters to be addressed... to be addressed and we are the ones in the classroom. So, we know where the evidence is. So, as long as we are given a time and support we can easily do it because we are already busy with other work. (Teacher)

### 3.3.5 The IB Approaches to Learning, IB standards and practices and curriculum

The MLs' role in this school to support the improvement in learning and teaching goes far beyond ensuring that the planning is visible in *Managebac* but that teacher practices are also constantly evolving with ATLs driving this. At China School, it is the dialogue between those who lead and those who are being led which has been imperative to building rapport and norms of collegiality. It is interesting to note that those teachers who engage in collegial activities, who participate actively in their communities of practice and engage in critical dialogue with their MLs are often those best able to apply practices related to ATL in their own classrooms:

I think my SAC is very knowledgeable in the area and very supportive and challenges my way of thinking. So, I think I'm growing professionally from him and I hope that, like other leaders, [I] will be able to challenge others professionally and hopefully grow professionally in that sense, yeah. (Teacher)

Authorisation and re-authorisation were imminent across two of the three IB programmes that the school offers. Therefore, ensuring curriculum planning falls within the IB standards and practices has become an urgent matter for the entire school with significant responsibility for ensuring the quality and the quantity of the work falling onto the school's MLs' shoulders:

I guess I would say their role is to train, accommodate and keep up-to-date anything to do with unit plans, how to build unit plans, how to assess unit plans and (it's long day and) how to implement authentic curriculum within the MYP framework and actually touch in with the team leads as well as getting to know those subject teachers and how they implement it in their classrooms. (Teacher)

#### **Distribution of Leadership for School Development**

The role of the IB documentation is not only significant for authorisation and re-authorisation processes within this school, but also allows MLs to create a shared vision and to contribute to a shared culture on how learning and teaching should be enacted in the school. In order to be an effective ML, articulating a clear direction forward for their teacher teams is imperative. Thus, when the school decided to take a slightly different path and to create the concept of a common-core, that is creating an integrated curriculum and removing language subjects to be taught separately as specialist subjects, MLs needed to make sure that teachers knew not only where they were, but where they were heading to:

We looked at the standards and practices all the time when we're doing our CIS-WASC and we looked at the IBO standards when we were creating the teaching and language or the language policy and the Math policy here at (the school) and have to go through the standards and practices. I guess when we brought in common core that was -- for language that was a little bit different just because -- they do kind of go hand in hand but there are a few things that we needed to replace in the curriculum but other than that I think it goes pretty hand in hand. (SAC)

### 3.4 Level 2 leadership: leading for capacity building

The school places great emphasis on distributing leadership and allowing for all staff and students to develop themselves into competent leaders of tomorrow. The provision of significant resources for PD is an incentive which has attracted much of their talents:

It was the PD that drew me here. They did an excellent job on the website with the teachers who got PD in New Zealand also with the PD policy. So, I was in the position of -- I think I was one of the first people to be interviewed for this job, so you were waiting until the closing day. (PSP)

#### 3.4.1 New Pathways for Leadership Empowerment

Recognising the unique cultural and societal characteristics of China School, the Senior Leadership has invested significant effort in providing opportunities for local and non-local Teachers to engage in leadership activities. The school has also increased the number of PYPs from one to two in order to build up the in-house curriculum development potential and to allow for a locally trained and highly experienced teacher to be given a ML role within the school. In addition to that, more empowerment for subject-level and grade-level leaders has taken place in the PYP section and more empowerment will take place next year:

We are also very fortunate that we have two coordinators on the PYP. So that makes -- that's something that the school's done, that's a different model I suppose compared to other IB schools within (this city). This year we've also tried to empower our team leads because there's no point sitting and complaining and wishing what you can't have. So our team leads have far more responsibility than what they had in the past. (PSP)

#### 3.4.2 ATLs for building instructional capacity

Furthermore, the school is broadening the scope for appraisal and the use of ATLs to inform teachers how to further improve the quality of teaching and learning through school-wide policies. The empowerment of MLs corresponds with this so that there can be the better facilitation of planning, assessment and professional discourse in team meetings:

Yeah, we've got a skeleton framework which again comes back to accountability, but also makes teachers jobs a lot clearer. So there is a lot more clarity, transparency and what the expectations are of their roles both in and out of the classroom going right down to the bookwork and marking and how... what we want it to look like in terms of not just tick and flick, but actually giving constructive feedback. (PSVP)

#### 3.4.3 Leaders-plus: who are the leaders?

Across the school, both a horizontal and vertical middle leadership structure exists. In the PYP, this is achieved by having both specialist/subject leads and by having grade leads as well. Most specialist and subject leads (vertical articulation) are led by one PYP, whereas the grade leads (horizontal articulation) are led by another PYP. These team leads in turn lead groups of frontline teachers and teach. In order to develop high quality curriculum and projects of inquiry, they collaborate with their teams to ensure their planning, implementation and evaluation are documented on *Managebac* and fall within the scope of the PYP framework. The PSVP summed up the work of one of these leaders:

This question relates to a conversation I had with team lead yesterday... I was talking to a team lead and he was... we were talking about next year and what he was hoping to achieve. And I said, well, I personally think you've done a fantastic job as a team lead, you communicate very well with your team, you know the strengths and weaknesses of each individual, co-teacher and [teacher], you diffuse problems, you come and seek advice and support when you need it. (PSVP).

### **Managing vs Leading: efficacy for school improvement**

Within the MYP division, there is a stark contrast between managing and leading the instructional programme and its people. For example, an ML pointed out that whilst administrative duties such as timetabling and report writing is an integral part of the leadership responsibilities (which constitutes de facto management tasks), however, some Teachers felt otherwise. A teacher emphasized that those MLs who prioritized management tasks over democratic leadership faced resistance and lacked efficacy. This is one aspect of capacity building which beckons further investigation. There is a focus on filling in the gaps between the PYP and the DP being planned and much of the communication is focused on that. Staff believe that the role of the PCs should be to support their work not just manage the workflow:

I think the MYPC should be looking at the scope and sequence and making sure there are no gaps in there and if there is kind of work with the teachers and the SAC on how to fill in and make it holistic and also to provide support to teachers and attend meetings to understand what's going on in the classroom as well." (Teacher)

### **Middle Leader Communication for enhancing organizational capacity**

The data shows that those MLs who do not discuss and engage in collegial practices show far less efficacy compared with those who develop more personal approaches with frontline staff:

Well, their efficacy is affected by how switched on they are, how aware of what is going on, the connections between you and them, the opportunities to connect, we're often reminded of our responsibility to make connections but not provide with realistic opportunities in terms of resources, physical or time resources, to get that done. (Teacher)

So, when MLs at China School were perceived to engage in more technocratic forms of leadership, even when their advice or criticism were seen as valid, their leadership efficacy was subsequently adversely impacted:

He knows his stuff often but his delivery is very bang, bang, bang and he misses some of the [positive contributions the teachers have made]. But they are massively important to keeping you buoyed and enthusiastic about the whole program otherwise it's very easy to drift off and become a lone ranger. (Teacher)

This is contrasted with the PYP division of the school and provided an interesting lesson not only for the researchers but for those aspiring to leadership roles in this school and those who were already in such roles:

I think that varies violently by division because my experience with the PYP is very different from that. They (PYPCs) meet once a week with every PYP teacher, with

everyone and so there are more in tune with what's going on literally with the students, the kids, they are more attached. (HoL)

#### 3.4.4 What and how do they lead?

##### Developing School Culture

As international schools face a high turnover of staff due to the mobility of staff in the sector, the senior leadership views it as essential to create a culture of shared leadership and to enact it as well. However, it was apparent that the developing school culture did not have the mechanisms in place to support and guide those with leadership aspirations. This became apparent when discussing the leadership journey of those who had moved from informal leadership backgrounds to more formal roles:

I don't really think we had any training. No, not that I can think of. It's more just like apply for it, you know three areas you'd like to improve for the school, admin approves it, or doesn't, and then your team lead will start the next year, pretty much so. (Teacher).

##### Building up ML in the School Organization

The vision of the school to extend leadership opportunities to all staff is embedded in the school culture with all ML positions of SACs and CSLs being annual positions which can be applied for by any member of staff. This is a key way by which middle leadership capacity is being built in the school.

Most MLs seek to empower their staff and are true advocates for their team members and their subjects though there are areas for improvement:

...I would say most team leads at the school are advocates for their teachers and their subjects however there needs to be a stronger relationship to the MYPC and those leads [SACs] and the HoS and those leads. It's because otherwise those voices [of the MLs] would fall on deaf ears (Teacher)

Interestingly, some teachers are threatened by this evolving system of distributed leadership and are very keen to express that delegation is not what they want. Instead, they desire 'real' distributed leadership where they are empowered to make decisions and to take responsibility for it:

I think because we are starting this, this way of working is fine. If it is already an established system where things are already identified, you know this person has seen things through and through to some extent, that's fine. But what happens when it's just going from one point to the other point and there is no feedback, there is nothing coming back I think there's no communication then, it's just delegation, there is no communication. And it's not a corporate world, its education so where everybody contributes. (Teacher)

Different levels of capacity building and preparing students and teachers for the assessment and projects that each diploma requires consumes much of the energy of the PCs but to different extents:

I would say in MYP, I have not had a discussion outside of my department about what we are trying to achieve and how we are trying to achieve it, in the DP those discussions have taken place and do take place on a regular basis... (Teacher)

### **Shared leadership for professional network and knowledge development**

MLs, particularly in the PYP division, are very willing to listen to a variety of voices and give opportunities for informal leadership to take place:

I think it depends on how much the team lead wants to delegate but I feel like everyone has a voice, everyone gets to listen to and we are free to suggest our ideas and bring something new to the table and it will be considered. (Teacher)

The SLs commit to distributing leadership opportunities and are united in this conviction. Therefore, there is much encouragement to people in non-formal leadership roles as well as in more formal ones:

I believe in distributed leadership. So, I don't believe that I have to be the expert in everything and I don't have to be the one who looks down. I let people do what they need to do. So, in that process, although there were some coordinators sprinkled in there, there are also teachers who could have done that. And that gives them the opportunity to build some leadership capacity and it's also important for them to understand how the parts of the school work. (SSP)

Through these means, school organizational capacity, team and relationship building can be developed resulting in stronger professional networks and deeper professional knowledge acquisition.

#### **3.4.5 The situation: tools, routines and contexts?**

##### **Tools and routines**

There are constant reminders of the school being relatively new to IB and the fact that considerable attention must be paid to further developing school processes and systems. The staff understands the need for more effort to be paid in areas such as planning and curriculum development. From the conversations with teachers, it would appear that the routines and tools associated with planning documentation needed to be further fine-tuned in light of impending external reviews:

It is also establishing the school as a proper IB school as a world-class international school, you know... There is constant communication coming from upper management telling us this is going on, you guys should be aware of this, these people visiting, this documentation needs to be done. (Teacher)

##### **Professional Development**

The school does try to provide support and time in order for staff to not only meet school requirements but also to attain professional growth. The provision of PD, while supporting professional growth in the school, is one of the drivers of school improvement and should be seen as a tool to significantly improve current practices and routines. Generous PD allowances are paid to teachers to participate in training and workshops around the world. The English SAC took part in a reading workshop in New York, while other teachers attended workshops in New Zealand. He benefited from “different levels of PD funding rights which

include one's fund", being fully aware that "there may be division funding for specific programmes." Therefore, in light of a school-wide focus on reading and writing, he discussed his PD plans for the summer holidays:

There is one coming up this summer in New York City at Columbia, there are five-day readers and writers workshop training on that I was able to apply for it and I didn't get the decision so I think three teachers are going to that so that's extra on top of that. (SAC)

### **Collaborative decision making to develop capacity and enhance distributed leadership**

Collaborative decision-making and the granting of autonomy during ML-led team meetings are invaluable in providing time for buy-in and collaborative decision-making. Yet, it is evident that the role of the ML during these team meetings is to provide inputs so that cohesive and collaborative planning and decision-making prevail. Such views ensure that the documents being produced are valued by the practitioners themselves because they have been given all the resources necessary, especially time, to produce a collaboratively reasoned document:

We do it [decision-making] collectively. The good thing about our schedules – all our schedules, we have collaboration time for each department. So, if we need to really have a session to talk about those issues like the curriculum, we use that time very wisely. (Teacher)

It is through this allocation of time and the repeated encouragement for the practice of highly developed norms of collegiality from all levels of leadership, that improvement initiatives are likely to become a regular routine.

However, challenges abound when the role of MLs to lead is disrupted with mandates from above. It was found that MLs often face resistance when initiatives are directed by the senior leadership without teacher input. MLs noted that often for the sake of expediency, changes were made to procedures or policy, and resistance from teachers was acutely felt by MLs. This was evident in the adoption of a new method for planning which was implemented very quickly at the end of the year, when much of the planning work for the next year had already been completed:

I'm able to do some things with my team if I can get buy-in from the team. If it's something the team doesn't believe in or if it's something that comes from the top and they don't fully understand why we're doing it then it's very difficult to implement that ... and I feel sometimes these ideas are not necessarily relevant to what's happening in the classroom. (SAC)

#### **3.4.6 Support and challenges**

##### **Time**

The school supports the work of MLs to meet with their teams and to provide time and resources for this to take place. While planning time and PD, as mentioned above, are embedded in the school's routines and practices, the depth of the support is admirable. In addition to providing a session within each eight-day cycle within the timetable for every

team to meet, ad-hoc solutions are also found to enable teachers to collaborate on important school mandated tasks:

But also this year something that we've done because I believe teachers are not productive after a long day work. So we've given them release time in semester one – (the Assistant Principal) got everyone released for the morning - to do language planner, to do math planner, different mornings. In semester two we've asked them to do it themselves. So when I went to grade four, yesterday, some teachers were in there (fewer than six), others were supervising the children.” (PSP)

### **School Ethos**

With the ethos that everybody can be a leader, teacher initiatives, supported by ML-led communities of practice, are often supported by the school's senior leadership:

They have freedom of how they achieve what they need to achieve. Some of them do it well. The same team lead, it's interesting that he's got to know his teachers' strengths within his team so much more. So if some of the new teachers see that, wow, such and such is so good at language and so creative ... (then they can work on new projects). (PSP)

### **Recognition for informal leadership**

There is also a strong appreciation of the work that informal leaders bring to life at China School. In a growing and fast developing three programme IB continuum school, the recognition of and appreciation for the vital role that informal leaders play in the school is a refreshing one. It may be due to the fact that distributed leadership is visible and discussed as part of the professional dialogue within the school:

We have a lot of informal leaders as well, and I think that it's hard to measure but I'm pretty happy with the culture in the secondary division because there are people who share and do a number of things with each other that is not scripted or not within a meeting. And there's a lot of sharing that goes on, there's a lot of distributed leadership that goes on, and without having to build the formal structures in order to do that. (SSP)

### **External Mandates**

A challenge for MLs in this school is the sheer number of externally mandated tasks which need to be completed within a short period. Within the past three years, the school has undertaken authorisation or re-authorisation of all three programmes as well as preparing for external accreditation. This drives their work and dictates the pace at which everything needs to be completed:

Yeah, and then the next thing is, oh, PYP you know re-authorisation is coming and everything stopped. And that's fine but I actually feel, I am the opposite, quite the opposite. I feel it is the accreditation that drives it. That, hey, we have a substantial visit coming next June, this has to happen, that and that, so I'm the one who's always upholding the flag for that one. (SSP)

### **3.4.7 The IB**

The school recognises its unique mission to provide a global education for students in Southern China. Not only is this reflected in its curriculum, but also in its approach to teaching and learning. To ensure that a Chinese and an international perspective are applied within the school, and in order to develop the overall capacity of the school, the SL took the decision to hire a local and very experienced international school teacher as a second PYP. This was seen as a method to overcome the deficits students had in articulating between the PYP and MYP initially and between the MYP and DP later on.

#### **ATLs for middle leader driven school development**

Using the IB's ATLs in order to reinforce professional networks and the imparting of professional knowledge across the school is achieved through grade-level and subject-level ML working together in both formal and informal settings. The architecture of the new library redevelopment provides pods and other collaborative spaces for this interplay to take place.

#### **Authorization as the context for Middle Leadership enactment**

Authorization and re-authorization have allowed for ML to play a significant role in developing school capacity for school self-evaluation and appraisal of school-wide systems. Tools used for planning, assessment and other practices have been strengthened to provide school-wide data to inform leadership decisions.

### **3.5 Level 3 leadership: leading beyond the school**

#### **3.5.1 Leadership plus: who are the leaders?**

##### **Leading in a Chinese Government International School**

China School follows in a strong tradition of distributed leadership exemplified by the parent school, a well-renowned Government School which focused on language learning and teaching. With a strong tradition of leadership development and with the HoS having been groomed from a Teacher to become a Principal in the same group and to subsequently open and operate two new campuses, it is unsurprising that this school believes strongly in middle leadership empowerment and has enacted structures to promote leadership within and outside of the school.

As evidenced in the first two levels, MLs in this school, both in formal and informal roles, exercise their leadership outside the school as well as inside it. Despite the nascent nature of the school, it has developed a strong reputation in the region and has hosted a number of IB workshops and functions:

As for the IB, another PYP co-ordinator was one of the top IB Chinese workshop leaders. So, the IB invited her to a lot of their meetings. She ran breakout sessions during the IB conferences. Also, the IB has used our campus twice as their venue for the first Chinese IB forum. (HoS)

Teachers in the PYP division have also participated in job-alike sessions but participation is relatively low. For example, in the MYP, Arts Education had invited other schools to come

and view an exhibition put on by the staff and students and provide feedback and discussions. PCs engage parents, the IB and other organisations in order to provide information about their relevant programmes. Some other MLs, such as the athletics director and the college counsellor, by nature of their jobs, engage regularly outside agencies, organising competitions, open days and other activities for their stakeholders. However, in terms of policy and assessment development, across the school, only the local PYPC has had an impact with the Chinese Language Curriculum during a visit to The Hague and the running of regional workshops.

### **3.5.2 What and how do they lead?**

Due to the relative inexperience of the PCs and other MLs, a more inward-looking view within the school has developed. This mirrors the stated view of SLs, who believe in and encourage their staff to share their skills and expertise with others within the school context.

It is worthy to note that as the school invests considerable funds into external PD for whole school development and improvement, the data suggests that the staff may be further encouraged to lead activities and networks outside the school.

### **3.5.3 The situation: tools, routines and contexts?**

#### **Tools and routines**

As the data suggests, in this nascent IB world school, most of the focus of day-to-day work occurs with activities inside the school walls. PCs still attend to external leadership outside of the school. One of the PYPC clarified that:

I mean outside of school, my professional knowledge is a lot more... I kind of clock out of work and then get my study on doing IB research as well. I feel that's an external capacity that I do but not in my work position.

Yes, in terms of providing guidance, the IBO, in looking for --- if we do need clarity or justification on why we're doing things, then that does. I don't feel like it's every single day that we're referring to IBO documentation I guess because of our knowledge about it. (PYPC)

Rather than contributing to the leadership of external agencies, these MLs source information, direction and justifications for their practice from external agencies and collegial sources. In this way, they tap networks outside of their school to improve the practice inside their school. The PCs are instrumental in guiding the interpretation of IB policy documents and embedding their practices into the curriculum

#### **Support and challenges**

As an international school which has only been authorised for fewer than five years and has been undergoing authorisation and re-authorisation for the last three years, the focus on inward development and organization has been steady. Nevertheless, understanding the important role that PD and professional engagement outside the school plays on school development, China School has allocated generous sums of money to ensure that the PD of Staff is profound and accessible:

There are budgets for them to do that, all of the coordinators have a budget in addition to the contractual budget to attend different work -- different IB workshops, every second year they are given money to go to the IB regionals, so they are allowed to network. We have job-a-likes with other IB schools within the city and that's not just money, it's time as well. But then people forget that sometimes, every time they're not going to hear that that is costing money. Yeah, so I don't think there are any challenges in them reaching out into their networks to do the things they need to do. (SSP)

The use of work shadowing and online discussion groups, as well as the opportunity to lead or participate in workshops abroad give opportunities for isolated international schools, like this one, to contribute to and learn from the broader international school community.

## The IB

The IB supports opportunities for leadership outside of IB schools through their online portal basecamp. It allows those IB practitioners in remote locations or in locations where there are few IB schools to be able to share, interact and even lead activities:

Well, there's a dynamic group of people online through --- there's a system called Basecamp. It's run by the IB. The Pearl River Delta, that kind of geographical area that spills over into Macau, China and Hong Kong. There's a group of coordinators and other groups of teachers who will meet twice a year and they'll have job-a-likes. I've been going to the co-coordinator ones and they are excellent. It is mostly Hong Kong schools that are represented, but there are three or four ones in Shenzhen also there. (SSP)

In the digital age, providing access to support anywhere, anytime is vital. It allows new coordinators, which China School has, to learn from the experience of others. The IB embedded ATL principles that support collegiality and openness support this professional dialogue which is so very important, not only in relatively new IB schools like this one, but also in more well-established ones as well.

### 3.6 Advice network and time-use

#### 3.6.1 Participants

In the next part of the chapter we relate the finding of the advice network and time-use data. We invited 150 participants to complete the advice network survey as indicated in **Error! Reference source not found.** 48 responded to Level 1 and Level 2 which produces the response rate of 32%; and 46 responded for Level 3 (31%). Including the participants, 83 people were nominated at Level 1 (55% coverage); 80 at Level 2 (53%) and 76 at level 3 (51%).

#### 3.6.2 Indegree centrality

We employed indegree centrality as an indicator of how the distribution of advice seeking patterns change across the three leadership levels (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Indegree centrality represents the normalised quantity of advice seeking nomination for a particular person. In other words, individuals with higher scores tend to be the favourite 'go-to' person in the network.

Table 7 Number of staff members in China School

Leaders	Primary	Secondary
Senior Leaders	3	2
IB Programme Coordinators	2	2
Grade Level Leads	8	0
Cross-School Leaders	1	6
Cross-School Support	9	
Subject Area Coordinators	0	8
Teachers and Tas	83	26
Total	106	44

Appendix I (in the Appendices) below shows the top five leaders of indegree centrality in each level of leadership. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the combined degree centrality for different types of levels and teachers. We refer to the table in our discussion of each level of advice giving.

### 3.6.3 Learning and teaching advice network

Figure 3 below shows the school-wide advice network results for Level 1. The imperfect sample size leaves some isolated settlements nearby the main advice network. By looking at the coloured nodes, the network captures the impression that the advice-seeking activities for teaching and learning (Level 1) take place among various formal and informal (i.e., teachers and non-teaching staff) leaders. Disciplinary and transdisciplinary collaborations are likely. For instance, participants in Figure 4 include a secondary SAC (52) and three secondary teachers in the same subject area (i.e., English). However, members consult a teacher in another subject area (73) and a CSL (43). Another illustration in the PS where a GLL (22) acts as an advice hub for a primary SAC (35), a subject specialist teacher (42), a grade level teacher (41), a homeroom teacher (91) cluster (see Figure 4 Ego network for ID 52 at Level 1

Table 8 Proportion of indegree centrality by nominated leaders

Leader	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
	No. of leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion
SLs	4	18%	4	31%	4	28%
PCs	4	21%	4	21%	4	32%
SACs	13	6%	14	8%	13	7%
CSLs	9	12%	9	11%	9	8%
Teachers	48	37%	42	21%	35	18%
Others	5	6%	7	7%	11	7%
Total	83	100%	80	100%	76	100%

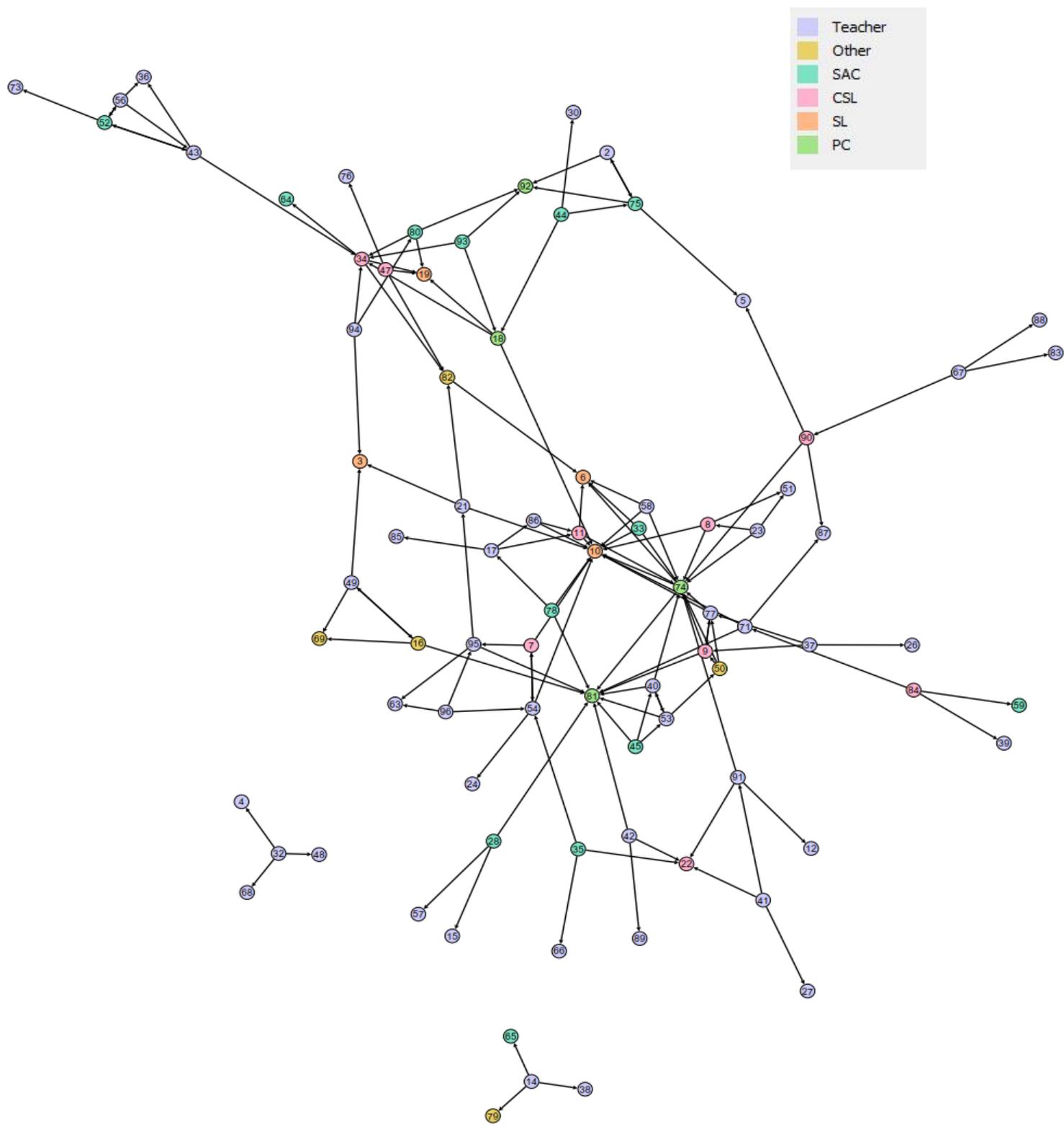


Figure 3 Level 1 Advice Network China

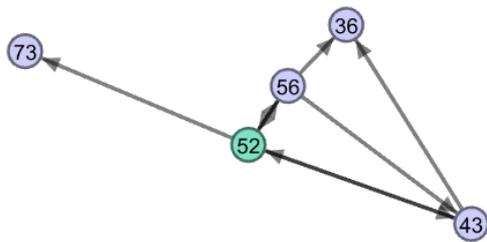


Figure 4 Ego network for ID 52 at Level 1

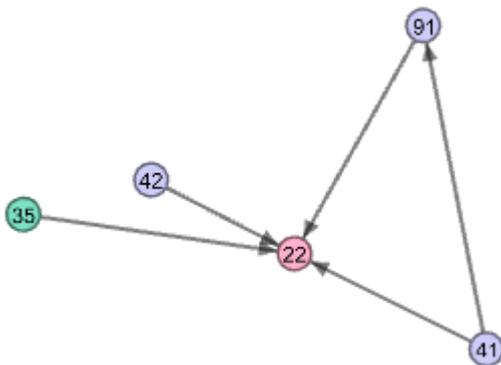


Figure 5 Ego network for ID 22 at Level 1

**Error! Reference source not found.** shows the proportion indegree centrality based on the roles of nominated advisors and advice survey participants. For Level 1, teachers comprise the single largest set of advisors (37%). PCs are the most nominated of MLs (21%). The total of all MLs (39%) (Composing PCs (21%), SAC (6%), CSL (12%)) slightly eclipse the teachers, with SLs comprising only 18% of advice seeking. These results suggest widely distributed leadership in the teaching and learning domain. Although formal leaders hold the largest individual proportions of indegree centrality, teachers' indegree centrality is broadly shared across a large number of individuals.

The PSVP is the lead in the measure of indegree centrality. This result indicates the PSVP is the critical advice provider in term of teaching and learning. Interestingly, the top four positions of indegree centrality are held by Primary School leaders. This may reflect the situation in which the PSVP has been employed for a relatively longer period than the SSP and PSP, and with the process of PYP re-authorisation, which entails significant communication requirements in the network. The sharing of an office with the two PYPs and PSVP link with the PSP further facilitates the ease of communication and advice seeking for faculty members. It is illustrative of how formal processes, such as programme re-

authorisation, can stimulate network activity centred around relevant leaders, i.e. PYPCs and PS SLs. The sum of the indegree centrality scores of the PYPCs is greater than the PSVP's, implying a shared workload between the PYPCs. The PYPCs constant formal and informal meetings with teachers tasked with curriculum development plausibly explain this phenomenon. This is also depicted in Figure 3 where PSP and SSP (6 and 10) seek advice from one PYPC. When combined with the qualitative data, this could be interpreted as further recognition of her links with the wider primary school faculty.

The advice network shows that the PCs in the Secondary section primarily interact with SACs rather than GLLs. It may represent the priority of academic growth at school in the Secondary section and the process of authorisation of the IBDP. The school network also illustrates that the PYPCs are not directly connected to the secondary PCs. Rather, SLs mediate this interaction. The observation may suggest that, in term of leading teaching and learning, PCs in both divisions do not have direct dialogue. It might be the case that leadership in teaching and learning are specific to their division. It may also reflect that two PCs did not complete the survey. The qualitative data further shows that vertical curriculum articulation between the programmes is a purview of SACs rather than PCs, with science (see Section 3.2.2) as but one example.

#### 3.6.4 Capacity building advice network

Leadership at Level 2 concerns leaders' capacity building activities. The four formal leaders in the PS are the leads in terms of the number of inbound inquiries (see Figure 6). The PSVP has the highest score, and one of the PYPCs is the second highest. The PSP climbs up to the third position while the other PYPC follows closely. The finding denotes the intensive advice-seeking activities in the PS. MLs and teachers seek the advice of the SLs and PCs to support their capacity building. The similarity of the results of indegree centrality distributions at Level 1 and Level 2 may imply that capacity building advice giving is related to teaching and learning. These findings support the qualitative data which shows the preparation for re-authorisation of the PYP as the core leadership task undertaken within the PYP and the adoption of a small group approach to meetings with frequent reporting back as part of the process (page 31).

**Error! Reference source not found.** shows how indegree proportions for Level 2 noticeably differ from Level 1. SLs proportion of advising has increased dramatically (from 18% to 31%), teachers' advising have decreased by approximately 40%), but MLs' advising have stayed relatively stable as a pool, and also by the three categories of MLs (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Among PCs, one PYPC's (ID 74) advising has increased by 40% (from 10 to 14 % of the entire network). These results seem to imply a strong role for MLs and SLs as advice givers at Level 2 in this school. The theory would suggest an increase for SL, but a decrease in ML advice giving at Level 2.

A plausible explanation is that the target of advice seeking has shifted towards more senior leadership roles, i.e. from teachers to MLs and from MLs to SLs. This shift can be illustrated concerning the network cluster or settlement around SAC 52 (see Figure 4 Ego network for ID 52 at ). Whereas in Level 1, the SAC advised and sought advice from other teachers, at Level 2 the teachers in the SAC's subject area are joined by another SAC in seeking advice from SAC 52. In turn, SAC 52 seeks advice from the SSP (19), the PYPC (74) and another

subject teacher. In contrast, the example of GLL 22 has remained consistent, with the same set of teachers and SAC seeking advice, except one homeroom teacher 91. As an interesting aside, teacher 91's targets for advice have shifted from the PYPC, Grade 3 Leader (22), and a Grade 3 teacher at Level 1 to the PSP, English as an Additional Language teacher, and a Grade 2 language teacher. This shift may reflect the nature of capacity building sought by teacher 91. At Level 3, teacher 91 continues to seek advice from EAL teacher but also from the school director and G3 teacher. This particular individual's story shows how differing the combinations of teachers and leaders are identified for advice depending on the leadership level.

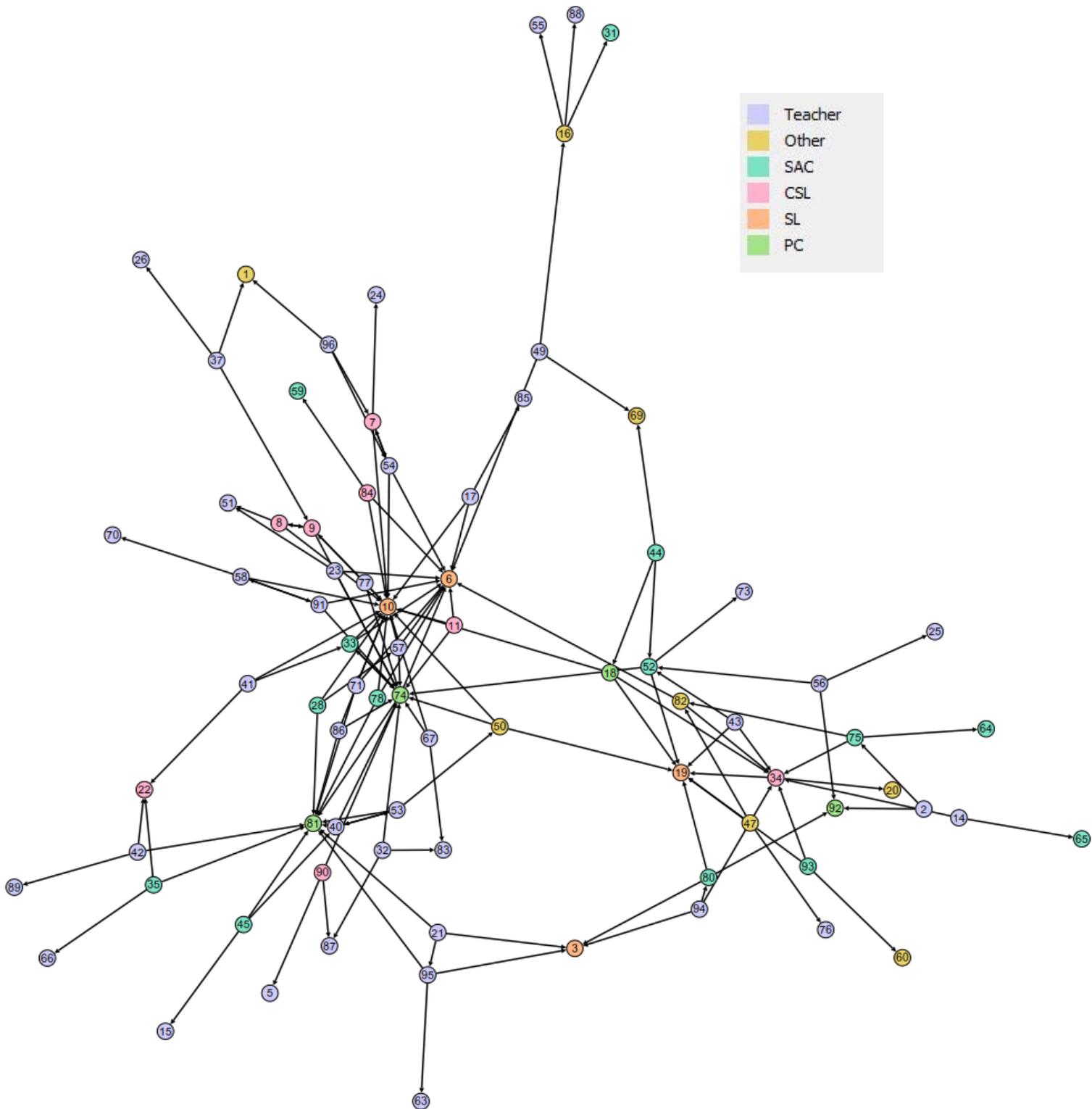


Figure 6 Level 2 Advice Network China

### 3.6.5 External/system advice network

Appendix I again shows some change in indegree centrality for external/system leadership. Advice sought from SLs, CSLs and Teachers remain relatively stable in comparison to Level 2. However, an increase is seen in advice seeking from MLs as a whole, which is driven by a large increase in advice sought specifically from PCs, i.e. a change of 50% from Level 2 to Level 3 (See **Error! Reference source not found.**). Among the PCs, the most dramatic change is among the PYPs, with a greater proportional change in advice seeking from Level 2 to Level 3 than was observed in Level 1 to Level 2 (See Appendix I). We also note a moderate increase in Level 3 advice seeking for the MYPC and DPC. Again, the acceleration in PYP advising activities from Level 2 to Level 3 may be explained by the situational focus on PYP re-authorisation and the need to seek advice about IB policy requirements, e.g., PYP Standards and Practices. This may reflect a sense that PCs serve to mediate IB policies to school stakeholders and are more depended on for their expert knowledge at this point of time.

Figure 7 reinforces the point about the impact of Level 3 advice seeking in the PS. A variety of SLs, MLs and teachers seek advice from the PYPs. In contrast, DPC and MYPC mainly interact directly with SACs and few teachers which could be accounted for by the PYPs frequent attendance at meetings and in the classroom which was frequently cited in the qualitative data as facilitating positive communication opportunities.

There were no directed connections among the PCs (except between the two PYPs). An indirect connection among the PCs in the Elementary and Secondary sections is mediated by a SL and a teacher. This micro network sheds light on the circumstance that the collaboration among the PCs in the Elementary and Secondary sections are not straightforward. Still, the figures may provide the difference in the sphere of influence among different PCs.

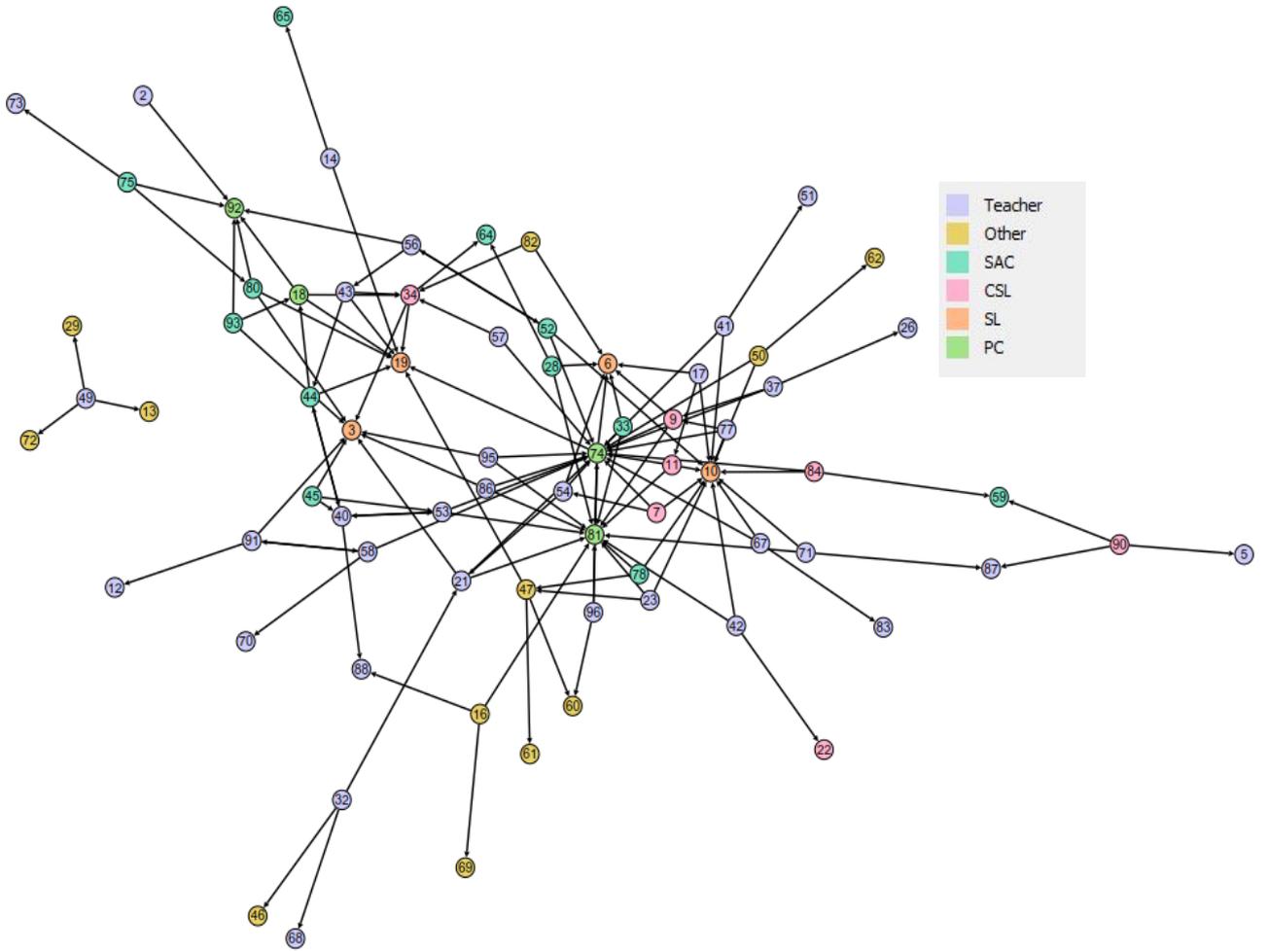


Figure 7 L3 Advice Network China

## Time-use Survey

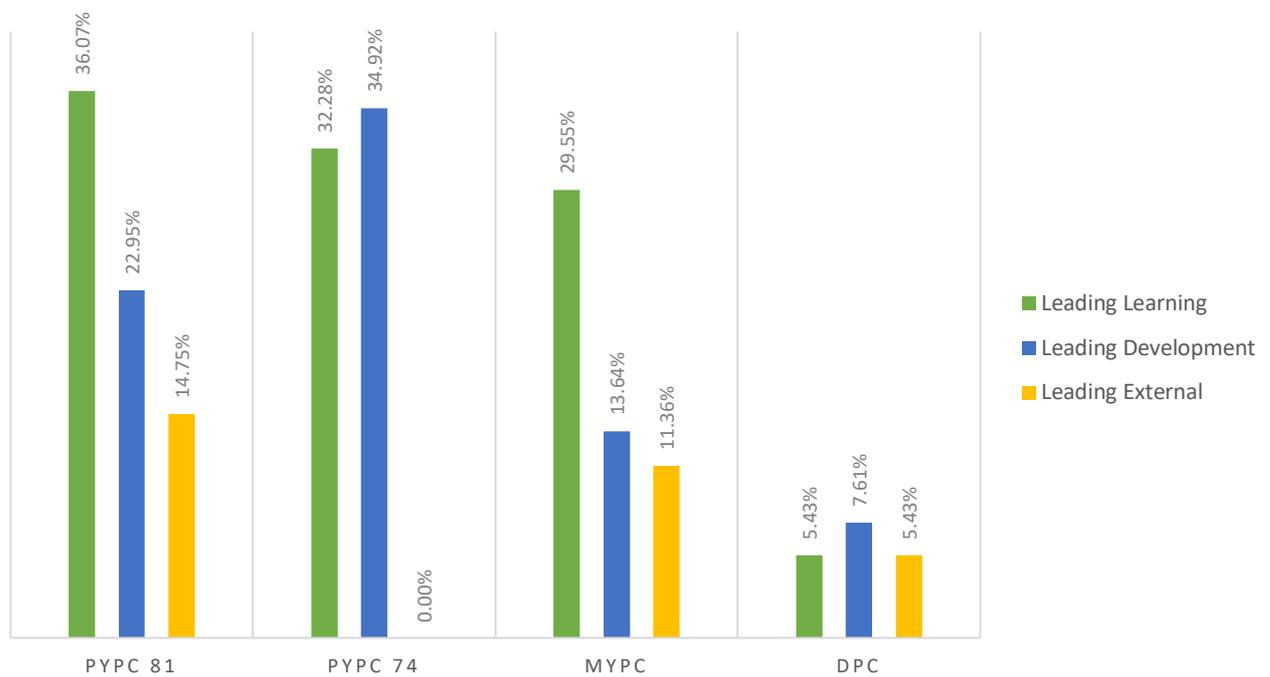


Figure 8 Proportion of time-use on three leadership activities by PCs

Figure 8 serves to illustrate the percentage of total work time that was spent on Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 leadership reported by each PC – the figure excludes time spent on classroom teaching and routine administrative work. Figure 9 and Figure 10 show time-use for SACs and CSLs/GLLs.

The PYPs and the MYPC spent more than half of their time on leadership activities. Conversely, the DPC spent on less than 20% of their working time on leadership activities, which may be explained as he is the only PC with a teaching load in addition to his leadership activities. The PYPs have a similar proportion of leadership time on Level 1. PYPC 74 outweighed the time-use on Level 2 due to her integral role in overseeing planning for the vast majority of the PYP. Conversely, PYPC 81 spent less time on Level 2 than on Level 3, reflecting her role as a key person for the Chinese Language for the IBO and her integral role in the Southern China Chinese Language Teacher group. The MYPC work has a similar pattern to that of the PYPC 81, with a focus on external collaboration. The work between the PYPs is delineated although it must be said that they collaborate regularly with each other. PYPC 74 is responsible for the common core while PYPC 81 focuses on the elective subjects and the Chinese Language.

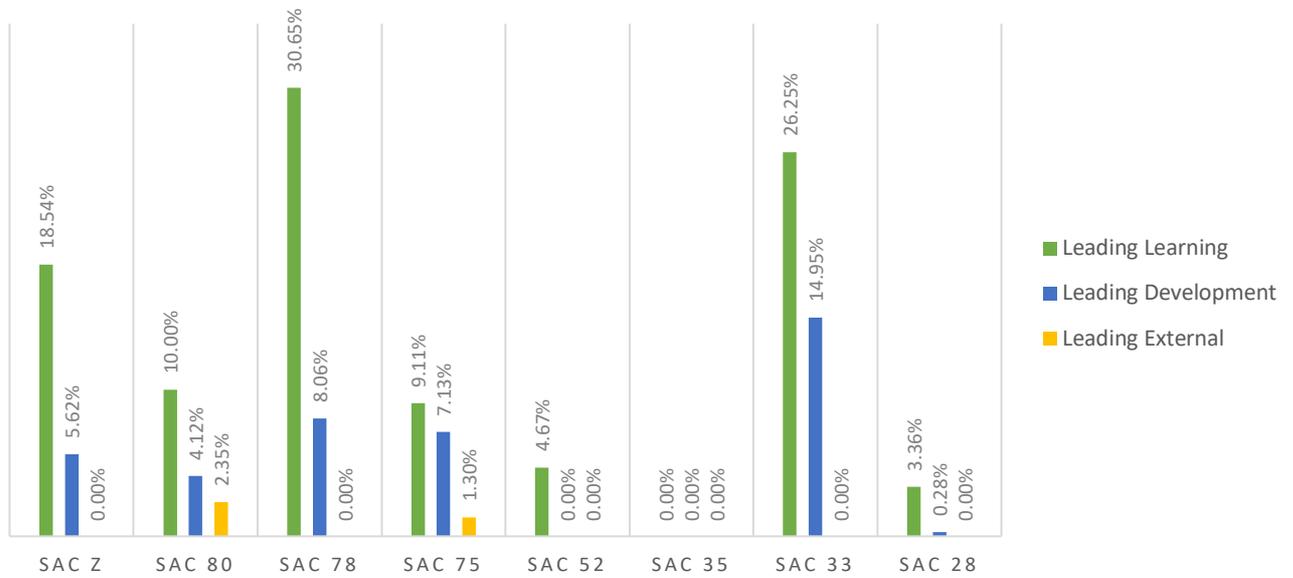


Figure 9 Time-use on three leadership activities by SACs

With a focus on re-authorisation in the PYP and authorisation in DP, the work pattern and time-use are functionally similar across the SACs: the majority of time is spent on Level 1, less on Level 2 and minimal amounts on Level 3. Some SACs reported that they do not participate in leadership activities at all. Furthermore, only a few of the SACs participate in Level 3 leadership activities.

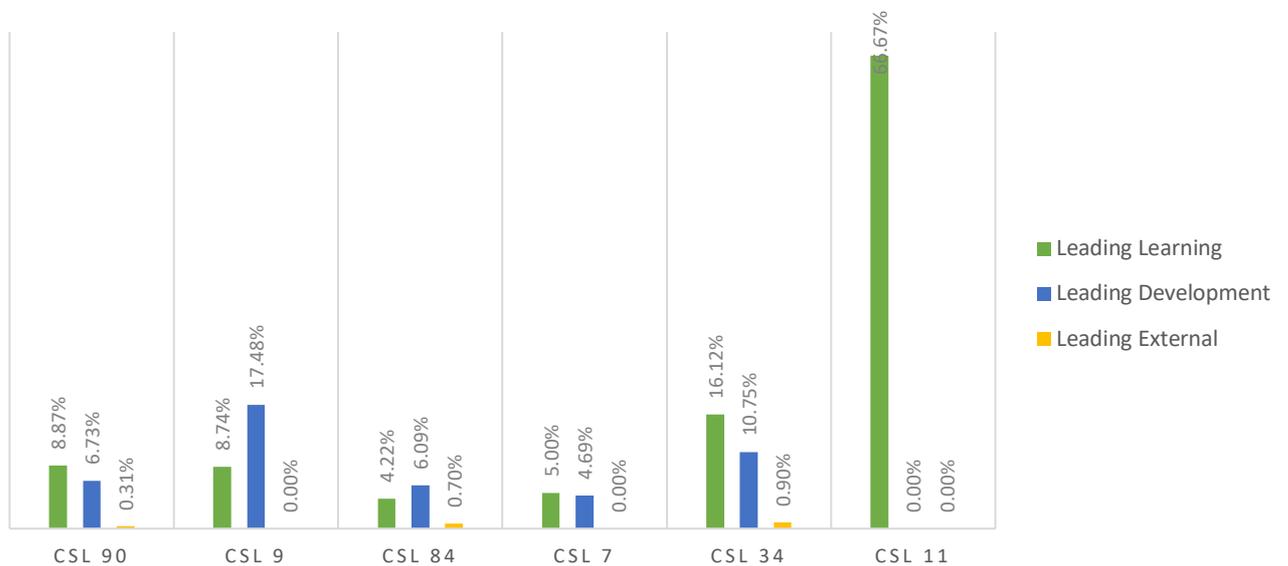


Figure 10 Time-use on three leadership activities by CSLs

When turning to how Cross-School Leaders (CSLs) use their working hours, their time-use patterns on leadership are clearly dissimilar. However, they demonstrate a common trait in the lack of time they spend on L3 leadership activities. CSL 9 engagement in development resonates with the work to prepare the Kindergarten for PYP re-authorisation. Similarly, CSL 34 role of coordinating student development across the school results in her spending

proportionately more time in developing school-wide policies and practices in comparison with other CSL.

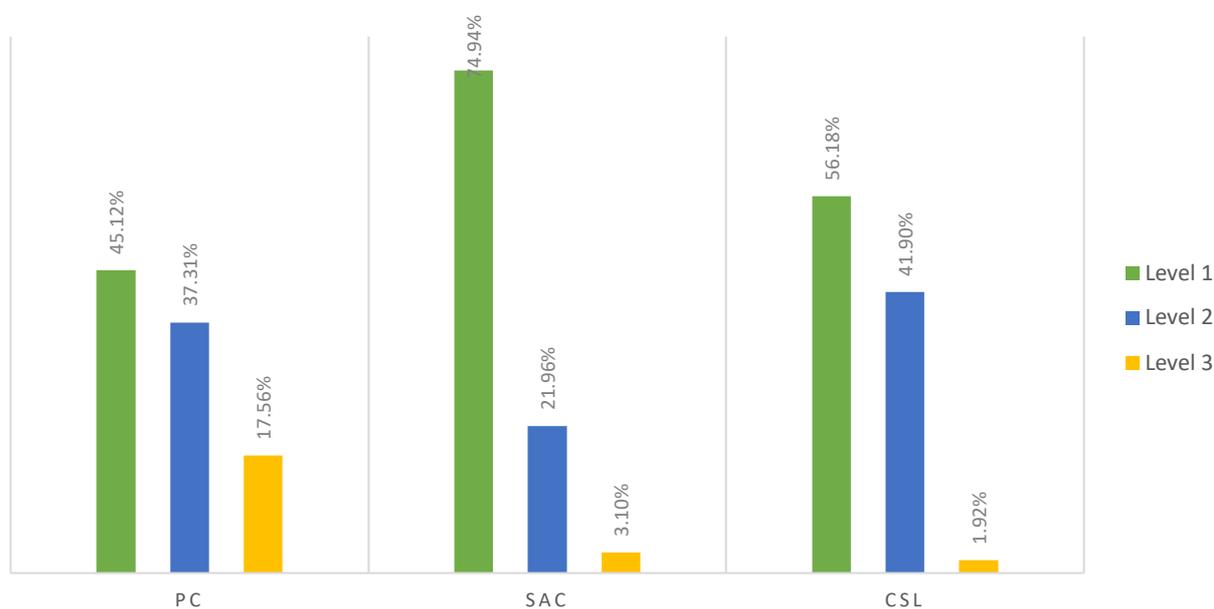


Figure 11 Comparison of time-use proportion in 3 leadership levels

When looking solely at the time spent on leadership tasks, the in-school comparison shows the PCs, SACs and CSLs have the same pattern of time-use in three leadership activities although to varying degrees (see Figure 11). PCs and CSLs prioritise their time relatively, equally on Level 1 and Level 2 tasks while PCs spend a significant amount of time on Level 3 activities. CSLs spent negligible amounts of time on Level 3 during the time survey data collection. SACs spend almost three-quarters of their total time on leading Teaching and Learning and 1/5 of their time on building capacity in the school. This supports the qualitative data which shows vertical articulation between programme is becoming a priority, particularly with MYP / DP Teachers (refer to p. 27) but also within Science Education as well.

### 3.7 Chapter summary

MLs at China School are those who hold formal positions within the organizational structure of the school, receive a stipend and have a specific job description. They lead teams which could be vertical (often subject-based) or horizontal (often grade based) and almost, entirely focus on teaching and learning or supporting students. Their roles are clearly defined and often fall within one of the three IB programmes, such as is the case with the four PCs. Despite this, many SACs, particularly in the secondary section, work across two programmes.

MLs efforts are focused on the promotion of quality teaching and learning. In order to achieve that end, much effort is channelled towards the creation of robust structures of planning and resource accumulation underpinned by active and democratic communities of practice. Significant time and financial resources are provided to ensure that high impact,

quality PD is undertaken. MLs further amplify the culture of distributed leadership within their teams, providing opportunities for teachers to lead projects and initiatives themselves. They focus resources to where they are needed and seek expertise and consensus when faced with problems of practice.

Middle leadership at China School revolves around the work of teams. The leadership culture of the school discourages “lone wolves” and encourages collaboration and consensus. Effective MLs, particularly in the primary division, work closely with teachers to develop planners and units of inquiry in preparation for IB re-authorisation. Meanwhile, SACs in the secondary division are pooling the talent of their teams, not only to plan brand new units for the DP but simultaneously, the subject leads are critically analysing the MYP units in order to “fill in the gaps” to ensure adequate vertical articulation. Provided with structured meeting times within the school timetable, and occasional, visionary release time from the senior leadership to speed up teamwork at critical moments, the mood and sense of achievement of the teams reflect positively on MLs’ traits of leadership.

By encouraging a school culture of collective action, the leadership of the school, from the senior leadership team via the ML layer of PCs and subject/grade leads create an environment where multiple voices are encouraged. Throughout this case study, we can see evidence of how various leadership traits are employed to varying degrees of success. Those leaders who remain technical and use a limited range of tools, such as email and memos, tend to be far less effective than those who demonstrate high norms of collegiality and collaboration. This in turn encourages teachers to work more closely together and to be willing to be informal leaders when required. Transparency, when evident, further cements the work of the team and when absent, creates distrust and animosity, which reduces the efficacy of teachers’ work. The willingness of the faculty to rally behind their MLs is influenced by the leadership practices demonstrated by the ML and the confidence the senior leadership has in those MLs.



## Hong Kong Report

Hong Kong Report



## **4 Hong Kong School**

### **4.1 School background**

Hong Kong School was set up by an established and successful Consortium to serve the needs of both local and expatriate communities in Hong Kong. It is a full Years 1 to 13 school offering the International Baccalaureate (IB), Primary Years Programme (PYP) for Years 1-6, Middle Years Programme (MYP) for Years 7-11, and Diploma Programme (DP) for Years 12-13. However, the school is not a part of the regular network of schools organised by the Consortium. Instead, it is a Private Independent School (PIS). Unlike the other schools run by the Consortium, this school has no catchment area in its admission policy and students from all over Hong Kong can apply to study. The school community enjoys exceptional facilities on a state-of-the-art campus. For PIS campuses, there is no recurrent annual grant provided to the school by the HKSAR Government, i.e. student places are not 'subvented' in the way that other Consortium run schools are.

### **4.2 Vision and purpose**

The school's vision is aligned with a mindfulness statement that encourages the students to commit to celebrating its diversity where people know themselves and others, and demonstrate empathy by thinking globally and acting ethically. The three core components of international mindedness at the school are - Intercultural understanding, Global engagement and Multilingualism. This is underpinned by the mission and Learner Profile of the IB.

In addition to the IB curriculum, which includes specialist courses in the performing arts and physical education from Year 1, sports and outdoor activities play a major part in the lives of the students at the school. Sports are provided not only through a comprehensive and highly competitive College program, but also through powerful local sports clubs in the area where the school is located. Likewise, co-curricular activities provide students with opportunities to explore new interests across a wide range of areas. The school has, in addition, a strong pastoral care element, which looks at the all-round growth of each student.

### **4.3 The consortium**

The Consortium runs multiple primary and secondary schools, enrolling over 7,700 students from 75 different countries. Each is accountable to School Council in accordance with the resolutions of the Board of Governors. Within this framework, its main responsibilities include working with the Principal to establish a strategic direction, approving the curriculum, ensuring that the needs of students are met and approving the annual budget. School councils are also responsible for approving senior appointments, implementing effective procedures for staff management and development and, most importantly, appraising the performance of the Principal. Each council comprises of a Chairman and representatives of parents, teachers, support staff and the wider community, as well as the Chief Executive's representative.

#### **4.4 Students and teachers**

The staff represents more than 20 nationalities. The student population comprises more than 45 nationalities and almost as many mother tongues. The school uses English as the medium for teaching and learning, with a strong emphasis on the acquisition of Chinese (Mandarin) as a second language and the development of international-mindedness.

#### **4.5 Formal organisational structure**

A Principal leads the whole school. The senior leadership team comprises of the Deputy Head of College, the Head of Secondary, the Head of Primary and a Business Manager (not a participant of this study). Three Vice Principals (VPs), two of whom are the DP and MYP coordinators respectively, assist the Head of Secondary. Similarly, the Head of Primary is assisted by three VPs, of whom one is the PYP. There is also a Community Engagement Coordinator. In addition, the subject areas in the Secondary school have their heads (Subject Area Coordinator). Each Year group in the secondary school has its own Dean. While the SACs look after their specific subject areas, the Deans have a portfolio of subject courses which pastoral care forms an essential component. Therefore, the school has three strands of middle leadership functioning in its operational schema and they form a metaphorical grid whereby the PCs have a more 'vertical' role as do the SACs, the Deans on the other hand have roles that are more horizontal in nature.

#### **4.6 Participants**

This study aims primarily to examine the practices of MLs in schools from the theoretical perspective that leadership is broadly distributed within schools. As in the case of many qualitative studies, a degree of flexibility has to be adopted regarding the participants. This reflects the degree of access granted by schools, the participants selected by school leaders, and the freedom of individuals to choose to opt out of the study and its different data collection mechanisms. Twelve individual interviews were conducted in this school and each interview participant had a formal positional leadership role. The Head of Secondary (HoS) and the Secondary School Principal (SSP) are classified as the SLs amongst the participants. There are three categories of MLs - the PYP Coordinator (PSVP/PYPC), MYP Coordinator (SSVP/MYPC) and DP Coordinator (SSVP/DPC) are the IB Coordinators (PCs). The PCs have dual roles as the VPs. The Dean of Year 8, Dean of Year 9, Dean of Year 12 and Community Engagement Coordinator are Cross-School Leaders (CSLs). The Head of Drama, Head of Humanities, and the Head of Language Acquisition are the Subject Area Coordinators or Special Area Coordinators (SACs). The interview participants also participated in the time-use survey and advice network analysis. At the beginning of individual interviews, the participants reviewed the finding of the time-use survey and provided comments on the findings. Also, focus group discussions took place with groups of teachers from PYP and MYP, respectively. Together, the collated data provides insights into the work of MLs in the school.

Table 9 Interview participants and their positional roles within the school organisation (Hong Kong)

Title	Code / Node No.	Level
Head of Secondary	HoS	SL
Principal	SSP	SL
PYP Coordinator & VP	PSVP/PYPC	PC
MYP Coordinator & VP	SSVP/MYPC	PC
DP Coordinator & VP	SSVP/DPC	PC
Head of Drama	SAC	SAC
Head of Humanities	SAC	SAC
Head of Language Acquisition	SAC	SAC
Dean of Y8	CSL	CSL
Dean of Y9	CSL	CSL
Dean of Y12	CSL	CSL
Community Engagement Coordinator	CSL	CSL
PYP Teacher Focus Group	Teachers	Teachers
MYP Teacher Focus Group	Teachers	Teachers

#### 4.7 Middle leadership: expectations, beliefs and understandings

To develop a more holistic understanding of middle leadership, the study incorporated three sets of participants: SLs, MLs (this was the largest pool of participants) and teachers. The collated data provides a comprehensive view of the functioning of middle leadership in this school. As SLs set the parameters of MLs' work, this section delineates SLs' perspectives on middle leadership.

##### 4.7.1 Senior leaders' expectations of middle leadership

The SSP pointed out that each strand of middle leadership was created to meet the specific needs of the school at different times in the school's history. The school started with the MYPC and gradually added on Heads of Departments, the DP and finally the Deans. The implication here is that each of the leadership roles is clearly thought out – and leaders work individually and in teams in networks as the situation demands. It is also apparent from the data, that the middle leadership roles can be changed (as in the case of the Primary school) keeping in mind the contingencies of the context.

## **Shared leadership**

The SSP stated that he believed that the school had a “devolved” model of leadership where leadership tasks were shared amongst many and that “the ownership and responsibility for certain elements of the school [are given] to different people.” The organisational structure in the school is egalitarian and the Principal emphasized that there was absolute transparency in all that he did. A conceptual orientation such as this underpins a model of leadership that is distributed in nature, as leadership tasks dispersed in an organized manner across a number of people.

## **Collegial integration**

Overall, the senior leadership team viewed the MLs through a collegial lens. They expected the MLs to work alongside them and with each other in the promotion of the school’s academic and pastoral programs. The HoS pointed out that the heart of all leadership activity is curriculum leadership and noted that in curriculum leadership teams there is integration between the PCs, SLs and others. Therefore, he noted that middle leadership is ‘flatter’ in structure in the school.

## **Symbolic leadership**

An underlying belief amongst the SLs was that MLs need to be both operational and “symbolic” leaders in order to bring a positive influence to their team members. Unequivocally, MLs and teachers are expected to have expertise in their areas and, especially in this context, have an understanding of international mores.

The SLs select or recruit MLs with personal qualities and traits that the MLs were expected to possess.

One of the important things that I look for in the recruitment of MLs is the understanding of leadership as an activity. So we often ask questions that require a conceptual understanding of the influence ... to get away from this idea that leadership is administrative in nature but that actually about working with people and getting the best out of other people. So developing the curriculum working with other colleagues to develop their understanding of the curriculum particularly in an IB context in which the key thing is the mindset and the conceptual understanding of what you're doing by that in the curriculum because there is a defined philosophy or ethos around it and parts of arriving at an IB School.

## **IB and middle leadership**

As noted by the HoS, a key task of the PCs in terms of curriculum planning is to make all the teachers familiar with the IB ethos. They are expected to define and deliver the IB philosophy and tenets to teachers, design curriculum to match the IB emphasis, develop teachers’ mindset and knowledge in the IB context and engage in cross-curricular collaboration.

### **4.7.2 Middle leaders’ understanding of their roles**

## Systemic leadership

The MLs believe that they have systemic influence both within the school's organizational structure and in the extended environment of the IB and the Consortium. While SACs have more explicit links to the actual business of teaching and learning, the PCs have an instructional leadership dimension in their roles and the Grade Level Leaders (GLL), or Deans, share the pastoral care of the students as an area of responsibility (along with academic leadership). In short, the leadership of the MLs depends on the exact nature of their professional responsibilities:

So a Dean would probably have a very different pattern to a SAC or to the CAS [Creativity, activity, service] coordinator or something like that - probably depends on where they are as to where the emphasis is on... (SAC)

## Interconnected leadership roles

By and large, the model of middle leadership in the school is one of interconnectedness and collaboration – thereby, the inference is that leadership is distributed across some individuals and not clustered amongst a few. It also highlights the fact that there is not one subject area that is prioritised above another. Explaining the context, the HoS noted:

That is also quite an important philosophical position because it means that there isn't a privilege of one subject area over another for instance the head of visual arts is it the same position and structure as the head of English and the head of PE is that the same position and structure as the head of maths.... we are all leaders of the whole school so everyone shares a responsibility of the whole school leadership even where they might specialise in a particular subject area. So that flatness of structure we benefit enormously from as well and our Deans are an important part of that.

### 4.7.3 Teachers' expectations of middle leadership

The data highlights that the expectations of the SLs and the beliefs of the MLs are compatible and congruent. Conversely, data from the focus groups highlight a factor that is somewhat different. The MYP and PYP focus group teachers had a clear idea of whom to approach when they needed to do so (the respective PCs in most cases). In both groups, the notion of middle leadership is aligned with a model of distributed leadership with leadership being clearly spread out among different individuals. However, there appeared to be a need for better communication between SACs and Coordinators on the one hand and the teachers on the other hand. A participant stated, "I have email contact with my department head many times during the week. Face-to-face there are two floors of difference". Another stated, "Occasionally we see [ML] for a couple of minutes during the meeting but generally not..." There appears to be more instances of direct communication between the PYP teachers and the coordinators. A participant pointed out that this was because the PYPC was also the PSVP and this was not the case earlier when as a teacher he saw little of the PYPC.

While of course, there could be multiple reasons why there are disconnections. Further, a *prima facie* assumption based of the data from a focus group interview as a whole may not suggest that there is a significant problem, but this is an issue that may be noted.

## 4.8 Level 1 leadership: leading for teaching and learning

### 4.8.1 Leaders-plus: who are the leaders?

This section examines middle leadership in the area of teaching and learning, or instruction. It considers the perceived leadership activity of MLs in areas such as curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, reporting and academic attainment. Most MLs identified level one leadership as comprising their core work. "Curriculum leadership at the heart of what the school is doing in terms of its leadership", remarked the HoS and this captures the essence of leadership, senior and middle, in this school. All the participants who were interviewed believed that, in one way or another, the central core of their roles was linked to leadership over various aspects of teaching and learning in a model that is distributed in nature.

#### IB Programme Coordinators

The MYPC emphasised that much of his role was educating the teachers to see the "elegance" of the MYP curriculum as some of the teachers found it to be a challenge. He worked with teaching teams to highlight different components of each subject area:

... the design department came to me with a particular scheme of work which is very skills-based and they were wondering about how do you teach that in a conceptually-based framework. So, it was a case of sitting down, starting off with what's the broader purpose of the unit, finding some conceptual links that are aligned with the conceptual statements that are scaffolded with questions that range from factual through to debatable, to help them to scaffold their work, so helping them to define their lines of inquiry, and then building their unit from that bigger purpose.

The SSVP/DPC pointed out that his job was meeting with the teachers and ironing out any issues with the curriculum. He saw it is "managing the curriculum". This included working one-on-one with the teachers in improving pedagogy, developing curriculum, instruction and assessment and by being around the teachers on a day-to-day basis helping them out. The PSVP/PYPC said that his classroom interaction was "strategic" and had "real intent connected with the curriculum". He also engaged in co-teaching with the teachers if the situation demanded as a way of mentoring them.

#### Subject Area Coordinators

The SACs related perspectives similar to that of the PCs and SLs - that their impact was strengthened by sharing leadership. They worked closely with teachers and the PCs on teaching and learning related activities, both formally and informally (for example sharing ideas about assessment). They were the first point of contact when there were issues directly related to the curriculum on an everyday basis. A SAC said, "I have people coming to me to run ideas past me or to brainstorm together what to ask, advice or that kind of thing".

However, his role had an administrative dimension, as he was responsible for documentation as well:

Moreover, it has a lot to do with the written curriculum and documenting of things. ...this is always ongoing for building quality curriculum, the BQC for the IB. So having to get our units all written up with all the bits filled in and things like that... it's

part of the documentation but it is part of the taught curriculum and also the written curriculum, so we're spending quite a lot of time on that now ...

### **Grade Level Leaders**

Notions of shared leadership tasks extend to the leadership capacity of the GLL as well. Their work is largely pastoral in nature and they focus on the all-around well-being of the students. Coping with and dealing with a challenging curriculum adds stress to the Upper Year students as the GLL 12 defined this role as:

Its student support, it's monitoring - all about Year 12 students in terms of their health and wellbeing and also academics. It's a leadership role. I work very closely with [SSVP/DPC] just in developing our programme strengthening our programme and ensuring that our have that students feel safe, they feel well looked after, that they are in an environment that they can maximise the personal or academic potential.

Similarly, the GLL Years 8 and 9 pointed out that they were involved in smoothing out students' issues brought about by adolescence.

#### **4.8.2 The practice: what and how do they lead?**

Overall, the data highlights that leadership tasks are distributed when it came to middle leadership and teaching and learning. Leaders worked in teams and groups (for example, Coordinators with SACs and GLLs, SACs with GLLs and teachers, GLLs with Coordinators) to enhance the teaching and learning experiences in the school.

### **Setting up the curriculum**

In this school, the SSVP/DPC had taken leadership in planning the Year group programmes from its genesis. He worked with SACs on curriculum planning, managing programme schedules and troubleshooting any potential problems with programme planning. Though he was in charge of the overall planning, the SACs had their demarcated responsibilities too. The SACs in turn formed their network and teams by working with the teachers:

When I came to this school, I started off the programme from scratch. The school did not have Year 12 or 13. I spent much time working with the SACs to design curriculums at the diploma level. ...The SACs had to develop course outlines to describe and explain how they were delivering the course to students, including the selection of teaching material and resources, and the sequences of learning activities for each unit. We had developed a unit planner that we would use, even though it was not compulsory for the diploma. ...I worked with the SACs to set the expectations and authorisation before we started teaching the programme. The SACs would work with their teachers to ensure their departments were well prepared [...] I was responsible for coordinating and managing that whole process from start to finish.

### **Working collaboratively on the curriculum**

Mirroring the discussion delineated above, the MYPC also pointed out the teamwork that went into delivering the MYP curriculum:

I have team members that help me out with the implementation of the learning framework, approaches to learning (ATL). ...Within the MYP learning platform, we built

in a creative capacity to see links with ATL across different programmes – not just across different planners, but also across different subject areas.

The PSVP/PYPC worked with GLL and brought in trans-disciplinary programmes that merged the learning units and the extra-curricular activities. He stated that his, “key role is also to ensure the articulation of the program aligning horizontally and vertically. “To bring about alignment and consistency he noted:

I am working collaboratively and modelling best practice around different aspects for staff members intentionally. I lead professional learning opportunities at school depends on what the schools’ priorities are. I go in and work with the team leader to find out what they have noticed in term of the strengths of the unit and the part they would like to pay more attention to. The team leaders and I will discuss the issues and work collaboratively with the team. I act as a consultant and curriculum leader.

At the subject level, the SACs and GLLs worked on implementing the ATLs in their curriculum. The SACs examined the framework and considered how the framework could fit into their curriculum:

We are allowed to have two days off to work through our unit plans, looking at the statements of inquiry and how we embed the ATLs explicitly in our subject.

As far as the delivery of the curriculum is concerned, the GLL and PCs enjoyed the flexibility to change their pedagogies and adjust the timetable to maintain students’ motivation and to satisfy their education needs. In addition, the GLL and the Coordinators stressed the importance of imparting and discussing issues that had more extensive educational value to the students, as a SAC pointed out, “We ended up teaching concepts in the programme rather than text *per se*”. Teaching concepts like plagiarism often lend itself to deeper interactions with the students as:

It provides an opportunity to teach students referencing skills and help them to be successful in secondary level. The unit also frees us to sit and conference with students, talking about what they enjoy doing in that programme. They see their strengths, in reading, writing, speaking and presenting, that need development. (CSL)

However, interactions with the students occasionally gave rise to controversial topics. For example, gauging how to deal with such situations, how much to discuss and how to “cradle” the students is also a part of the leadership repertoire.

### **Interdisciplinary curriculum collaboration**

Within the faculty, SACs were involved in curriculum collaboration. For example, in the area of the Arts, students were assigned topics that allowed them to blend the subjects within the scope of the arts autonomously:

I have been working on interdisciplinary unit planning. The whole Arts Faculty get together and assign the Year 11 kids a topic. They can do whatever they want, like a mixture of Arts Music and Drama. They can do a live performance, an art piece or a film. I think that is intra-disciplinary. (SAC)

Likewise, the GLL communicated with the SACs to find the natural linkage that connected subject learning with the informal curriculum. For example, a GLL pointed out that he was

trying to see if there were any links between Science and Sex Education to promote better learning:

We are trying to build in more connections by using the MYP unit planner. For example, for the sex education program, I might talk to the Science Department and see what they have covered, and we will teach in a different angle...The teachers may suggest changes and then it is up to me to make those changes. I will also talk to my students and the SLs before I make any change.

### **Bridging transitional challenges**

The students were likely to face transitional challenges when they moved from one IB level to another. In response, the SACs and GLLs held meetings with the members of the subject areas, reviewing its scope and sequence, identifying the obstacles for learning, and addressing the consistency of the learning contents, in order to foster a smooth transition from a year programme to another:

A SAC will meet their department four times a year to find out what students are struggling with and try to improve their abilities in this area. [...] We review the strategic goals of the school and what we would like to see next year. We try to formalise the topics connecting between upper primary and lower year programmes. (SAC)

There has been a big drive with these ATLs in the MYP curriculum. My particular focus is to aid students in transiting from Middle Year to Diploma Year. We are remapping students [ATL] skills with the IB programme since the ATLs in the primary programme are slightly different from those in the secondary programme (CSL)

### **Pastoral and co-curricular leadership**

In line with the vision and ethos of the school and the IB, pastoral care and co-curricular activities of the school are high in priority for all levels of middle leadership, though it factors in more in the responsibilities of the GLL. In addition to the academic curriculum, MLs also led co-curricular programmes and this gave them an opportunity to get to know the extended school community better:

The MLs are the basketball coaches, leading a music ensemble or leading other extra-curricular activities. We are looking for them to be role models in terms of their involvement in tasks like the co-curricular programme, excursions and contact with parents. You would see many parents instantly recognise our staff because we both have fairly organic interactions, as this is a part of their child's life (SL).

GLL, PCs and SLs work closely together to develop and oversee pastoral programmes. A GLL stated that his vision for the pastoral programmes echoed the ATL programme:

I have been looking at the relationship between the pastoral programme and the ATLs. ...I am looking at how I could transfer those into the pastoral care program and into the wellbeing lessons that we write for the students. I am thinking how should draw those skills and resources into those lessons.

Some PCs also highlighted their effort in engaging with the pastoral programme. For example:

The pastoral work takes up a huge chunk of my time. Student issue arises, as it is the nature that students sometimes require urgent attention. When that happens, which happens fairly frequently, it does take up a fair chunk of my day. (MYPC)

#### **4.8.3 The situation: tools, routines and contexts?**

In order to accomplish the work of instructional leadership, SLs and MLs utilize structures, frameworks and mechanisms either devised by the IB or crafted by them. Tools include documents, rubrics, criteria that direct leadership activity by focusing efforts and energies. Routines are established, regularly scheduled events that are used to facilitate engagement leadership by supporting time-bound progression or completion of tasks. Contextual issues may also determine the focus of leaders' energies.

##### **IB tools**

In this school, IB tools have helped MLs to be on track with the requirements of the curriculum. However, they have modified these tools to suit the demands of their context. One such modification is seen in the case of the MYP planner. The MYPC noted:

It's working with the consortium, this school was established as three programme school. The other schools in the consortium - the secondary schools for a number of years have been IGCSE in the middle years and then the IB Diploma the last two years. And now they are all making a move to adopt the MYP. So I suppose that justified the investment in building the scope in the MYP planning tool, which we've only just rolled out – so we've spoken about little glitches and bugs and the heads of department have been fantastic about making suggestions on how to enhance it further and there are some extra hacks that I want to put in as well... this school that brought the expertise in terms of functionality, what should go where in a particular place – little enhancements that we could see that might improve planning. Such things like pop-ups that provide advice on how to complete part of the planner or MYP Plus statements. And being the school with eight years of MYP out of a bunch with none, the design was really driven by us. Some of those schools had user trials, but in terms of contributing – the most significant contribution was the functionality that came from us.

As can be seen in the extract above, the MYPC is taking the lead to bring about changes in other schools in the system as well.

##### **Feedback as a tool**

Feedback is a powerful tool to promote leadership activities and drive better practices in schools. Some SACs have put in place a formal feedback system as an effective tool to bring about better pedagogical processes that are aligned with the needs of the students. This feedback was received in a systematic manner and had dual inputs – views from the students and the teacher's self-reflection:

Our school values students' voices. As a ML, we try to support the school values and encourage teachers to follow these too. Due to the limitation of class time, teachers in my department use different ways to collect opinions, such as delivering survey form in the mid-term asking students' feeling of the teaching. Teachers also reflect on our teaching and suggest how we should improve our teaching. That helps student learning.

The IB offered an even more formalized process of feedback. After curriculum auditing by the IB, SACs responded to the feedback from the IB. By reviewing the feedback with their panel members and documenting the proposed changes, the extract below highlights how the leaders react to the feedback in order to bring about change:

We have to do a lot on the written curriculum documenting for IB's Building Quality Curriculum (BQC), to get our units all written up. The feedback from the BQC last year suggested that there was an area we were not performing or documenting very well. So I am in the lead team for the ATL, so our team meets regularly and reviews the curriculum at school. (SAC)

## **Routines**

The data highlights that due to its unique position of being a part of an established group of schools run by the Consortium, and also by virtue of it being established as a continuum school, certain structures are in place that has helped the MLs and teachers by way of standardisation of procedures. As the SSVP/DPC joined the school at the genesis of the DP, he developed templates used to guide the process and help clarify expectations and outcomes by developing a unit planner (not a necessity at the Diploma stage) that provided all the elements of a functional unit and how it would be taught. He noted that SACs are expected to work with newcomers, who would also be sent to workshops, to help set expectations of what needs to be done to teach the course, understand the expectations of the course and their preparation and documentation in place.

### **4.8.4 Support**

A key support for the MLs is the culture of collegial culture that the school offers. For example, a CSL pointed out:

In terms of PD - as yet I haven't had any specific to the Dean's role. I would say that the support from the Deans that are in place has been very good - more than adequate for me to feel well-supported and to feel that I've got exactly what I need here and who knows the students and the community better than the people who have been here for a while? You go to these workshops and sometimes it's kind of one model fits all - sometimes it doesn't right? We've got people here who know the community very well and they're a valuable resource... I learn on the job and find your own feet and develop organically I suppose in the role.

However, being a colleague and a leader simultaneously can be challenging and the leaders have to negotiate both roles very carefully.

## **The IB as a context of instructional leadership**

The PCs had the responsibility to align the IB policies with the school's vision and mission. Some PCs had to adjust their year programmes when there were changes of IB policies or school's direction. However, when IB requested the school to change beyond the year programme level, the accountability fell to the "college leadership level":

I have direct input into the mandatory IB policies. ..We do reviews, guide changes then we will shift our year programmes. Other than this, we review what the IB evaluates. ...The IB reflected there were some changes needed. (MYPC)

To be more specific, the PCs had to ensure the curriculum planning was aligned with the requirements of IB:

For the IB evaluation, we have to submit the planners for the written curriculum at different year levels, its associated addendum and its specialisms. Beyond that, that is up to the teams. The IB does not require a format of the scope and sequence document and the yearly overview. It is more school-based, and we need to make sure we have aligned the requirement vertical and horizontal across the school. [...] I need to do curriculum mapping. Last year, the new scope and sequence document of the science programme came out. We looked at the document and aligned the outcome [components required by IB] with our science capacity and potential opportunities that we can strengthen our science units. (PSVP/PYPC)

Some PCs were developing strategies that had the potential to enhance productivity in curriculum planning:

I want to set up a planning tool to ease the planning process and to increase the transparency of planning. Ultimately, it will build up a database of explicit strategies and learning experiences for teaching ATL. ...I think the planning tool can serve all curriculum areas, to reduce the document load. (SSVP/MYPC)

However, the leader pointed out that it is important to cohere with the initiatives with IB requirements to maximize its effectiveness. The PCs, therefore, played an essential role to define and elaborate the requirements or policies of the IB.

### **Promoting innovations**

The IB has a number of conceptual and skill-set factors and parameters. For example, as the participants pointed out, the Approaches to Learning framework, has five skills categories, ten clusters, and across all of that, there are 139 skill indicators. So, when a unit of work is planned teachers need to select two, three, or maybe four skills and these have to be indicated on the planner and teaching and learning experiences follow this.

Currently, in a drive for change and better practice, an electronic system is being put into place by SSVP/DPC to promote best practices by way of creating a database of explicit strategies and learning experiences for teaching ATL. In other words, this is an innovation to enhance the IB experience still further. The SSVP/DPC believed that by having, “such a system there would be little need for additional documentation and would also give an opportunity to make continuous updates so the teaching and learning process does not become static “. He noted that teachers had heavy workloads and, therefore, he was keen to simplify the work of the teachers.

### **Finding vertical alignment**

Being a continuum school, the capacity of the school, is intrinsically dependent on finding alignment between PYP, MYP and DP. The SSP explained the specific needs for a continuum school with regards to alignment:

For the first three years, we opened one of their major targets in a strategic plan for what we called One School. So that was another thing that we wanted - we didn't

want to be a primary school or a secondary school. We didn't want to be a PYP and MYP Diploma School - we wanted to be one school.

Amongst others, the Head of secondary noted that it requires continual energy and investment to ensure that there is cogency across three sections. On the subject of alignment, data from the MYP focus group (teachers) reveals that this is an area that needs improvement.

### **Nesting within networks**

Being a part of the IB, the MLs were also a part of a larger network like the Pearl River Delta Network for schools in Hong Kong, Guangdong province and Macau. This is a well-developed network with regular meetings three or four times a year and an email group which has now become a basecamp group under the auspices of the IB regional office. The SSVF/DPC stated:

I guess, if I need clarification on IB stuff, I just go straight to IB answers and ask the question and get clarification occasionally. That's pretty rare - usually I can find the answer in the documentation. If you just read all the stuff you're given, generally the answer is in there, and after a few years reading all that stuff and been through it a few times, usually I either know the answer or I know where to go but if I don't, I would just go straight to IB answers and that's quite useful.

#### **4.9 Level 2 leadership: leading for capacity building**

In the previous section, the discussion centered around middle leadership and its impact on teaching and learning, which the participants tended to view as their core work. At this level of leadership, their work was aligned with the factors related to the development and delivery of the curriculum (both IB and co-curricular). In addition, they provided a supportive network for their colleagues in these areas. The IB curriculum is complex and challenging. Therefore, a lot of thought and innovation went into creating and maintaining best pedagogical practices. In addition, though not strictly academic, weight was also given to the pastoral care of the students – this is in line with the school and IB vision of a holistic education that provided for the all-round growth of the students.

This section deals with the capacity building activities that the MLs engage in. In general, school capacity building is considered to be strategies and plans that are enacted at the whole school level to bring about positive influence and growth, and is seen to bring about improvement. In practical terms this captures the efforts taken by the MLs to devise strategies and plans under the umbrella of instructional leadership, thereby extending the PD and knowledge of the teachers and contributing to areas that transcend curriculum (like school policy). In sum, the capacity building includes the development of individual professional learning, and organisational capabilities to enact school vision, mission and policy.

##### **4.9.1 Leadership plus: who are the leaders?**

In a school setting, capacity building is generally seen as efforts to build and improve the expertise, skills and abilities of its members.

When it comes to building school-wide capacity most of the MLs participated in building capacity within the school. The SLs expected the MLs to engage in operational procedures that ensured building quality teaching teams in the school. The coordinators, SACs and GLLs worked collaboratively and in teams to add value to the school capacity while individual capacity building tasks like mentoring and coaching also took place regularly.

In the section above, it is clear that PCs, SACs and GLLs are all heavily invested in Teaching and Learning as a level of leadership. In this section, the findings reveal that the coordinators most often take capacity building activities (for example, IB related workshops), though SACs also have a significant role (liaising with other schools), with the GLLs being less active (though there is still a fair amount of participation like in mentoring), as their area of leadership is somewhat different.

#### 4.9.2 The practice: what and how do they lead?

##### **Contributing to the culture of egalitarianism**

The SP noted that all the leadership teams were focussed on building capacity and his role is supervisory in nature. He planned meetings with his leadership teams and was involved in both instructional as well as operational leadership. He noted that decisions taken were transparent and that there were “no hidden agendas”. A GLL emphasized:

Oh yes. I see this as being very much horizontal leadership that while we've got our positions of importance with our Principal and heads of school and things like that, after that, it becomes very much blurred, grey lines and people are at various aspects of it with their job descriptions and I think it means that there isn't a real top-down leadership model which I have worked in before which has not actually been pleasant at all because it was almost you don't question the top..... if there was ever a decision that was made and I didn't have a good understanding of what the reasons were, and I didn't think that it had been explained enough or in enough detail, then I would actually go and speak to either [names the senior leadership team]... So, I see it as far more a collaborative model of leadership than anything else.

Although the school is an international school, it is worth noting that a horizontal form of structure in a school in Asia is not the norm, as Asian schools tend to be hierarchical in structure. While explaining how the structure of the school came into being, including how the middle leadership team expanded both vertically (the coordinators) and horizontally (the Deans and SACs) the GLL also raised the issue that the administrative structure of the school was not static: “So the structure is constantly evolving and we will continually look at it. One of the focuses at the moment is how we structure community engagement, the whole notion of CAS in community engagement”.

##### **Distributing leadership tasks**

One of the significant ways that school capacity is enhanced in Hong Kong School is by building and disseminating leadership tasks. This devolves responsibilities from single individuals and helps in building professional knowledge amongst different members of the staff. The SSVP/MYPC said that working in teams is “liberating”. He went on to note that:

[working in teams] is a case of upskilling them in terms of PD because there's also some coaching and mentoring associated with that.... So it helps build capacity across

the school and that's helpful for me and it means that the MYP is not seen as a person's baby. It distributes the leadership around.

A GLL explained:

It's been a very long process to get to where we are because we've actually looked at other models and then trialled different things ...I mean we're moving in the right direction. So yeah, explaining the process and why we're doing the things and why the teachers have got to be doing the things but they have in their planners and their day-to-day lessons as well.

On the other hand, leaders, both formal and informal, work individually as well. The SSVP/DPC called it a "bottom-up approach" where innovative practices initiated by individual teachers are shared vertically upwards. Thus, in this school, informal leadership, that is leadership exhibited by individuals who are not positional leaders, is acknowledged to be positive by the MLs as it builds capacity in the school.

## **Professional development and personal capacity building**

### **Mentoring and coaching**

The data from this school suggests that a key function of all strands of MLs is the building of capacity, a point that was explicitly reinforced by the Principal. The IB curriculum can be potentially challenging, therefore, when new teachers joined the school, the PCs, SACs and GLL were involved in mentoring them and setting expectations for their responsibilities, while at the same time providing emotional support:

New teachers are not familiar with the programme. They need special attention. The SAC would set expectations of tasks to be done in teaching and work with them. Sometimes there is a new SAC! In this case, I would with them directly and ensure sure they understand the expectations from us in term of teaching and administration.  
(SSVP/DPC)

I am a mentor when new teachers come to the school. I have frequently given mentoring inside and outside the department... They may need somebody to talk to and to lean on (CSL)

The MLs by way of offering emotional support to the teachers when the occasion demanded offered an informal supportive network.

Even more expert MLs benefitted from mentoring. For example, the SSVP/MYPC has adopted is getting informal mentoring from a more experienced erstwhile coordinator who now resides elsewhere:

I have a good friend; she doesn't work at this school anymore. She now works as a consultant – in my view, is the best coordinator in Asia-Pacific or at least one of them and I'm lucky that she gives me some mentorship and is happy to talk to me at any time.... So if I need to clarify my thinking on a particular aspect of MYP, a Skype call with her could be for an hour. A lot of it is for my own learning curve but ultimately serves the school's purposes

### **Professional development – in-house and outside**

There were also a number of workshops and training offered by the IB and the Consortium. The DPC and SACs instigated an evaluative form after such sessions. To ensure and remind teachers what they had learnt from the workshop, evaluation forms have been developed so that the participant can summarize the learnt content and its implications. This attempt intended to help participants achieve the learning objectives and application in the workplace. After the form was submitted the MLs reviewed these with the attendees so that it became a structured learning exercise in building professional knowledge:

I think teachers need to attend training periodically to upskill themselves continuously. However, they are not necessarily going to listen to or absorbing anything. I have a form for them to fill in. For example, they need to formulate the statements of enquiry in a particular way, and they need to include key concepts that relate to you and the global context. I will read them and review the form with them. (SAC)

The professional capacity building did not have to be formal. For example, a SAC revealed that she had received ideas about assessment from a book recommended by a PC.

As far as the PD programs are concerned, the SSP stated that though he believed that off-site programs were good for capacity building, the school has a cap of the number of such programs that the staff could attend as he did not want the staff to spend too many days out of the school. Some MLs perceive that their capacity building and their engagement face restrictions as a result of this limitation:

I have started some workshops... MLs from other school invited me to go to their school and provide them with the faculty workshops. I had to say no because the school did not allow me to take a day off. It made me annoyed as the school talks about the flourishing community but they don't allow me to do that. ..., I totally disagree with the school requirement on the limitations for attending workshops. I think it limits the capacity of people like me to grow professionally as an individual. (SAC)

### **Building instructional capacity**

With teaching and learning perceived as the core functions of schools, the functioning of much of middle leadership is related to enhancing and dispersing instructional capacity in the school in a systematic and organized manner. For example, PCs strategically planned to build capacities of teachers across different departments, to prepare the teachers to share duties of year programme development or to take a leadership role in the future. The findings reveal that leadership capacity is being enhanced as teachers are being trained to take on future leadership roles:

I am looking at building up the skills and capacities of teachers and I can have them to lead different aspects of the MYP development. I try to be strategic, having teachers in different departments. It is an opportunity for symbolic leadership and an opportunity to develop those staff members. [...] I am also upskilling the teachers for PD. There is coaching and mentoring to develop teachers as leaders for MYP and the school. (SSVP/MYPC)

As seen from the extracts below, the PCs provided support and scaffolding for curriculum planning while GLLs educated their panel members to work on the development of ATLs required by the IB:

I sit with departments and help them to plan the scheme of work at the departmental level. A department just came to me with a particular scheme of work, which was skill-based. They were wondering how to teach in the concept-based framework. Then we sit down, started off with the broader purpose of the unit, found some conceptual links among conceptual statements. There were scaffolding and debates to help them to define their lines of inquiry and to develop units. Then they will find out where the skills fit in. The fitting in processes and the bigger conceptual focus can drive the unit. (SSVP/MYPC)

Our school is working with various initiatives. There has been a push for the ATL development. I am part of the lead team and I am responsible for the PD to ensure everyone at school is doing what the IB wants. (CSL)

In daily practice, the GLL worked on developing the capacity of Learning Advisors by bringing them closer to the students, enriching their knowledge in the pastoral programme and developing their capacity in pedagogy. They met together to evaluate the performance of Learning Advisors, identified areas for improvement, and offered additional PD support:

I work closely with the Learning Advisors to help them to develop and improve their relationship with students, and their capacity to deliver the [pastoral] programme. This comes up in the discussion in our Year Level Leader's meeting, in which we have to do a critical evaluation of the Learning Advisors for their growth. We should target the room for growth and consider what we can do in terms of PD for their roles. (CSL)

As teaching enquiry has become a common practice at schools for professional evaluation and development, some Deans worked on supporting the teaching enquiry and offered advice on development:

I have helped the teacher enquiry. I have spent an hour per week with staff members to do teacher enquiry, tried to improve an area of their practice. I have gathered and analysed the evidence for strategic planning for improvement. I have also helped the teachers to improve their pedagogy in term of diploma students writing analysis and essays. (CSL)

Even in instances when topics were beyond the leader's area of expertise, the SACs worked with the teachers to ensure that good teaching practices were taking place through various practices:

Some teachers are working on other modern languages, which I cannot monitor thoroughly. We can do some 10 minutes of cross-marking every fortnight. At least, they let me know what is happening in their subject area. (SAC)

To ensure quality practices in class, lessons were observations by SACs. They tended to monitor teaching and learning, in order to ensure the consistency of unit planning. These practices were formal and informal in nature. A GLL believed:

I would like to make sure teachers teaching properly so I work on lesson observations and monitoring student work. We are assessing all those things in the same way. I would like the unit planning to be in detail and it is important to be uniform. The observations are informal, but there are a couple of formal ones.

In order to add to the skill set and expertise of the MLs and to encourage change and innovation, the HoS emphasised:

one of the things we're thinking about doing this autumn is basically offering in-house to try and supplement the [Consortium] programmes something that's really geared towards existing ML colleagues, to try and basically bring in some expertise, to try and bring in some fresh thinking for people who have been doing the role for a while but really want to take it to the next level that's probably the biggest gap for them.

### **Professional and community network building**

The data highlights that the PCs had many opportunities to extend their leadership and to develop their own professional learning outside the school. For example, one coordinator proactively started a professional network of practice. After a period of interaction with PCs from other schools, the group decided to hone their professional skills further by forming a professional network. These Coordinators have the potential to influence the IB system, which they are trying to do methodically by collecting and collating of its members and writing a report that they have sent to the IB. Also they have developed a guide for leaders in the IB system:

I did start up the professional network. First, I sent emails to other CAS coordinators whom I have already known and whom I search for from the Web. We started up the CAS network in Hong Kong. We had some informal meeting and got the meetings rolling. I think this was an interesting opportunity for us to know each other and talk about CAS, as I do not have a peer to talk to at our school. [...], I got permission from the IB to hold workshops. I am writing a report to IB to share [our] points of view. The finalised report will become a guide for the IB. (CSL)

The SACs are also active in building knowledge sharing networks across other schools, and these were built either because of the IB or through personal relationships:

We often find the other schools request to visit us, as they know someone at our school. The SACs in other schools often write to us and ask for my permission to visit a particular department, since our SACs are in touch with them. The IB is a good network for people as well. I think many of our SACs have a high profile in their respective subject group and we often find they have inter-school connection and community network. (HoS)

This was reiterated by data from SACs who noted that SACs from different schools created PD opportunities for their panel members. They arranged school visits, which allowed their panel members to observe lessons and to shadow the teachers in this school. SACs also took turns to liaise with the Consortium and other SACs. The extract below explicitly states the organised manner in how such processes are developed:

We have a curriculum group cross the seven secondary schools under the same Consortium. We have PD together. Along with the curriculum, we try to use the common resources we have. We send our teachers to visit each other's schools to observe classes and discuss the curriculum development. The SAC from each school takes turns to be the chairperson of our group. Last year I was the chairperson. If there was anything coming from our Consortium, then the Consortium would notify me and I will tell the other SACs. We are naturally brother-sister schools and we work together. (SAC)

Though the GLLs noted that they did not have many opportunities to communicate with the IB, they were connected to leaders of other schools run by the Consortium. For example,

the GLLs exchanged best practices with other school leaders so that capacity building for their departments and programmes happened at both schools:

Within the capacity of the Year Level Leader's role, I would not need to communicate things with the IB. [...] I was at the coaching instructional session and one SL from another school mentioned their school had a strong pastoral programme. I got her in touch and we share how we do things at our school. She invited me to visit her school to see if their programme was helpful for us. Our schools have the same consortium, so we are open to sharing. They have just taken up the MYP and they would like seeing we have done. It was an excellent opportunity for us that we could support each other. (CSL)

### **Contributing to school-wide policies and initiatives**

The data reveals that by and large the SLs perceived that potentially all staff members could contribute to school-wide initiatives. One such way is by reviewing the existing school plan and suggesting initiatives for change. The School was on the cusp of implementing new initiatives based on the priorities given by the Collaborative Leadership Team (CLT). The Head of Secondary noted that:

All staff consultation is a part of the college-wide plan. We have a whole college meeting where everyone sits down, reviews the college plan from last year and gives comments on the next year's plans. It is not just middle leadership. It is the involvement of every attending teacher and supporting staff. ...We need to work out the priorities developed by the CLT, so we define concepts and plan the implementation schedule. We re-visit periodically during the year. (HoS)

However, there were sharply divided perceptions about the validity of this assumption by the MLs. On the one hand, some of the MLs believed that they did have a say in the school plan and indeed, one ML had contributed ideas for a change in assessment which was to be piloted as a new school initiative:

I had presented the idea of the creation of the assessment calendar for students to all the SACs. I had done a pilot... This is an opportunity for whole school initiative. You need to put your hand up and volunteer (CSL)

However, other MLs raised differing points of view. Some MLs perceived that they had limited participation in setting school's development goals and mission, as all these aspects were decided by the CLT:

I do not think I have involvement in the strategic planning. The CLT decides it and then the targets were filtered in the SAC meetings. I do not think we would sit down and say there are things that need to happen. (SAC)

The agenda is already set... I do not know if you would call them collaboration. That is more like idea sharing and dissemination of information. Certainly there was a discussion, but I do not know if people will work together. I am not sure how much collaboration there is. (PC)

Moreover, a SAC stated that his team was involved in identifying new practices and initiatives at school in a manner that did not allow the team members much time to do so. Despite this, if the school adopted new practices, the SAC would facilitate his team members to implement the new school-wide practice:

We might have been involved in identifying new practices, but honestly I do not think we spent much time on it. The PCs will offer new practices in the curriculum. If the year programme changes, we need to help the PCs... We will facilitate the teachers to implement the assigned new practices.” (SAC)

While it is difficult to ascertain the exact reason for this discrepancy, without further investigation, a possible explanation could be that school-wide planning does not apply to the entire school as some practices and policies are applicable to the secondary level, but not for primary level:

We spent time on school-wide initiatives across the secondary level, but not for the lower school. The secondary CLT leaders led us, and we all have an equal voice. (CSL)

Furthermore, the circumstances in different year groups may vary. Some PCs were concerned that additional innovations to the curriculum might overload students, who were already overworked with academic and extra-curricular activities. Instead, they would rather innovate in term of teaching and pedagogy:

There are many tasks in the final two years of education and students are thrown into that entire programme with the six subjects, ToK, CAS, extended essays and so on.... Some schools have talked about introducing a graduate diploma, which they need to do outside of DP... It looks like getting credit for the students, but it is dangerous and we may end up overloading the students.... Do we want to add more requirements to them for a better diploma? We decided not to do anything like that. They already have enough to do. I guess the innovations are often in the developments or changes in the way we teach. (SSVP/DPC)

#### 4.9.3 The situation: tools, routines and contexts

##### Appraisals and evaluations

Appraisals and Evaluations, together with its attending standardised procedures, form effective tools for ensuring quality and building capacity. The PCs assessed teacher performance through class observation and followed it up with formulated improvement plans and practices. This was a shared leadership task along with Department Heads and together they executed formal evaluation processes for teachers.

The data below is a clear indication of the formal step-by-step process of appraisals with feedback forming an important factor for understanding teacher performance with its underlying assumption that good pedagogy capacity to the instructional cache of the school:

I work on improving pedagogy. I observe lessons when I can. After the lesson observation, I provide feedback .... If I have any suggestions for improvement, I tend to frame them as questions. They are formative feedback. I was helping to manage a performance improvement plan. Appraisals will take place if needed. There are some formal appraisal processes taking place. ..If there are underperformance issues, then we have formal processes or dealing with those. (SSVP/MYPC)

With a strong focus on improving school performance and enhancing capacity building, the data highlights that the MLs take appraisals seriously. When there is constant underperformance or other contentious concerns about the teachers, there is scrutiny under a systematic process of evaluation, and if necessary the teacher’s contract may be not

renewed. Evaluation too is a shared process as the PCs work with the SACs and the teachers, either in teams or individually as each case necessitates:

I work with teachers one-on-one on appraisal and evaluation. I help them with day-to-day tasks and I sometimes discuss with them when things are not going so well, or something challenges they encounter. If there are some complaints about the teacher, I have to investigate by observation and talk to teachers and students. Sometimes you may discover it is nothing wrong. If it were underperformance, I would have to work with the teacher to identify and address specific gaps. The SACs and I would help the teacher to improve and to adjust particular practice. However, if improvement had not happened, we would have to go through the formal process of evaluation and consider the contract renewal or termination. (SSVP/DPC)

### **Teacher inquiry as a tool for evaluation**

With reference to a school-wide policy, a SAC stated that the school provided the autonomy to choose whether the teachers would like to adopt teaching inquiry for their performance evaluation. On the surface this appears to be a tool that allows teachers independence and provides a structure for growth orientation within the teacher evaluation process. As a PC stated, *“However, we use teacher inquiries as a means to look at growth. Our teacher inquiries are evidence of you taking your own learning seriously and you will have improvement”*. Therefore, the assumption is that the teachers will regard it positively. The findings reveal that contrary to expectations, teacher inquiry as an evaluation tool has led to some challenges as can be seen in the discussion below:

For background, in this school, every teacher undergoes a teacher inquiry across the course of 12 months and it's an exploration of pedagogy and what makes a positive difference to students learning. ...- the first stage is to figure out what your students need to learn and then figure out what you need to be doing to help them learn it and then work out how you can do it better, try out something, evaluate it and report back. (Head of Secondary School).

Lauding this initiative, another middle leader opined:

Our secondary school is brave to start the teaching inquiry programme. The school gave teachers options. If you do not want to do the traditional performance management, where your SAC comes to your class and gives you feedback, then that is okay. Alternatively, you can do a teacher inquiry. We have done much work in training teachers, especially the MLs in the last two years.” (SAC)

However, data from some teachers strike a contrary note, one commenting that it was a “box-ticking exercise”.

Additionally, a ML pointed out another gap:

One thing that I feel has been a bit of a shame is that we have a teacher inquiry programme within the school which focuses on how can we improve our practice, we don't take into account dealing with pastoral, social well-being and I do wish that we had the opportunity to focus on helping that particular area. (CSL)

#### **4.9.4 Supports and challenges**

##### **School culture: enabling autonomy**

Earlier discussions have noted factors like the dispersal of leadership tasks by SLs, collaborative work structures, and lack of hierarchy, all of which promote notions of autonomy. More explicitly, the MLs believed that they enjoyed autonomy and flexibility when it came to performing their leadership tasks. For example, SACs and GLLs perceived that they had the autonomy to identify and contribute toward department goals:

There are different initiatives going on at school. We have a certain level of autonomy to add something new or something different. (SAC)

I think I am free to identify my own goals for my area. Some of the decisions happened in the last few years came from my suggestion. (PC)

### **The challenges of time management**

A significant challenge faced by the MLs in terms of capacity building was the pragmatic challenge of time management. The coordinators had to juggle between pastoral care and the academic curriculum and as the SSVP/MYPC jokingly pointed out – he felt that he was being “pulled in 50,000 different ways”. On a more serious note, he worried that pastoral care took up the time when he should have been engaged in curriculum planning and feared that this might affect his leadership capabilities.

### **Embedding IB in capacity building**

There is an unambiguous relationship between the IB and capacity building in the school. The previous sections discussed the opportunities that were afforded to the MLs (Coordinators mainly and the SACs as well) to be a part of a professional community, to engage in networks across some schools and to exercise leadership therein. The School was established as a three-program school and because of the many instances where the leaders (and teachers) have gained expertise in the IB programme, these individuals are now regarded as valuable resources for other schools in the system. This was seen not only in instances where the MLs ran training workshops but also occasions when other schools visited this school to observe and absorb best practices. The extract below captures the essence of the role of IB in capacity building:

So I work with the IB on a bunch of projects and that could be with the school services manager on school authorisation processes. I do a little bit of consulting on behalf of the IB with some schools. So some of that might be a Skype call or a quick document review. I’m comfortable doing that within work time because a lot of what I learn is from looking at other schools or talking to the IB about either projects that I’m working on with them or some of our bigger set pieces at school [...] has been part of my work and built my capacity as a coordinator. (MYPC)

## **4.10 Level 3 leadership: leading beyond the school**

### **4.10.1 Leadership plus: who are the leaders?**

The previous sections discussed the enactment of middle leadership in areas related to teaching and learning and the ways and means that school capacity was built. In both areas, leadership tasks were distributed with the program coordinators taking ownership of IB

related tasks, SACs with their subject areas and the GLL with the all-round development of the students. This work was conducted in collaborative patterns and thus, forming a distributive network across the school. In this section, the discussion is on the third level of leadership – where the context of leadership extends the school barriers and influences on agencies and communities outside the school. The communities discussed here are the extended communities of IB and the Consortium as well as the contextual community of parents and the city.

Being a part of two established networks, the Consortium and the IB, the school leaders had opportunities to exercise their leadership to extend beyond the school, in addition to the interactions with parents who formed the extended community of the school. The PCs had more opportunities to interact with others outside the school, whereas the GLLs having “minimal” chances to do so. However, as a GLL explained that communicating with other schools was lay outside the scope of his professional responsibilities. However, the data reveals that the GLL has strong interactions with the parental community.

### **Informal leaders**

A significant finding was that a relatively large proportion of teachers who were not in positional leadership roles in the school are engaged in leadership that extends beyond the school (examiners, markers, moderators and so on). The findings reveal that 27% of the teachers in the school were engaged in some form of leadership related work within the IB. In other words, it would be a valid assumption that there is a pool of nascent MLs in the school, who do not have positional leadership roles at present but have the potential to take on such roles in the future. Thus, the capacity building in the school is an on-going and expansive process.

#### **4.10.2 The practice: what and how do they lead?**

As mentioned in the earlier section, the school was nested in two ready-made networks, the IB and the Consortium and MLs had opportunities to influence both sets of networks. For example, a SAC stated:

I am an examiner for the Diploma Programme. For our school’s Consortium, I have held conferences with students and held workshops with different teachers in other schools.

The CSL spoke about the informal network that he has built up with the VP of another school of the Consortium:

... the VP at another school and I will keep in touch. We were at a coaching instructional session a few months ago and she mentioned that they have a very strong pastoral programme. So I got in touch and she lets me know what these guys are doing and I let her know what we're doing. She's invited me to pop over and see look at their program and see if there's anything that would be helpful for us. So, I think with the Consortium because we are a group, there's much more openness to share.

On more formal levels (as mentioned in earlier sections) this school, along with another PIS school, is seen as a resource school by the other schools run by the Consortium. This is

because of its continuum structure that helps the other schools that are transitioning to the IB in phases. GLL Year 9 noted:

So, I work with Consortium as a whole I am one of two teachers from all the secondary schools who work and have basically created a programme to better embed skills within our curriculum. So part of it is mapping, part of it is resource collection. Yes it's quite a big project and one of the days of those two weeks I had a whole day devoted to that...

#### 4.10.3 Extending leadership on the parental community

The IB curriculum offers a structured way for community inclusion. Also, as in the case of most schools, the most immediate community that the leaders need to interact with is that of the parents. The Programme coordinators, SACs and GLLs interface with the parents in order to “upskill” them in the IB curriculum and to work collectively with the parents in terms of the growth of the students and to resolve issues that may arise.

The physical location of the school is such that many more parents come to the school and the Principal highlighted the fact that there was a natural sense of community, which may not have happened if the school was situated elsewhere in Hong Kong:

Another focus for us was that whole community school thing and that happens because you'll see it in the morning - the hundreds of parents walking the kids to school - this is unusual for Hong Kong. If we were in Kowloon all the students would come by school bus, we wouldn't see parents very often but here, you just see them all the time and I love that, I love the fact that it does feel like a community school, even though we're a big school now.

The school-home collaboration building students’ emotional support was also included in the pastoral programme:

I give my support in terms of pastoral care. It is supporting learning diversity. Children who need additional support are struggling socially. I am the liaison between the school and the parents. I have a direct connection with families on the behavioural or social-emotional issues. (PSVP/PYPC)

A factor related to the local Hong Kong schools, including the DSS schools, is that these schools tend not to have strong Fine Arts related disciplines and hence the school intake in the senior levels tend to include many more students who come from the local system:

And that's where a lot of our intake into Year 12 has often particularly been from local schools and DSS schools where students have wanted to pursue a performing arts subject and it's not been available in the schools that they've gone to, so we've brought in some exceptional scholarship students in those upper years, who have added a sense to the school – because they're not necessarily kids who could afford to come to a school like this. So the scholarship scheme really adds to our diversity, not in terms of talent but in terms of the backgrounds of the kids who come to the school (SSP)

One of the consequences of this is that parents of students who enter later in the IB system need to have an orientation into the system:

And just think, well, maybe not collaborating with parents groups but definitely - if new students come up or parents aren't sure about the grading system of MYP and things like that, I will explain to them what our school does in terms of structured practice or even ATLS if they ask so I know there was some discussion with parents during those two weeks about what MYP is as a curriculum... so often there is a lot of feeding back and upskilling parents.... (CSL)

The HoS pointed out that the interaction between parents and MLs were not necessarily always a formal process. The school had formal occasions of interaction as in a Parents Information Day, but by and large the interaction was more casual and happened organically. The GLL tended to work more closely with parents (one-to-one as opposed to interfacing in groups) and these interactions were largely focussed on issues related to teaching and learning:

I explain to parents about their enquires on the question on curriculum, on the structured practice, or on ATLS. I had some discussion with parents on the MYP curriculum and the grading system. Parents can access to report and get their feedback to us. (CSL)

#### **4.10.4 The situation: tools, routines and contexts**

Though the notion of professional networking has been discussed earlier under the capacity building, it also bears relevance in this section. As stated earlier the IB and the Consortium provides the tools and routines (communication, conferences, and workshops) for MLs to distribute their leadership functions beyond their schools. PCs developed the curriculum, along with the help of SACs and together they contributed to notions of change and innovation, exchanging ideas about best practice and so on to the IB and Consortium community. Personal connections and relationships are important when it came to promoting the influence of leaders (especially the SACs, some of who were considered high profile) outside schools. As the Principal emphasised:

We often find that when other schools request visits, they do so base on someone they know - that's often SACs by-the-by so other schools will write to us and it will be directed to me to give the green light for their visit but they might have started by saying I want to come and visit the science department because they I know the head of science at such and such school and he knows the Head of Science here.

The data extract above also illustrates how leadership networks are formed in out of school situations (Leader 1 knows Leader 2 and Leader 2 knows Leader 3 and through this relationship Leader 1 gets to network with Leader 3).

#### **4.10.5 Challenges of the local context**

##### **Teaching of the mother tongue**

Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997. The 'Handover' has created its own set of challenges as there have often been differences between edicts of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the beliefs of the Hong Kong people. As far as education and school is concerned, there have been some issues that have come to light on a regular basis over the past twenty-one years. One of the issues is the teaching of Mandarin as the mother tongue. A PC voiced this concern, "there is the mother-tongue issue, which is one that gnaws away". Though this school is not directly caught up in the controversy, nonetheless they have to

teach Mandarin, and this, along with other issues highlights the dilemma of the school being linked to factors that are local and international as well.

### **The Education Bureau and the school**

A PC pointed out that he was grateful that by and large the Education Bureau (EDB) allowed the school to carry on teaching the IB with no intrusion:

We do not have to satisfy with the governmental or the others educational system. We can focus purely on the IB continuum. It is a wonderful advantage for me. I suspect people out there would be quite envious of that freedom. [...] [The Hong Kong government] does not tell us what curriculum to follow. We have freedom in Hong Kong, apart from the restrictions on how the school runs. (SSVP/DPC)

Nonetheless though they may have little by way of direct interaction with the EDB, there is some concern that decisions taken by the EDB may impact their leadership.

### **Challenges of third culture students**

Hong Kong has a large expatriate population and many of the students in the school belong to this category. Unlike other expat contexts, many of these students and their parents are long time residents. So, they are neither 'local' in one sense nor are they fully 'non-local' – this creates a unique set of challenges and makes community interaction a complex task. The Head of Secondary explained:

We have a mandatory minimum permanent residency of 70%. We are covered by the local ordinance. We have a responsibility to teach what is termed local language, Mandarin, which, in itself, is a complex question. We follow an international curriculum and we tend to hire international teachers and our students are very international (whatever that might mean). So, we are absolutely caught between local and international and our students are absolutely caught between local and international - many of them are permanent residents of Hong Kong,... see themselves as 'Hongkongers' but also see themselves as attached somewhere else or attached nowhere. So actually, we're a bit of everything and I think that does have an impact on how the school is led. I think it creates a responsibility for engagement with the local community that's peculiarly difficult I think it's actually easier to be international than it is to be local and I think that it makes a difference in the sense of the responsibility that we have in areas like community engagement in areas like parents interface to understand that we are not separate and that we are embedded within the city.

#### **4.10.6 The IB as a contextual factor**

It is inarguable that the operational structure of the school, its place in the Consortium and IB network and the senior leadership team promotes the cause of middle leadership. This means that there are a number of staff members who received formal and informal grooming opportunities to take on positional leadership roles within the system. However, there are limited positions of leadership in the school, therefore these individuals have looked for leadership opportunities elsewhere:

It probably shouldn't be a downside to it - you've got stars that are looking for challenges and leadership roles. This year, we put four of our staff onto an emerging leaders course which is a year-long course that ESF run - all four of them have finished

the year with promotional positions next year but two of them have got promotions in other schools (SSP)

In sum, ironically the advancement of a distributed model of leadership may result in people with leadership capabilities having to leave the school to seek desired positions elsewhere.

#### 4.11 Advice network and time-use: Middle leadership across the levels

The advice network survey was circulated to 63 teachers and leaders in the secondary division of the school. The primary division did not participate, although some primary teachers were nominated by their peers. There were 33 respondents (52.4%) at Level 1 and Level 2; and 32 respondents (50.8%) at Level 3. Given the moderate response rate, the survey results are useful to illustrate or provide further insight into qualitative findings but are not statistically significant as a whole network.

The measurement of indegree centrality has been employed as an indicator of how the distribution of advice seeking patterns change across the three leadership levels (see Table 11). Indegree centrality represents the normalised quantity of advice seeking nominations for a particular person. In other words, individuals with higher score tend to be the favourite 'go-to' person in the network. Table 10 shows the breakdown of individual programme coordinators. Appendix J below shows the top five leaders of indegree centrality in each level of leadership. We discuss each level below.

Table 10 Proportion of indegree centrality by nominated leaders

Leaders	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion
SLs	2	4.19%	5	25.17%	5	18.40%
PCs	2	12.70%	2	23.04%	2	28.84%
SAC	12	34.77%	9	20.97%	11	28.79%
CSLs	8	20.04%	8	9.54%	5	8.03%
Teachers	13	17.81%	11	12.74%	4	5.70%
Others	8	10.48%	8	8.54%	8	10.25%
Total	45	100.00%	43	100.00%	35	100.00%

Table 11 Proportion of indegree centrality nominated leaders by groups

Leader	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion
SLs	2	4.19%	5	25.17%	5	18.40%
MLs	22	67.52%	19	53.55%	18	65.65%
Teachers	13	17.81%	11	12.74%	4	5.70%
Others	8	10.48%	8	8.54%	8	10.25%
Total	45	100.00%	43	100.00%	35	100.00%

#### 4.11.1 Learning and teaching advice network

Figure 12 shows the school-wide advice network results for Level 1. The leader of the indegree centrality is a ML titled the Head of Learning Diversity (see Appendix J). This leader provides advice to another ML (the Humanities) and teachers. These include two LD teachers (50 & 67) and SAC and two Humanities/English teachers. This disciplinary connection is plausibly indicative of focused collaboration in the humanities team on supporting learning diversity. Of these team members, the humanities SAC also seeks advice from the SAC for digital literacy and humanities teacher who is also a GLL (Dean). The SAC emerges as important to the humanities for resourcing the team by seeking different ways to facilitate teaching and learning. In the centre of the cluster is the DPC and SSVP who engages a wide range of MLs.

There are also four leads that share the same indegree of 6% each – two MLs and two PCs. All of them have dual roles. The DPC and MYPC s are also VPs. One ML is an English teacher and ToK Coordinator, another is an English teacher and GLL. Senior secondary education. The former advises SLs (SSP) and DPC/SSVP, and a GLL/ English teacher. This illustrates that many English teachers are advised by the ToK coordinator.

Taking a closer look at the local advice network of the PCs, we observe that they interact mostly with MLs. The MYPC receive the majority of advice from MLs; meanwhile the MYPC seeks advice from other MLs. The DPC seeks advice from a range of teachers and MLs including the ToK coordinator and student counsellor. This reflects the dual emphasis of the DPC/VP role, which emphasises the DP programme but also the school-wide initiative on student well-being.

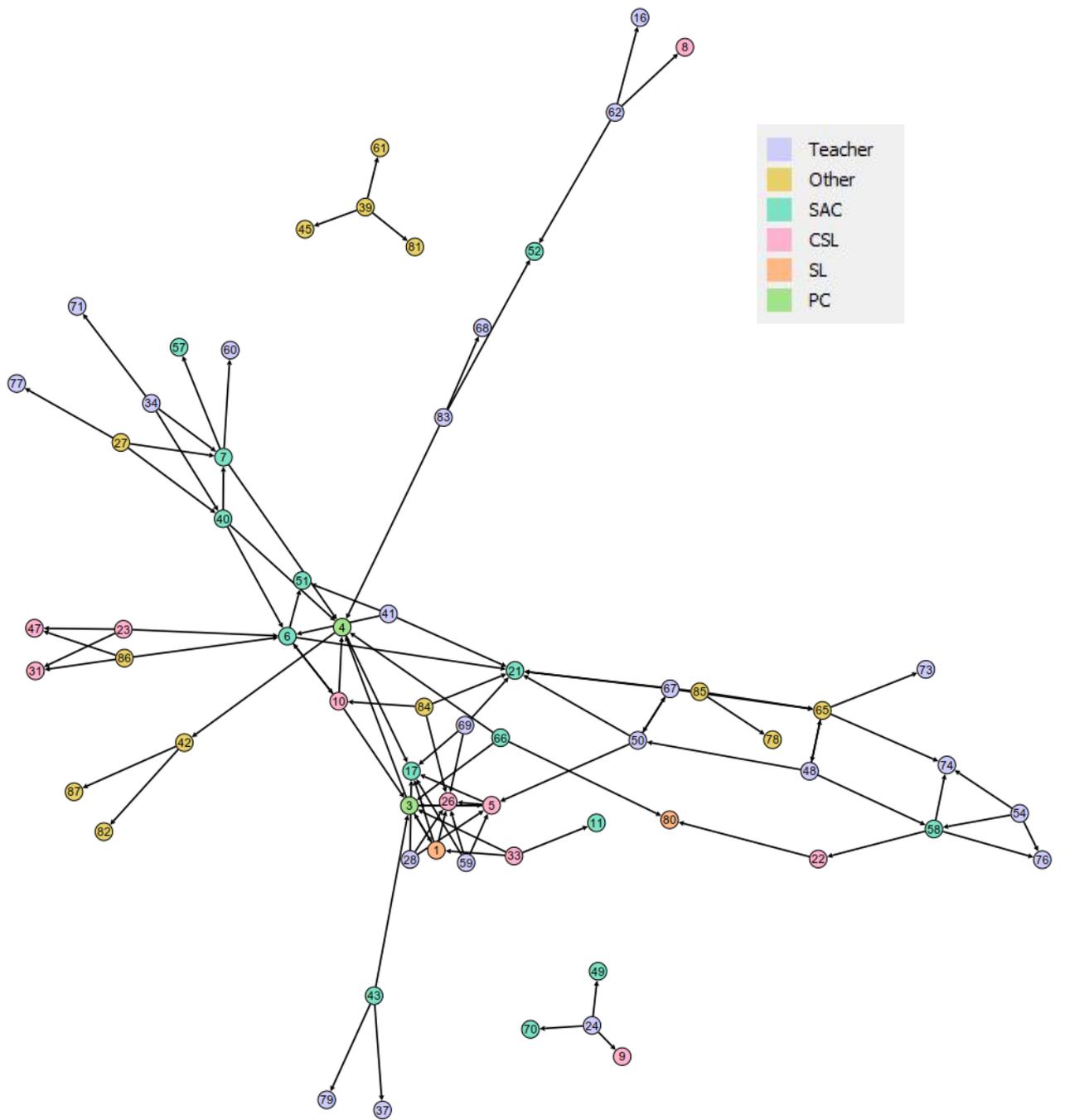


Figure 12 Level 1 Advice network Hong Kong

Table 10 and Table 11 show the distribution of advice seeking in Level 1. Collectively, MLs account for 67% of advice seeking in Level 1. Of these, SACs and CSLs (primarily GLLs) as a group account for 35% and 20% of advice seeking in comparison to PCs at 12%. However, individually SACs and CSLs on average account for 2.9% and 2.5% and PCs for 6% each. This may reflect the school's initiative on student well-being, showing similar levels of advising around academic and pastoral care activities. Within the group of formal leaders, SLs are the least consulted for teaching and learning. Teachers account for 18% of advice giving, which is similar to that of CSLs as a collective.

#### 4.11.2 Capacity building advice network

In considering Level 2, we observe a shift in advising towards SLs and PCs who share similar proportions of advice seeking. For SLs, this entails a shift from 4% to 25% share of advising, a six-fold increase. However only two secondary school SLs account for 79% of Level 2 indegree centrality. This is sensible because two of the remaining SLs do not have SS responsibilities and the third does not have an IB PC role, all three are consulted only by the school Principal.

PCs share of advising in Level 2 has approximately doubled from 12 to 23%. They consult each other. The PYPC provides advice to 5 SACs, 5 CSLs and one teacher. The DPC advises 5 SACs and four teachers (see Figure 13). This difference may reflect the greater disciplinary and examination orientation of the DP and the more transdisciplinary nature of the MYP, which would require greater work across year levels, i.e., coordination or leading with GLLs. SACs and CSLs share of advice-giving seems to drop respectively from 35% to 21% and 20% to 10%.

PCs increase may be accountable for their dual role as SLs in the school. This may mean that they along with the two SLs are perceived as suitable targets for advice in capacity building. Like PCs, they have professional knowledge about IB programmes that can support teachers' professional learning and the development of professional networks beyond the school. The dual role as VPs plausibly positions them as agents to provide resources and decision-making authority needed in support of capacity building or school-wide initiatives. In contrast, SACs and CSLs lack such positional authority in the school and formal connection with IB networks, in comparison with VPs and PCs.

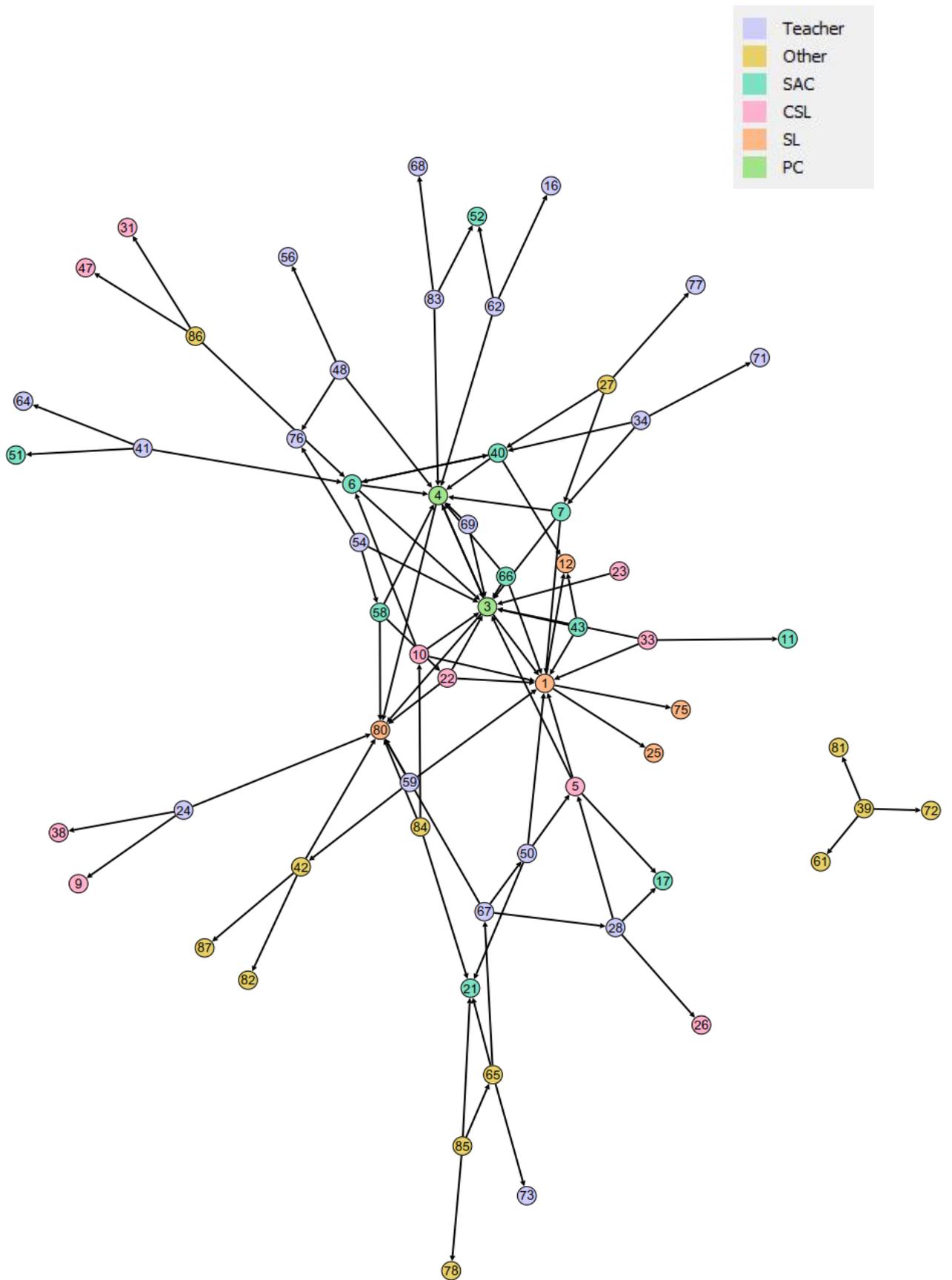


Figure 13 Level 2 Advice network Hong Kong

#### 4.11.3 External/system advice network

In Level 3, PCs emerge as holding the most substantial proportion of indegree centrality on an individual basis and share the same proportion collectively as is held by SACs. In contrast, SLs' proportion of indegree centrality decreases collectively and individually. By ranking, the top 5 consulted individuals are SLs and PCs. Two SLs with responsibility across the entire school, the HoS and Deputy HoS, emerge as having a greater share of indegree centrality than any MLs excluding PCs, whose proportion of indegree is approximately three times higher than SLs (See Figure 14). PCs' dominant role in Level 3 may again reflect their engagement with the IB around enacting policies, i.e., standards and practices, in the school. Comparing the three levels, it is interesting to note that SAC (Head of Design) consults a broad range of individuals that differ depending on the type of advice sought.

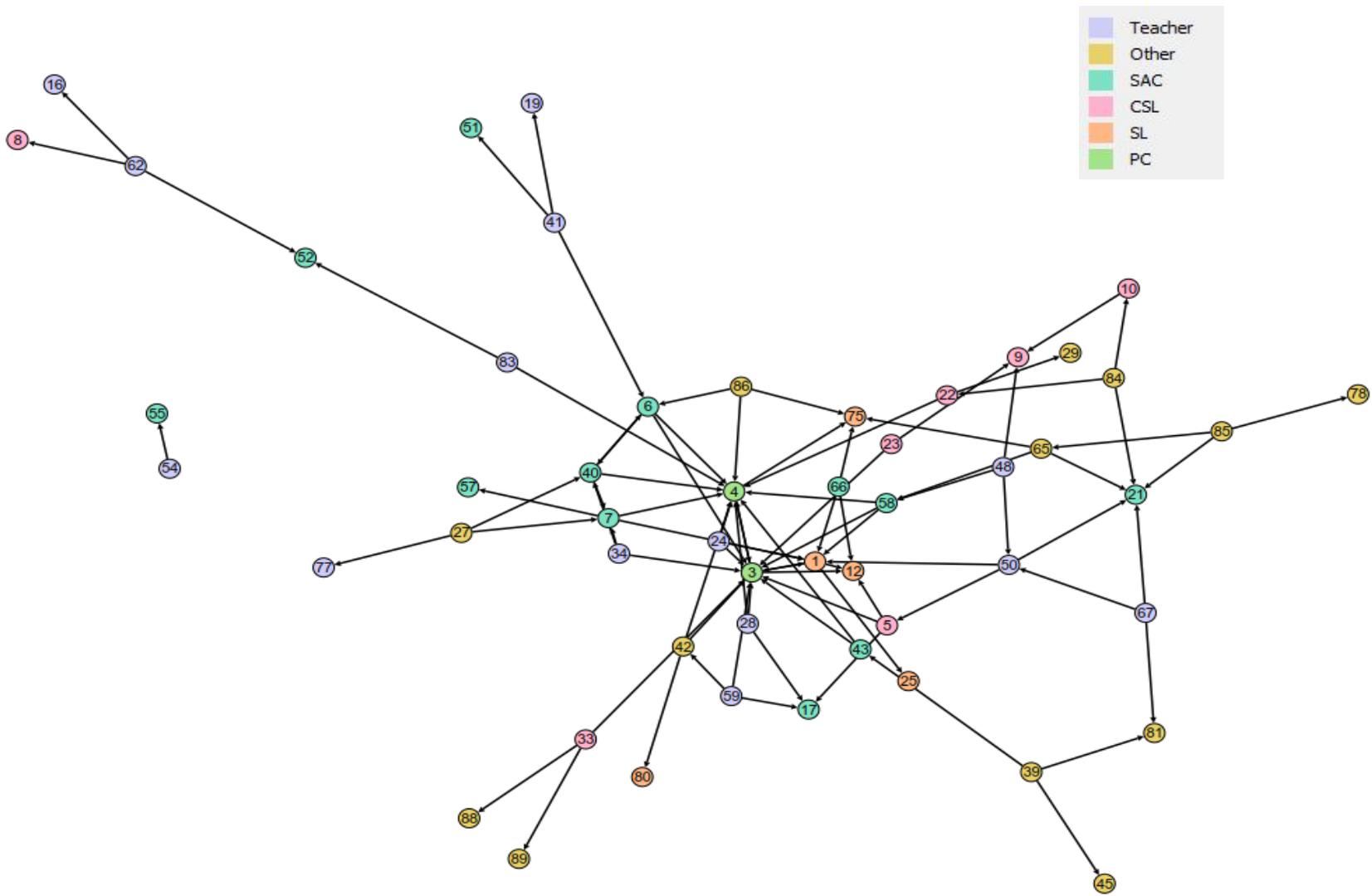
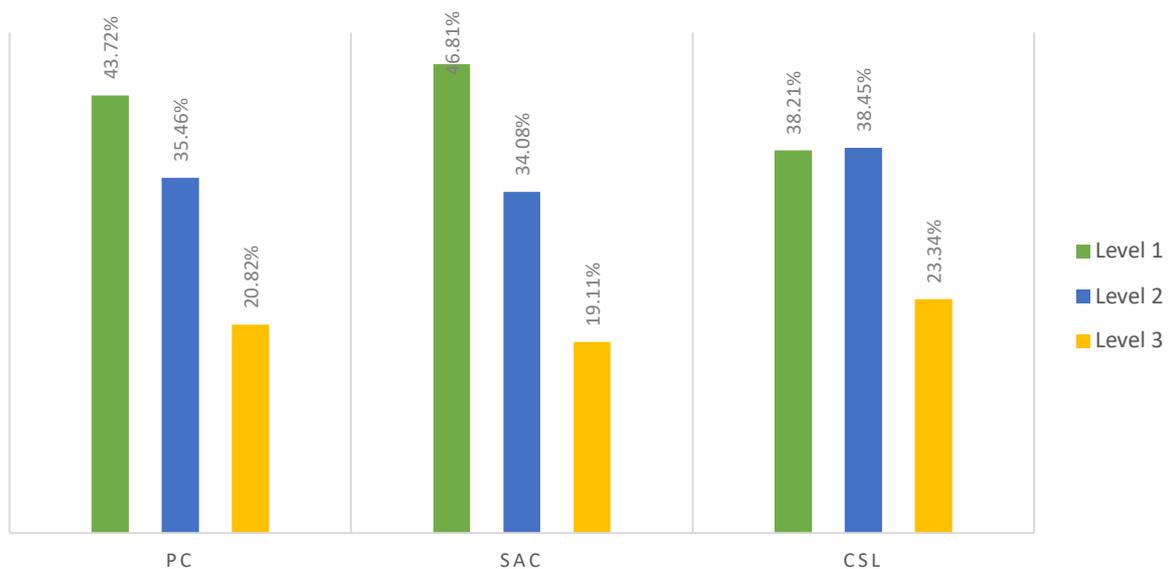


Figure 14 L3 Advice network Hong Kong

#### 4.11.4 Time-use

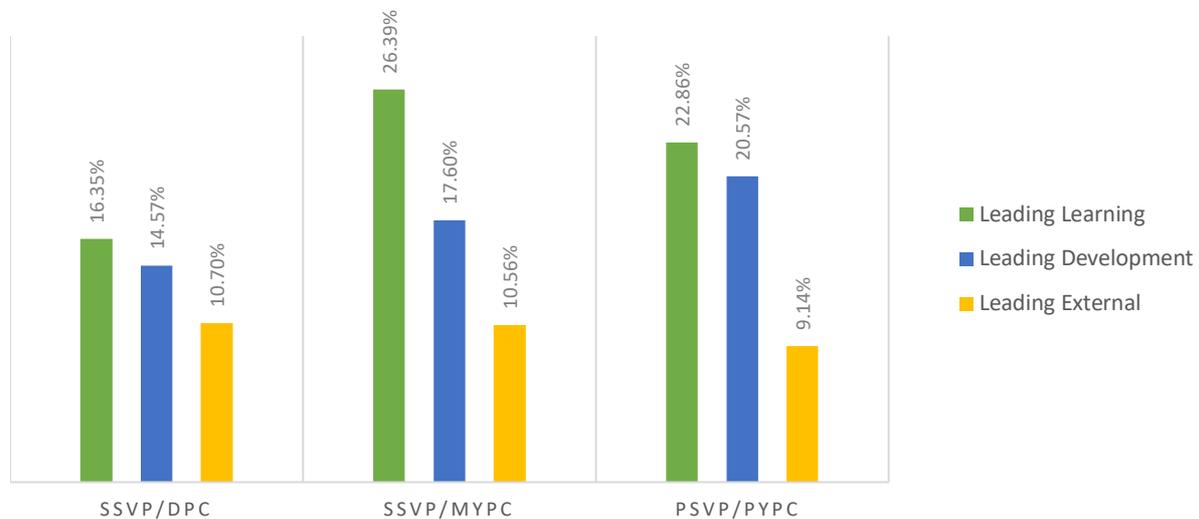
In this section, we examine the time-use of PCs, SACs and CSLs. We show time-use across each group of leaders and then individually within each group. Figure X shows the distribution of time in leadership activities for all MLs—it excludes other activities. The distribution of most time occurring in Level 1 and least in Level 3 fits with normative middle leadership trends. However, figure X illustrates that large proportions of time (more than 50% taken together) are still invested in Level 2 and Level 3 activities for each leader type. For PCs, this may be accounted for by virtue that PCs in this school are also VPs. This conflates their PC work with their responsibilities as SLs in the school. Alternatively, the dual positions emphasise their role in programme coordination within the school. Regardless of the explanation, the dual role seems to be linked with Level 2 and Level 3 activity when considered in light of the advice network analysis that shows a marked increase in seeking from PCs for Level 2 and Level 3. For all MLs, the large proportion of Level 2 and Level 3 activity may partially be explained by membership in a consortium of schools, which serves to intensify the amount of time and opportunity to lead PD and engage professional communities across the consortium. This is in addition to opportunities that come to schools participation in IB programmes, such as leading PD workshops.

Figure 15 Comparison of time-use proportion in 3 leadership levels



#### 4.11.5 Programme coordinators' time-use

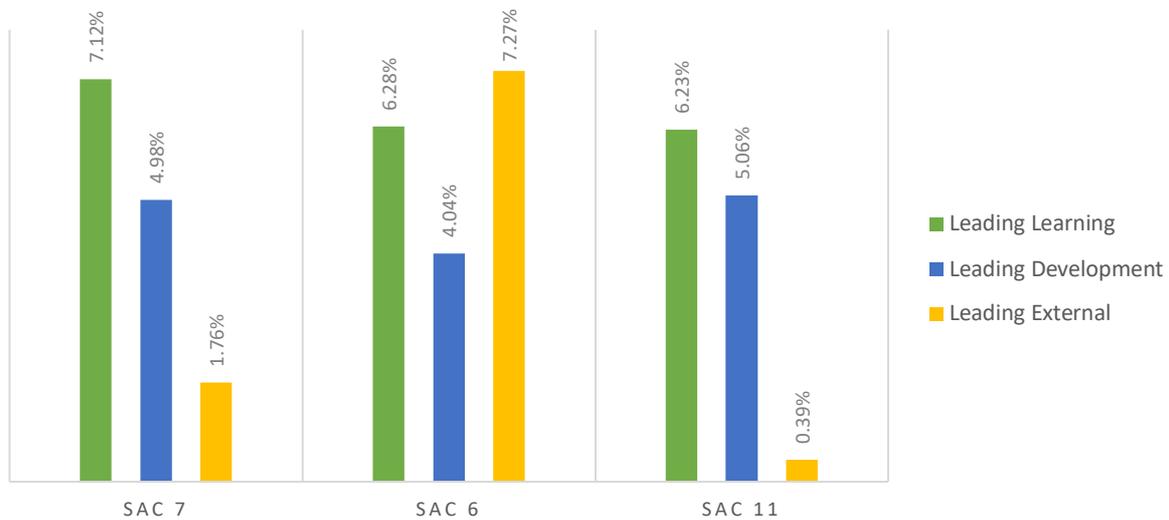
Figure 16 Proportion of time-use on three leadership activities by PCs



Considering the three PCs specifically, at least 40% of each PC's time is accounted for by leadership activity—the remainder includes classroom-related, administration, and other work. The DPC appears (in the sampled weeks) to spend a smaller proportion of time on leadership activities than the other PCs. Interview data shows that the DPC is officially allocated a 20% teaching load. However, his work as DPC entails a significant proportion of pastoral care work, which when working with individual students is classified under classroom-related activity. He related that, of course, other time periods would entail different activities: "If I were doing this school consultation visit for a school for example or the IB regional conference or something like that obviously Level 3 would be very high for that period". The sampled period occurred nearer to the examination period, so more time was invested in pastoral care and assessment that would be normative. So, in this sense, the DPC explained the period might not be "typical" or representative of his activity over a more extended period of time or at different times of the year.

#### 4.11.6 Subject area coordinators' time-use

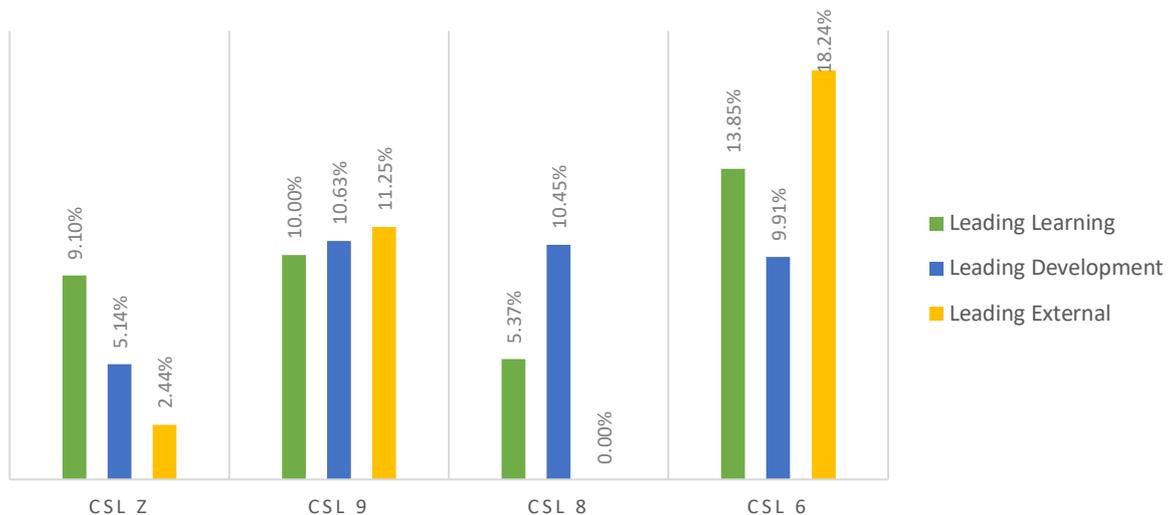
Figure 17 Proportion of time-use on three leadership activities by SACs



Only three SACs completed the survey. Each SAC spent less than 20% of their total time on leadership activities. All spent similar proportions of time on Level 1 and Level 2 activity. SAC 6 reported more time spent on Level 3 leadership—7%. In the social network analysis, three individuals related that they seek advice from this SAC around Level 3 that includes an EE coordinator, and a subject teacher. Probing the interview transcripts shows that this SAC engages in work external to the school as a PD leader for other schools in the consortium. She also related involvement in interpreting IB policy to guide resource allocation, and connected IB standards and practices to school leadership decision-making. Also, the reported strong association of leadership activity with the IB appears to enhance leadership opportunity at Level 3.

#### 4.11.7 Cross-school leaders' time-use

Figure 18 Proportion of time-use on three leadership activities by CSLs



The proportion of time spent in leadership activity is similar to other MLs for Level and Level 3 but with greater emphasis on Level 2 activity (Figure 15). Nonetheless, the above Figure 18 Proportion of time-use on three leadership activities by CSLs, shows a great deal of variation across CSLs with no discernible pattern of time-use in any level of leadership, in the distribution across levels or in trends across levels. Amount of total time spent in leadership varied from approximately 15% (CSL Z –Dean and language teacher) to 40% (CSL 6 —Head of the Year) of total reported time-use. Only in Level 2 is the proportion of time spent similar for three leaders. This seems to be a function of leadership roles in the CSL category. CSL 9 reports a relatively high proportion of Level 3 time-use. This reflects a formal position as CAS and Community Engagement Coordinator, positions that require leadership engagement beyond the school. The advice network showed that two CSLs have pastoral care and student life responsibilities sought and one teacher sought advice from this leader at Level 3. This is indicative that formal ML positions with Level 3 responsibilities align with time-use and advice seeking patterns. CSLs’ results for Level 3 are explained by the school’s membership in a consortium and participation in the IB:

I work with the [consortium] as a whole. I am one of two teachers from all the secondary schools who work and basically create a programme to better imbed [ATL] skills within our curriculum. ... It's quite a big project and one of the days of those two weeks I had a whole day devoted to that...

The time-use and qualitative data, therefore suggest that the IB contextual factor serves to facilitate the opportunity to lead beyond the school context in response to the wider environment of the school. In the case of CSL’s, variation appears to be explained by the specific nature of their work and the time period of the TUS sampling. This suggests that the nature of their work varies with the school and consortium schedule.

#### 4.12 Chapter summary

This case study aimed to form a comprehensive understanding of how middle leadership functioned in an IB continuum school based in Hong Kong. The theoretical framework looked at MLs’ involvement in leadership through the perspective of their involvement in teaching and learning, the building of school capacity and their influence beyond the school.

The preceding sections have delineated the findings and the ensuing discussion in detail. This section captures the key points by way of a summary.

The school culture was egalitarian, and collaboration and team working were the preferred methods of leadership enactment. The data highlighted that leadership was distributed amongst a number of people and this included, in some instances, informal leaders as well.

The IB forms an overarching framework within which leadership was carried out in the school. The SLs of this school played a supervisory role in the schemata of middle leadership. They were supportive of the MLs often worked alongside them in teams.

It was not unexpected to find that the MLs were invested heavily in areas related to teaching and learning, which they perceived to be fundamental to their roles. They directly influenced teaching and learning by taking on leadership tasks such as developing curriculum, co-curricular activities and the pastoral programme. The PCs had the responsibility of articulating and maintaining the philosophy underlying the IB system. Particularly they worked within the group of MLs to co-construct cross-disciplinary activities under the IB learning framework and transitional programmes across year levels. They supervised, mentored and coached teachers in order to promote better learning. The coordinators were involved in 'quality assurance' tasks such as systematic appraisals, evaluations reviewing the work of teachers following observations. SACs influence was more directly in their subject areas. They actively assisted teachers in improving pedagogy and engaged in tasks such as unit planning. Their leadership activities included observing teaching practices informally and monitoring student work. The GLL was responsible for the pastoral care of the students and their all-round growth. This included a dimension that was academic in nature and their tasks included overseeing the implementation of lesson plans that target key elements in the IB Learner Profile. In general, the MLs had a strong sense of responsibility for being role models for the members of their teams and thus they engaged in tasks such as co-teaching with teachers to demonstrate desirable practices in the classroom.

The MLs collectively contributed to capacity building by attending and conducting PD activities that aimed at increasing the professional knowledge of other members of the staff and themselves. They worked in collaboration and in teams when the situation demanded it, thereby increasing the in-school network. Although not all MLs felt engaged in school-wide goal setting, some participated in discussions to decide when to reject suggested innovations and how to bring in new initiatives. In addition, the MLs built extensive networks (formal and informal) within the IB system and the Consortium. And where possible, they aimed to suggest or bring about substantive and positive changes within both the systems, thereby extending their leadership beyond the school. The MLs had formal and informal interactions with the extended school community – especially the parents. Although they were relatively shielded from the contentions within the Hong Kong education system, nonetheless there were contextual factors that affected their leadership practices.



## Japan Report

Japan Report



## 5 Japan School

### 5.1 Introduction

#### 5.1.1 Background

Promoting the cause of lifelong education, Japan School was founded in 1997 as a private, co-educational, non-denominational day school serving the international community of Tokyo from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12. A core value is “to keep international education as reasonable as possible [in terms of fees]” (HoS). It is the first school in Tokyo to offer all three programs under IB – PYP, MYP and DP. The HoS explained: “We believe our mission is very similar to the IB. We believe everything we are doing is aligned with the IB”. However, the mission of the school had recently been re-written to emphasize academic achievement.

#### Students and teachers

The student body comprises just over 660 students from over 50 nationalities, with an excellent record of university placement. Korean and Indian students comprise a large segment of the student population. The teaching staff is trained in IB practices and represents over 15 different cultural backgrounds. All teachers hold a recognized teaching degree (e.g. Bachelor of Education or equivalent thereof) and either a minimum of two years' teaching experience or an IB Diploma. Due to the nature of international education, the turnover of staff changes from year-to-year. In general, the teachers are employed for an initial two-year contract. Some teachers decide to leave at the end of this period; however, many extend their time for a second or third contract.

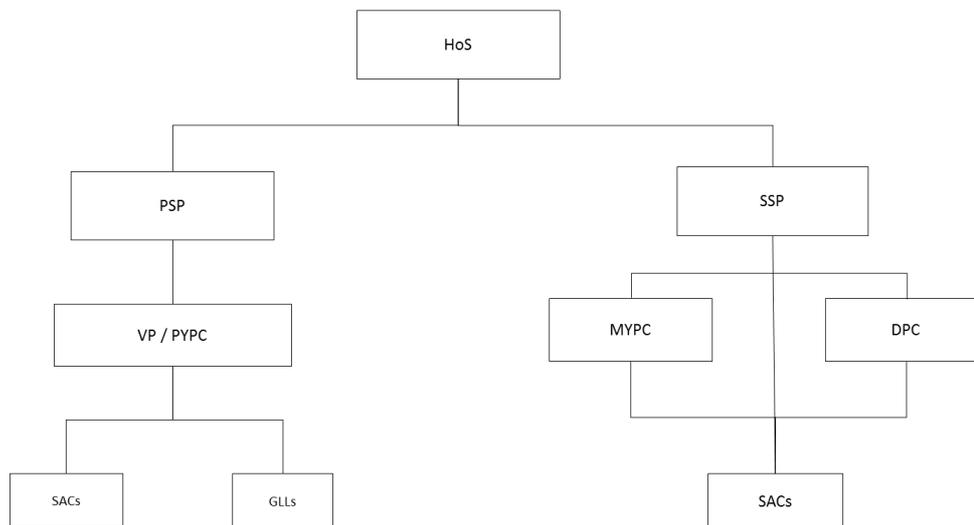
#### Formal organisational structure

In terms of the organization of the school, there is a clear demarcation between the administrative division and the learning and teaching division: The Operation Division and the Education Division. The Board President and the school board oversee the operations of both the divisions. The Operation Division comprises of two directors working under an Associate Head of School: The Director of Personnel and Admissions, and the Director of Operations. The latter takes charge of four managers, who are respectively responsible for the financial, Information Technology, accounts and development. The four managers lead the rest of the operation staff members.

Figure 19 shows the official leadership structure of the school's Education Division, the focus of this research. The Head of School (HoS) leads the Primary School Principal (PSP), the Secondary School Principal (SSP). He is the only formal line of authority connecting the two schools. The PS Vice-Principal and the PYP Coordinator positions are held by the same individual (PSVP/PYPC). The SSP supervises the MYP Coordinator (MYPC) and the DP Coordinator (DPC). The Secondary School (SS) Subject Area Coordinators (SAC) and the teaching and supporting staff work under the supervision of the school Principal and MYP and DP Coordinators. In the PS, Special Area Coordinators (SAC) in English Language, Literacy and Mathematics and Early Childhood Education also have coordinating roles. They differ from SS SACs in that they work across subject areas. Both Primary and Secondary School have CSLs. In the PS these comprise Grade Level Leaders (GLLs). In the SS they

include specialists such as guidance and school counsellors or community service coordinator.

Figure 19 Japan School Leadership Structure



### Participants and data collection

This study aims primarily to examine the practices of MLs in schools from the theoretical perspective that leadership is broadly distributed within schools. As in the case of many qualitative studies, a degree of flexibility has to be adopted in terms of the participants. This reflects the degree of access granted by schools, the participants selected by school leaders, and the freedom of individuals to choose to opt out of the study and its different data collection mechanisms. In the case of Japan School, the HoS indicated a preference to focus the research on the work of IB Programme Coordinators (PCs, i.e., the PYPC, MYPC, and DPC) and the sample reflects this prioritization. Accordingly, interviews probed the work of PCs, how SLs influence and interact with programme coordinators, and how programme coordinators influence and interact with subject leaders (SACs) and teacher leaders. Only programme coordinators were invited to participate in the time-use survey. Moreover, SACs were interviewed in two focus group meetings in order to minimize disruption to their working schedules. For purposes of triangulation and for developing a more holistic understanding of middle leadership, the collated data provides a comprehensive view of the functioning of middle leadership in this school.

All nineteen participants in Japan School had different positional roles (See Table 12). Three participants formed a part of the senior leadership Team, the Head of School (HoS), the Primary School Principal (PSP) and the Secondary School Principal (SSP), who have primary responsibility for instruction. There were 11 participants who were MLs. This group is further divided into two sub-groups: The PCs, and the Subject Area and Specialization

Coordinators (PS and SS respectively). The PCs were the PYP Coordinator (PYPC), the MYP Coordinator (MYPC) and the DP Coordinator (DPC). PC positions were allocated half a workload, meaning that the MYPC and DPC also had teaching responsibilities, whilst the PYPC had Vice-Principalship responsibilities. There were eight SACs, the English Language Support (ELS) Coordinator, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Coordinator, the Elementary School Literacy and Numeracy Coordinator, the SSA Coordinator for English, the SSA Coordinator for Individual and Societies, the SSA Coordinator for Science, the SSA Coordinator for Mathematics and the SSA Coordinator for Japanese. The remaining five participants were a Grade 1 teacher, a Grade 3 teacher, a Grade 4 teacher, and two secondary school teachers. The data collected from the participants provided insight into the main focus of this study from different perspectives.

Table 12 Interview participants and their positional roles within the school organization (Japan)

Title	Code / Node No.	Level
Head of School	HoS	SL
Primary School Principal	PSP	SL
Secondary School Principal	SSP	SL
Primary School Vice Principal / PYP Coordinator	PSVP/PYPC	PC
MYP Coordinator	MYPC	PC
DP Coordinator	DPC	PC
Early Childhood Education Coordinator and K1 teacher	CSL	CSL
ES ELS Coordinator and G5 ELS Instructor	SAC	SAC
Elem School Literacy and Numeracy Coordinator and G3 teacher	SAC	SAC
Secondary Subject Area Coordinator – Subject A	SAC	SAC
Secondary Subject Area Coordinator – Subject B	SAC	SAC
Secondary Subject Area Coordinator – Subject C	SAC	SAC
Secondary Subject Area Coordinator – Subject D	SAC	SAC
Secondary Subject Area Coordinator – Subject E	SAC	SAC
G1 teacher	Teacher	Teacher
G3 teacher	Teacher	Teacher

G4 teacher	Teacher	Teacher
DP Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
DP Teacher	Teacher	Teacher

## Key initiatives and change drivers

The HoS articulated that a “comprehensive appraisal system” served to drive school improvement as a mechanism to focus the work of school leaders and teachers. The appraisal originally comprised five standards: Professionalism, instructional planning, instructional delivery, classroom environment, and assessment for learning. In the year of data collection, a sixth standard entitled “impact on learning” was added. The appraisal is conducted through a portfolio mechanism in which the teachers collect and present evidence of their impact. Evidence includes instructional plans, self-appraisal, reflective peer-observations conducted by teachers, and documentation of brief 10 – 15 minutes observational rounds by programme and subject coordinators, and formal observations conducted annually by the senior leadership team. The HoS related that the appraisal system was meant to motivate teachers and also reward them through a performance-based bonus system. The SSP explained that the system permitted a mechanism to recognize and reward “good practice” and in doing so “retain for as long as possible the people in the middle leadership positions”. Aspects of the portfolio appraisal system emerged throughout the study as an aspect of school structure that shapes leadership practice and influence.

### 5.2 Middle leadership: expectations, beliefs and understandings

As SLs set the parameters of middle leaders’ work, this section delineates SLs’ perspectives on middle leadership. In this school, SLs are the HoS, the PSP and SSP. MLs constitute the three programme coordinators (PCs), the SS SACs, and the ES area coordinators (ACs)

#### 5.2.1 Senior leaders’ expectations of middle leaders

The senior leadership viewed the MLs not as subordinates but as collegial working partners. The HoS explicitly stated that he prefers “to avoid the hierarchical comparison” in discussing the school’s organisational structure, and instead referred to “areas of responsibility”, while discussing MLs rather than their positions in the school’s administrative hierarchy. He emphasized that the MLs, in particular the coordinators, worked with him and the other Principals in terms of strategic planning in instruction and organization. Another SL who pointed out the notion of leadership as a team effort:

We have an easy staff to work with generally. But when it comes to some of the difficult members, we find that working, as a team is a bit more effective. (PSP)

#### Ensuring the IB standards’ and practices

The HoS considered the PCs’ “main responsibility is to make sure that we’re meeting the standards and practices” of their respective programmes. This entails ensuring that appropriate policies are put into place. MLs with pedagogical responsibility include the PCs

and five SACs in the secondary school, whereas in the elementary school, the early childhood, literacy and numeracy and PYPCs filled this role.

### **Shared leadership**

The secondary school Principal related how he has increasingly allocated more responsibility to PCs and SACs. This includes the opportunity to lead instructional leadership team meetings and allocating increasing time for SACs to engage in leadership opportunity. In his view, by having first put into place expectations for curriculum organization and planning, programme coordinators are enabled to focus on relevant “pedagogy or initiatives or goals... within a clear understanding” (SSP). Allowing PCs this responsibility, in turn, releases him to focus on another new priority area, such as developing a pastoral care programme. Echoing the HoS’s view about hierarchy, the SSP noted that while there are “leadership structures on paper” the above illustrates how practice is shared as capacity develops.

Similarly, the PSP related his perspective on leading with the PYPC, in some instances, “we are more effective together than we can be separately”. The shared leadership approach was supported by the physical layout of the office, in which the PSP and PYPC/VP shared the same physical space without walls. This permits both to engage with teachers flexibly as appropriate during formal meetings and informal discussions.

The PSP related that because PS lacked subject areas, the PYPC took on work beyond typical pedagogical leadership. He explained that he viewed it as important for PCs to be able to work with other teachers in a way that is not like “being judged”. This attribute was valued because, as a new school, teachers need time to learn the PYP and make mistakes. Therefore, having a “supportive leader [i.e., the PYPC] to take those risks as a teacher” was essential at the school’s state of development.

### **Structures supporting middle leadership**

An important outcome of the new appraisal system was that the clarification of expectations, including “how teachers should plan, deliver, and assess” (SSP), allows PCs to focus their work on coaching and instructional rounds, or classroom walkthroughs, rather than “evaluation”. To the SSP, a positive impact of the new appraisal system is that MLs could focus more directly on instructional leadership. Using the appraisal system to articulate basic expectations for teachers—e.g., “exactly what you have in your unit plan” (SSP), meant that PCs do not have to engage in unnecessary “difficult decisions”, but can focus more concretely on curriculum leadership. The SSP noted that while formal job descriptions have not changed, the “increased support and clarity in detail” through the appraisal system allows MLs “to get into doing their roles”.

### **Ensuring middle leadership quality**

In order to ensure that the school’s instructional leaders are clear about “why they are the best person for the role” and “their appropriateness for the role” (HoS), aspiring leaders apply through a competitive process in which they articulate their potential contributions. Therefore, a reasonable assumption may be made that these positions are offered only to people who were qualified or showed the ability to take on such roles.

MLs, particularly programme coordinators, are expected to articulate strategies for accomplishing school directives. One example was a new goal of accomplishing average DP results of 36. “This puts a lot of pressure on our DPC...” as well as “the subject area coordinators. Everybody feels responsible for attaining the school goal because of the structures we have put into place” (HoS).

The appraisal system provided a clear example of a mechanism in which all members of the school leadership have different responsibilities to enact, in order to support a focus on improved instruction and assessment.

## 5.2.2 Middle leaders’ understanding of their roles

### Programme coordinators

PCs related that their main roles were in providing instructional leadership and capacity building and viewed routine administration as primarily the work of the school Principals. This perspective corroborated that of the SLs as related above. The PCs’ main roles are elaborated in more detail in the next section of the case report. However, the DPC related that he viewed part of his job as being able “to take the pressure away from teachers”. Examples include taking up work such as data analysis for SACs and teachers, and discussing predicted grades directly with students. The MYPC related that much of his work entailed grappling with and implementing The Next Chapter curriculum changes:

...it’s something to sink your teeth into, gives you a little definition, these are the things that we have to get done. Here is a list of milestones that have to be in place.

The PYPC viewed his role as “helping those who directly connect to the classroom. There are times that I do pop in and observe”.

For all PCs, part of the job entails managing workload for teachers by prioritizing near and long-term work and explaining and clarifying its impact on teachers and SACs. Relating programme requirements, therefore, constitute a major job expectation.

### Subject area coordinators

SACs explained that much of the work “is clerical, keeping track of documents and making certain things get done”, resolving questions about curriculum, and keeping “the overarching vision and sense of community” (SAC). Through team-based decision-making SACs work to represent teachers views to school administrators, “my job is to listen [to teachers] ... and support their new ideas” (SAC), and to “filter down new initiatives”. In some instances, SACs take on a role of supporting colleagues in addressing parental concerns about the academic programme, “a kind of go-between, between the teachers and parents”.

### Middle leaders’ scope of work

An overview of the enactment of middle leadership in this school reveals a metaphoric grid, with the three PCs forming vertical alignments with the subject area coordinators forming the horizontal. Their positional roles appear to be demarcated, but in practice both sets of MLs were engaged in activities pertaining to the teaching and learning in the school within

the parameters set out by the IB and extending their roles to incorporate other areas as well. This involved engaging in formal and informal activities to promote PD, promoting better teaching and learning methods in school (pertaining to areas like curriculum and assessment) and by building inter- and intra- school community networks.

### 5.3 Level 1 leadership: leading for teaching and learning

#### 5.3.1 The practice: what and how do they lead?

This section examines middle leadership in the area of teaching and learning, or instruction. It considers the perceived leadership activity of MLs in areas such as curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, reporting and academic attainment. Most MLs identified level one leadership as comprising their core work.

#### **Programme coordinators**

##### *Instructional and curriculum leadership*

The DPC declared unequivocally, “[Enhancing] instructional leadership is pretty much my dominant thing”. He went on describe the painstaking way he analyzed data from the final IB examinations in order to disseminate the information amongst the rest of the staff so that plans can be put in place for improvement in all subject areas.

The MYPC noted that much of his work entails developing clarity around how the curriculum is structured:

....the DP tends to be clearer for people. It is prescribed - this is what you need to do, here are the assessments. It kind of gives you a framework to work with. The MYP often lacks that at the subject level and we have to develop it. So if we do things that apply to Grade 6 and Grade 10.... the expectations for Grade 6 kids and Grade 10 kids seem to be radically different. But it's the same curriculum. So how do you address that? So there were lots of challenges kind of built in there....

The MYPC’s statement seems to address a curriculum coordinating issue of aligning skills and capacities that extend across the broad swath of the MYP. Another challenge that he articulated was around improving teaching and learning in interdisciplinary units:

There are four objectives for the course and all of the assessments fall into one of those four categories - sometimes in assessments there will be more than one or whatever. They often, like in language acquisition or the Japanese programme, they find it challenging. It is complicated that the way second language assessments work, more complicated than you would expect... In science there are two criteria and there are complications with it every time designing it and executing it. As far as dealing with teachers in individual departments is sorting through that and ultimately being comfortable...maybe that's not perfect but we end up getting through it...

Providing support for individual teachers in gaining comfort and mastering the skills needed for criterion-referenced assessment appears as an important aspect of the MYPC’s work. He explained how this clarity was accomplished by working directly with teams of SACs to discuss how assessment in MYP works and conducting workshop-like sessions to bring about this clarity. In this sense, the MYPC had an important role in building the capacity of teaching colleagues about the skills needed for delivering the programme.

Similarly, the PYPC noted that his responsibility was largely “sussing” out areas that needed development:

Improving practices related to instruction and assessment is a major part of my role. My job is meeting with teachers and teaching teachers how to implement the curriculum.

### **Subject area coordinators**

#### *Instructional and curriculum leadership*

The SACs worked directly with teams of teachers. However, concurrently they worked in conjunction with the IB programme coordinators. They were the first point of contact when there were issues directly related to the curriculum. In addition, and like the PCs, they perceived themselves to be engaged in coaching and mentoring the teachers in their departments. A SAC noted:

When I came to school four years ago, I think that was the first year we implemented the new mathematics curriculum in the school, so that was a big change in the first two years and my focus was on reconstructing the mathematics curriculum. ...The situation is a lot better now.... so now my focus would be on supporting individual maths teachers in their teaching, so that’s what I feel I am doing well now.... So for example what I do is I go and observe maths teacher’s lessons and if I see something that they could improve or if they have any things that they want to improve then I would sit with them and go through some of the ways that they can improve.

This quotation illustrates a progression from providing leadership around curriculum reform that entailed putting curriculum components into place to focusing on supporting individual teachers’ enactment by providing feedback and mentoring opportunity to grow capacity.

#### *Shared leadership*

SACs related perspectives that were similar to that of the PCs and SLs expressed above: that sharing leadership strengthened their impact. The PCs and SACs jointly initiated curriculum development plans for the teachers to implement, albeit the process is collaborative between the various staff members:

This year we have developed two new plans. One person generally has the driving idea and then the other person joins in and helps direct it. [...] We’ll fill in a planner and bring it to the SLs, and then we together will discuss it in the meeting. If the central idea is a bit weak and we’ll tighten a few bits of the language up. Maybe we’ll change one of the concepts if we discuss it, if we come up with a thought from a different angle that we’ve not thought of before. (SAC)

This quote exemplifies a process of shared instructional leadership by which SACs work with PCs and Principals to formalize and document a curriculum approach that originates from the instructional team.

In the DP programme, the PC requires all SACs at the beginning of the academic year to report on examination and internal assessment results from the previous year in order to identify areas for improvement. The PC follows up throughout the year, analysing student progress about four times for Year 11 and Year 12.

### 5.3.2 Leadership plus: who are the leaders?

Despite the fact that the MLs, at the level of leading teaching and learning, unambiguously display leadership capabilities related to instructional leadership, the data highlights that there are subtle differences in which such leadership is operationalized. The leadership displayed by the SLs were supervisory with strong administrative dimensions. They laid out policies, expectations and structures for MLs and teachers to follow.

The PCs and SACs largely identified their roles as pertaining to instructional leadership. Both sets of MLs work directly with teachers. However, PCs most often worked directly with SLs and SACs. SACs liaised more closely with the teachers and were more explicitly linked to the day-to-day teaching and learning. The data highlights the fact that all groups of leaders worked closely together with no leadership function being isolated in terms of roles or relationships.

### 5.3.3 The situation: tools, routines and contexts

In order to accomplish the work of instructional leadership, SLs and MLs utilize structures, frameworks and mechanisms either devised by the IB or crafted by them. Tools include documents, rubrics, criteria that direct leadership activity by focusing efforts and energies. Routines are established and there are regularly scheduled events that are used to facilitate engagement leadership by supporting time-bound progression or completion of tasks. Contextual issues may also determine the focus of leaders' energies.

#### IB Tools

Indisputably, the most effective tool for the MLs is the framework provided by the IB. As the PYPC pointed out:

So, whether that's a whole new set of information or it's actually managing what the IB expects from us.... because those things are basically the skills that have to be taught and the IB wants them to know that it's concept-driven the image of how we, by osmosis, understand things and by the example of doing we actually learn. But we've gone with some skills-based teaching and so it's keeping teachers on a borderline of you have to remain in an IB frame of mind which is those concepts, how kids learn and how kids get involved with things, and how they take them further into action.

As a continuum school, some of the MLs were focused on building "vertical alignment" within PYP, MYP, and DP in order to build consistency:

I think in science in terms of planning, there hasn't been a lot of that in the past I don't think but this year, one of the teachers from the primary school is actually now teaching our grade 6 and 7 science. So that's been awesome because he knows what they do there, and he knows what they should need to do. (SAC)

In order to facilitate instructional work, PCs worked with SACs by using Internal Assessment guidelines provided by the IB to guide teachers and reflect on practices.

In the PYP, teachers worked on the scope and sequence of the curriculum. In order to facilitate this, the PYPC created templates and gave examples of how they should be completed. During meetings teachers had the opportunity to review drafts of work, ask

questions, and engage with the specialist coordinators when relevant. From the PSP's view, the process "... gives teachers a bit of responsibility for curriculum development".

### **School and ML developed tools**

Another core tool is the teacher appraisal system, as outlined above. The system directs leaders and teacher energies. In particular, it sets expectations for the development of appraisal portfolios. Teachers include two unit plans and evidence of lesson observation feedback from PCs, SACs or Principals for contribution to their portfolios. As such, the portfolio structure and guidelines provide tools through which MLs enact their instructional leadership by developing teacher capacity, which is elaborated in the next section.

### **Routines**

Throughout this case, it became evident that the school has in built structures and systems in place that afforded the teachers support by way of standard procedures. In the secondary school, the Principal mandates that SAC's organize monthly meetings at a minimum, but allows different subject areas to determine the frequency, duration and purpose of meetings. Further, regularly scheduled meetings of SACs, led by the PCs, provide an opportunity to identify and develop skills in core areas of IB delivery. An example of this includes ATL mapping. PCs worked together to conduct workshops on topics about instruction with SACs. One example includes the process of ATL mapping. This enables SACS to further replicate instructional skill development strategies with subject area staff.

The MYPC established a pivotal routine to support the Personal Project. Each month the MYPS sends to teachers and students an update of where they need to be, the information the student should have, and the resources that are needed in order for students to meet their targets.

### **Supports**

As far as support is concerned, in Japan School, as the data revealed, there exists a system of "vertical collaboration" that provided support in all tiers of leadership. As S5H (a teacher) noted:

He [SAC] also helps me with things like inquiry-based teaching, that I may not know or lack the experience of as this is my first year of teaching. So I ask him for feedback on how to you use provocation or how to set up the lines of inquiry and all that, and the planner as well.

The SLs, the PCs and the teachers stated repeatedly that each group of leaders formed a supportive network. In addition, the school had clearly defined structures and policies in place so there was clarity in terms of whom to ask for help.

Shared leadership and coaching provided a strong support mechanism for programme coordinators. The professional relationship between the DPC and MYPC and the SSP was illustrative of this work. The SSP related how initially, two years prior to data collection, he chaired formal Instructional Leadership Team meetings (ILT) that included the three and the SACs. He developed an agenda around curriculum coordination. This focus progressively changed. The following year, the PCs "came up with very specific instructional focuses" and

devised the agendas, but would solicit feedback from the SSP. By the next academic year, i.e., of data collection, the PCs had:

basically, prepared a years' agenda with 4 or 5 focuses...linked with the IB expectations... even trying to do a bit more of workshop-style so that the DPC was able to give the SACs some tools to work with the subject teachers on how you would review a unit plan, how you would make a decision on whether this assessment was meaningful. Now, this year, I'm getting to the point where I'm not even asking them to show me what they're going to do with the ILT. (SSP)

Mentoring PCs into their role formed a clear priority for the SSP. This was corroborated during job shadowing observations of a meeting between the SSP and DPC. During the meeting, they discussed a forthcoming ILT meeting and how it would be conducted together with the MYPC. The SSP provided feedback to the DPC and together they determined how they could provide individual support for SACs teachers.

## **The IB**

Working in an IB context provides for a certain level of uniqueness in the teaching and learning context. While most of the participants believed that the IB had taught them to be flexible and adaptive to change, they also pointed out that working in such environments produce its own set of challenges. The IB mandates leadership roles in programme coordination to ensure that IB educational values and pedagogies are infused into instructional programs and aligned to school purpose. Therefore, it was not surprising to find that several of the participants remarked that they required additional skill-set to perform well in the teaching and learning context. MLs have a crucial role in supporting teachers in acquiring such skills.

## **IB-related instructional skills development**

The DPC pointed out:

So, a lot of my work here is teaching teachers how to look at strategies for teaching, how to look at presenting materials that aren't chalk and talk.

To illustrate, he provided the following example:

The teacher that I mentored for the first year I was here wanted a book, and she wanted to "teach it" on the board, and she wanted to assess on a worksheet. So, I had to explain to her how that doesn't work. So those are the kinds of the things where I spend a lot of my day.

MLs in all areas of the school related challenges with enacting the IB curriculum. When asked about enacting the IB curriculum, one primary level SAC related that:

I think we generally do the unit of inquiry quite well. (SAC)

Also, a SAC explained:

The difficulty is that it is quite different from the formal British curriculum. [...] There is a difference between DP and MYP in the way that they assess students and I always feel somewhat challenged when I try to share that difference when moving [from

MYP] into DP. I often feel that since assessment is completely different, [teachers] tend to struggle with that.

The MLs remarked that strong instructional knowledge coupled with relevant experience could support them to work more effectively with teachers in addressing such concerns. One of the ways that this could be achieved was by building collaborative networks among other MLs and teachers:

Just working with other MLs who work in IB, I feel that I learn a lot from what they do or how they approach different teachers...that's how I learn how to apply leadership to my department. (SAC)

The PYPC noted that some aspects of the IB curriculum are required and, as such, a coordinator's job requires some prescription:

In a sense that sometimes, well, the IB is the curriculum of choice here and sometimes decisions are made through the IB which have to be communicated to the rest of the staff need to be prescriptive and those need to go across in an authoritative manner. So, in that sense that [i.e., working collaboratively with the Principal] backs it up you know, it's not just the PYPC collaborating with you but making sure these systems are in place and are followed, so, which sounds a little less collaborative, but it's the nature of the beast, right?

From this perspective, implementing the IB requires a balance of devising collaborative and supportive structures with teachers whilst utilizing SLs' authority to ensure that IB standards and practices are followed. This perspective aligns with those articulated above by the SSP and HoS, each of whom argued that putting structure and policy into place frees PCs and SACs to focus on instructional leadership.

#### **5.4 Level 2 leadership: leading for capacity building**

The previous section considered MLs' instructional leadership, which they tended to perceive as their core work, and especially so of SACs. MLs tend to focus their attention on curriculum development and mentoring and coaching colleagues in these areas. PCs tend to work most closely with Principals and SACs, and SACs with PCs and teachers. In this sense, networks of collaboration emerged (HoS to SLs; SLs to PCs; PCs to SACs; SACs to teachers). Much of the focus of instructional leadership is on cultivating an understanding of components of the IB curriculum and on improving teaching and learning. SLs and MLs develop tools and routines to support development in these areas.

This section considers MLs contributions to school development by examining data pertaining to their role in capacity building and school-wide initiatives. This level of leadership considers the development of professional and organizational learning structures and connections to the community that enhance the capacity of the organization. To a large extent, capacity building extends from MLs' focus on instructional leadership as leaders devise strategies to improve instruction that often account for capacity building. In so doing, their efforts extend to contributing to policy development and work beyond areas of curriculum responsibility.

Capacity building includes the development of individual professional learning, and organizational capabilities to enact school vision, mission and policy.

#### 5.4.1 The practice: what and how do they lead?

##### Structures to support capacity building

The beginning of this case report introduced the teacher appraisal system. The system along with its associated policy, procedures and tools aim to build teacher capacity. Given its centrality to focusing work on capacity building, we now elaborate on it further. Building personal portfolios is also seen as a way of enhancing instructional leadership. The HoS emphasised the rationale for this:

One of the first things that we did was to bring in a comprehensive appraisal system, and the reason wasn't to give critical feedback so much although that is part of it if it's needed. The reason for it was to recognise staff and, of course, to support them in their professional growth.

Therefore, this contribution towards building school capacity was structured and formalized. The SSP elaborated on the impact of this core structure:

To complement [the appraisal system] ... we just reviewed our teacher appraisal and support processes so everything aligns... But, also for MLs. Hopefully it gives them the support that they need so the expectations to the teachers are clear from the admin who evaluate them, ultimately. "This is how we expect you to plan, assess, and deliver in detail.

The SSPs perspective was that the portfolio-based teacher appraisal system aligned to teacher support and development processes and clearly documented expectations for teachers. Moreover, this clarity provided a platform for MLs work in building teaching capacity. This occurred through formal mechanisms such as observations:

There are observational rounds from the leadership team so the coordinators, subject coordinators and the Principal. [...] We also have a formal observation done by myself or the area Principals each year, and the teachers are notified of that in advance. [...] Our board decides what success is, so that is subjective. If I don't want to have policies and job descriptions and support measures in place to define our expectations and define what success means, then I'm not setting [teachers] up for success. [...] My role is setting those structural measures so that people can do what we want them to do. How they go about doing that is up to them but we do appraise the coordinators, we have an appraisal system for our Principals, so they are reviewing the expectations and they are collecting feedback and getting feedback. (HoS)

As per the appraisal system, the DPC regularly observed lessons and provided focused feedback to teachers on aspects of lesson delivery. An example of such an activity was noted during job shadowing. A science teacher had invited the DPC to conduct a walkthrough and to provide feedback on "the end of the lesson" in which the teacher was providing instruction related to internal assessment (IA). He initiated this focus because, as a new IB instructor, IA's were unfamiliar. The feedback focused on the use of rubrics and how the purposes of the IA's were explained. The DPC provided immediate written feedback on a mobile device, ensuring that he submitted the feedback before leaving the classroom. His feedback referenced internal assessment guidelines and focused on the selection of topics. He explained that he would also discuss the results with the teacher and noted that although the feedback was formative and not officially recorded, teachers could include the written feedback in their assessment portfolios, if they wished to do so.

## **Mentoring, feedback and coaching**

The above data, along with the findings on instructional leadership, suggests that a key role for PCs lies in the building of capacity of other MLs and teachers. PCs and SACs related that they work in teams and with individuals in enacting their instructional leadership practice. In this vein, the SSP, MYP and DP noted that establishing mentoring programs to help improve the teaching and learning practices was a crucial part of their work. The DPC provided one example:

I set up a mentoring programme for all the new teachers... and then I also mentor three teachers who are new to the science department. So even the SAC, I mentor her how to be a SAC as well.

Areas of mentorship included both curriculum content and leadership skills. Both secondary school programme coordinators related that they co-led regularly scheduled meetings with SACs in order to focus on developing a SACs toolbox of managerial and leadership strategies needed to effectively lead their subject areas, as well as identifying and developing skills for subject area programme delivery.

## **Leadership distribution**

Leaders reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of their committee members to allocate duties and seek improvement in school operations. SACs tended to monitor, assess, coordinate and evaluate the administrative work in their own panel as well as the performance of teachers, in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

SLs and the PCs reported that they strategically allocated leadership responsibilities to more junior leaders and teachers:

I am increasingly trying to delegate a bit more curriculum leadership to the coordinators. (SSP)

We're counting on the colleagues. It is their job which is not in the title only. There is a lot of things that they have as responsibilities. We are trying to make sure that they're comfortable with what they're doing in their different levels" (PC)

Providing both opportunities as well as mentorship and feedback were evidenced in the school. This included SACs efforts to further distribute responsibility to team members:

Each department can decide the way they want to do by themselves, but we want to make sure that everything is in place. (DPC)

What I do is trying to distribute my work to other members of the department when it is possible. [...] I do distribute the extra-curriculum activity to other colleagues to run and organise. (SAC)

However, one ML believed that he received insufficient exposure to leading bigger groups and hoped that he will get the opportunity to do so later on:

Maybe leading a wider group of people because at the moment, my role is focusing on my department mainly. But then if I had the opportunity to be with teachers from different departments, for example, if I could be applying different types of leaders to them. (DP)

Moreover, a teacher articulated the potential pitfalls of distribution leadership across the organization:

The buck stops with you potentially if something doesn't work then it's your fault, it's your fault if something goes wrong.

### **Middle leaders building teaching capacity**

In the secondary school, MLs capacity building work occurs in close collaboration amongst the Principal, PCs and SACs. The PCs related how they set out a programme for SACs on how to run departmental meetings. Priority areas were identified based on a CIS and IB recognition visit. Topics included teaching and learning strategies and lesson planning. PCs and SACs provide feedback to colleagues through walkthroughs. Managerial strategies were also examined, and SACs presented "how they organize their department" and the structures that they put in place to provide feedback to colleagues. One SAC, used electronic notepads to provide feedback on planning documents, which all department members can then access and see "what they need to change and what they need to update".

The data shows that the SLs and the MLs are engaged in contributing to the personal development of other staff members. They do this by guiding and mentoring teachers (especially new teachers) by sharing experiences with the intention of strengthening current skills and developing further professional skills:

The MLs will do walkthroughs and observations. Not fully observations but walkthrough types, but their roles are coaching. [...] Sometimes the MLs will talk with me first or might collaborate my observation and walkthroughs, then the MLs can follow up without a teacher feeling that it's the SLs who makes the final evaluation decisions. (SSP)

There were also less formal ways where the teachers were encouraged to reflect upon their practice and discuss ways to improve their pedagogy:

I offer support to the teachers when needed, and I am the kind of an unofficial person who has the experience in teaching to support them. (SAC)

I think that's quite good in terms of our own personal development that we see the things that we have been doing and you can see where the weaknesses are and what you think you want to do next. (Teacher)

Even in instances where leadership was not explicitly shared, MLs tended to work *with* teachers to build networks of practice:

I tend to work more with the teachers directly on curriculum documents and assessments. (MYPC)

I oversee the programme of inquiry to ensure that all the different [IB required] elements are evenly represented. (SAC)

### **Middle leaders as school culture builders**

Another key aspect of capacity building is the building of relationships within the school. The SLs and the MLs emphasized the importance of building trust and respect amongst

teachers. Not only were they concerned with building professional networks within schools, but they also saw themselves as conflict-resolvers whenever needed:

[I] allow the MLs in a way to live the role. Having someone come to you for assistance is so much different than telling someone that this needs to be done. I think it means a lot more to a leader to feel valued. (PSP)

I take care of emotional support. In a sense, make teachers comfortable. Making staff work for a purpose that is actually heartfelt. So, creating an atmosphere where the workplace is comfortable and warm. (MYPC)

Sometimes we see there are conflicts between teachers and the administration decisions. So my job is to listen to the teachers and then I try to help and support their new ideas. [...]. ...I told them you know I really want to help. [...] And that can be a good kind of coordinator, a good listener. (SAC)

All levels of leaders articulated that resolving potential miscommunication and creating a safe and supportive environment for effective teaching and learning were valued roles for MLs — a finding that suggests MLs' potential to influence school-wide cultures.

### **Middle leaders as contributors to policy and procedures**

In general, the participants reported that they had a role in setting up and revising the school-wide policies:

I updated our secondary school teacher handbook and I made specific documents on instructional planning procedures and expectations. [...] I think now there are clear expectations on paper, very detailed for how the teachers should plan, deliver, assess, so the MLs can really get into supporting them because they're in an evaluation role. (SSP)

While SLs established expectations by writing policies, the above quote also indicates a role for MLs in supporting the achievement of such expectations. PCs and SACs corroborated this by articulating their roles in developing policy and procedures:

We want to show the policies are a good system of how teachers operate. [For example,] data analysis assessment criteria and looking at effective learning through data (DPC)

We are looking into changing a lot of the ways in which we assess students... The PCs have consulted each of the SAC to get their input. (SAC)

These data indicate engagement of PCs and SACs around assessment and the use of assessment data. They have involved policy development by providing feedback on policy proposals and in interpreting and enacting policy change.

Similarly, the PSP explained that when revising English language support policies, the ELS coordinator was “very much involved... was very vocal ... and was putting the students first” by suggestion ways that policies could be improved (PSP). The DPC similarly explained, using changes to assessment policy as an example, that he and the MYPC would review policies from the perspectives of the two programmes:

We take a look at it and say, “you’ll probably want to fix this”, why you’d want to change this, or something like that.

## Other school-wide roles

While MLs took up responsibilities for building capacity and contributing to policy development and enactment in school, other examples were found in which individual teachers took up leadership roles with cross-curricular impact:

I teach the MYP from Grade 6 to Grade 8 but I'm also the coordinator to make sure that technology is being used throughout the school, every single department and every single class. [...] We have also worked to create a new scope and sequence for technology across the school both for primary, elementary and for secondary. [...] So there is a lot of collaboration. (Teacher)

## Building middle leaders' capacity

As discussed in previous sections of this chapter, the school design facilitates a cascading structure of development in which SL's mentor PCs who in turn develop capacity in SACs and from SACs to teachers. At times SLs and PCs will also work directly with teachers.

However, the concept of professional learning has other dimensions. For example, some participants suggested that they required specific skill-sets to perform well in their roles. Their capacity is developed by having flexible mind-sets, being open to suggestions, having the ability to learn from mistakes:

The main thing is I learn from my mistakes and what's not to do. (DPC)

Just working with other MLs who work in IB, I feel that I learn a lot from what they do or how they approach different teachers...that's how I learn how to apply leadership to my department. (SAC)

Trying to think of things they could do it better...maybe there are better ways of doing it, this is the only way I've been exposed to it so far. (Teacher)

### 5.4.2 Leadership plus: who are the leaders?

The section on leadership practice reveals that SLs, PCs, and SACs each have clear formal responsibilities for building capacity and contributing to school-wide policies and practices within the organisational structure of the school. One aspect is in developing school strategy. While the HoS primarily is responsible for drafting policies to be adopted by the school board, MLs draft action plans for their respective programmes in order to meet strategic aims. As the HoS articulated, such policies are not "thrown on" MLs, but are supported through "structures to motivate teachers towards that goal".

In particular, PCs are appointed to their roles in part to develop teacher capacity. However, the HoS views it as the area Principals' responsibility to "support the development of the PCs" who in turn "work with other staff to meet the requirements of the programmes". From this vantage, capacity building occurs through a layered mentorship design. Part of this process was explained in the above section.

By design, senior and PCs collaborate to identify areas to address for school improvement. They collaborate around developing and implementing strategies to build capacity in SACs and teachers. In the elementary school, the PYP/VP and PSP tend to work in a close relationship in this area. In the secondary school, the MYP/PC and DPC will, at all times,

individually mentor or provide feedback to teachers, and co-lead subject area training with SACs, but will also regularly co-lead training of SACs in IB curriculum and leadership capacity matters.

### 5.4.3 The situation: tools, routines and contexts?

#### Tools and routines

The school appraisal system once again served as a significant structure to guide the development of both leadership and teacher capacity. One of the solidest routines was that of observational rounds, or “walkthroughs” in which PCs and SACs provided frequent, focused and formative feedback to teachers on brief and pre-arranged aspects of teaching and learning. Most often, teachers themselves identified areas of foci. Principals and the HoS conducted summative observations periodically.

Regular meetings run by PCs in the secondary school were used for skilling SACs in both IB instructional capacities and leadership capacities that SAC needed to effectively lead in their areas of responsibility and to implement change.

#### Supports and challenges

Aside from the internal capacity building strategies already related, MLs related that the provision of external PD also served to skill them in their work:

Once I was selected as the PC, all the training that I needed was available and set aside.” (PYPC)

In addition to formal PD, the senior leadership recognised the additional time required of SACs to build capacity among team members:

I'm sure I could be a much better leader if I only taught one class and all the rest of the time was focused on helping other colleagues. (SAC)

However, both SLs and SACs observed that relief from responsibilities as homeroom teachers and student club supervisors, planned for the next academic year, would mean that “we have more time to be focused on our own SACs job” (SAC).

A significant support to middle leadership by way of capacity building is the school culture. More specifically, MLs believed that there is a shared goal and that makes their roles easier:

We asked a lot of teachers. They were involved in different committees, meeting times - none of that is fun for them it's all time and grinds but they did it in kind of the spirits for improvement and there was very sincere about it. (MYPC)

The participants in this study believed, by and large, that they had autonomy at their workplace:

I can do things with somewhat looks like autonomy because I don't have to run around and get everything backed up. That's because I know the parameters of what I can and can't do (PYPC)

There is no set policy that puts these ideas out in front of you if you want to adopt them or change them, as long as the kids are getting the results. It doesn't matter what you do. I like that freedom. (SAC)

## **The IB**

The school leaders believed that academic background and experience could support them to work better and suggested several ways that may potentially cultivate their PD in middle leadership. They noted:

I've done additional IB training focussed on its interdisciplinary units, so not specifically for coordinators, but I went to the training more than half of the people were coordinators because it was a new initiative it's kind of a problem in schools. So that was one of the things they had something in place to support it I guess which was an indication of the alignment between what they were expecting and what they're providing with training. (MYPC)

I would like to get more experience as an external examiner with the DP and potentially with MYP as well. (SAC)

An issue that was brought up by SSP was that although PD programs were valuable, it was difficult for SACs to juggle time for PD with their teaching responses:

No matter how much an organisation tries to streamline or have global expectations for PD quality. But I think for middle school leaders traditionally, there's not been a lot out there as well. So, I think time because ultimately...especially the SACs – they're balancing a pretty full-time teaching load within their role

The IB curriculum is the background against which middle leadership is enacted. One of the key functions of middle leadership is building continuity between PYP, MYP and DP. The HoS noted that the MYP Coordinator in particular is leading strategies "to smooth the transition from PYP to MYP". However, he articulated the caveat that while PCs' need to work on articulation, "we've got area Principals" for whole school initiatives, who may in turn utilize programme coordinators". Work on alignment, therefore, may best be viewed as a shared activity led by SLs and involving MLs where appropriate. The SSP corroborated this perspective, explaining that he observed Year 5 lessons, and met the Grade 5 teachers along with the MYPC in order to plan PYP-MYP transitioning activities. Less formally structured was alignment in subject areas, which may reflect the different pedagogical leadership structures across the primary and secondary schools. However, the SSP related his aim to reduce SAC's teaching load in the upcoming academic year. He noted that SAC "will have the change to connect more with the grade five teachers and NLS coordinator"

Both the DPC and the MYPC mentioned that they consciously focussed on aligning the various sections of the programs school-wide:

What I do is offer a liaison from the PYP to MYP ...So I liaise with the PYP and the primary school to do things like that involving CASS but that's about it for the PYP because it's such a different programme. However, [the coordinators] work really closely together. We set out a whole semester of the program for the SACs of what to do in their departmental meetings ....to plan a lesson and obviously use that for a walk through activity and that's between MYP and DP ....it just promotes a better learning structure throughout the school.

Similarly, the MYPC had organized induction programs so that students completing the PYP would transition better into the MYP.

### **5.5 Level 3 leadership: leading beyond the school**

In contemporary school leadership settings, the enactment of leadership activities is not just limited to schools. Instead, it transcends and affects contexts that are beyond the school.

#### **5.5.1 Leaders-plus: who are the leaders?**

The SLs and PCs by virtue of their positions have opportunities to lead beyond the school. Although there are instances when the SAC takes on leadership roles that connect them with out of school leadership contexts, this is in conjunction with the PCs. The SAC and the PCs interface with parents through the extent of the SAC's involvement with wider levels of networking are more limited. This can be explained by the nature of their roles.

#### **5.5.2 The practice: what and how do they lead?**

There are two main contexts where the MLs lead outside the school. The first is that of the extended community and this is by and large the parent body and the second is extending leadership by way of networking with other schools. The discussion below deals with these contexts in order.

#### **Parents: the external partners**

One of the key reasons for enhanced communication with the parents is that they were seen as partners in resolving issues related to students:

The best way is I sit there with the teacher and the parents, three altogether to discuss the solution for student's issues. It is another task of being a SAC, to go between the teachers and parents. (SAC)

#### **Changing community mind-sets**

The student body of this school is international and thus the senior leadership team needs to have a degree of multicultural awareness and sensitivity when it comes to student intake and then building relationships with the extended school community. The literature in the area highlights that Asian parents are strongly driven by academic excellence in other areas and the parents of this school (albeit international but from different Asian countries) are no different.

The HoS pointed out that the DP is very appealing to parents from a particular non-Japanese community who would prefer to educate their children in another international school that offered the curriculum of their home country and then move these children to this school in Grade 11. Consequently, the students often did not have the skill set to adapt to the DP. Over time, then he has managed to bring about change in the mindset of parents from this community and so students are now being enrolled well before the commencement of the DP.

In Japan, it is the practice of parents to send their children to cramming schools known as *jukus*, this forms a shadow education system. This is a challenge faced by the SAC, teachers

and PCs and hence the SAC has taken proactive means to bring about a change in this culture more:

In the past we put so much emphasis in mathematics since we have a lot of Asian parents and students, there are tendencies for them to study ahead of what we teach by going to cramming school [juku]. So, what I do is run information sessions to discourage them from doing that. But then I find it sometimes challenging to change their mindset towards that. (SAC)

### **Bridging the gap in expectations**

The SLs, MLs and teachers perceived that the expectations from the parents have raised some difficulty in the enactment of their leadership. The participants found that they have to explain to the parents about their job and how to help students' learning and social development. This is because some parents did not understand the school's approach and purposes, due to cultural misalignments. The parents had their priority such as the preference for academic achievement over social development. This situation meant that at times their leadership needed to be adjusted to meet parental expectation. As the DPC pointed out:

Tomorrow we're doing offside touch football so that's for period six just to get them to relax a bit because a lot of the parents, Japanese parents, ....they stop sports, just want them to study it's just the completely the wrong thing to do, they need to have a release they don't get that so that's one thing we try and push at school but it's very difficult..

### **Building networks**

Schools in Japan, in general, do not have a strong culture of inter-school networking. On an organizational level, the PCs are bringing about a change in this area. The DPC emphasized that he was developing networks with other IB schools with the dual aim of building a supportive network and looking at models of best practice across schools in the region:

I know all the DPCs from the established schools here so I am in email contact with them all the time and they just email us we send emails back... we are looking into changing our assessment policy and we wanted to know what the other schools have for their assessment policies and how its linked to the IB so I've got all the information now ...it [inter-school communication] doesn't happen every week but it happens probably once a month ....

## **5.5.3 The situation: tools, routines and contexts?**

### **Tools and routines**

#### **IB tools**

The formal IB structures allow the MLs to engage with the community and this is a useful tool. Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) is one of the three essential elements that every student must complete as part of the DP. CAS is studied throughout the DP and it involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies. As a key element of CAS is voluntary service outside the school, the DPC stated, "CAS tries to get the community to be involved so that is part of my role that's one thing". He acknowledged that this is an area

that he trying to focus on to bring about improvement through his perceived shortcoming in the area is linked to the fact that there is a language barrier between the parents and him.

As far as routines are concerned, there are the DPC has charted a series of meetings with outside agencies like the parents to disseminated information about the IB, such as options evening.

### **Supports and challenges**

#### *Language of communication*

A significant contextual challenge is that of language. Many Japanese parents do not speak English and, as a result, even simple communication becomes a challenge.

The DPC said,

I don't speak Japanese. So I have to go through a Japanese colleague every time and especially one-on-one meetings with parents. I have to get to get a translator so it gets complicated and I sort of have put it on the back burner sometimes

However, a technical tool has helped to overcome this barrier as the school as bought audio systems with simultaneous translation functions. The DPC stated:

The school has bought audio systems where we have the school translator translating my speech in real time as I speak ....sometimes parents can't speak English if there are issues I have to get the translator to interpret what I'm saying real time as well so it gets a bit difficult for the school-wide community especially for me and my Japanese language ability.

#### *Contextual challenges: staff turnover*

Another critical external influence related to middle leadership is the high turnover of staff. Gaining experience in international schools worldwide in general, and in IB schools in particular, affords a great deal of flexibility to teachers and enriches their socio-cultural understanding of different contexts, yet it does hamper this school in terms of continuity building. Indeed, this factor is mentioned on the website of the school. In reality, the school has put into place strong structures in order to promote a sense of permanence. The lack of continuity may affect an IB school less than other schools precisely because of the highly developed IB program. Structurally teacher turnover is unlikely to dramatically impact on the way the curriculum is delivered. However, the personal aspect of this issue is undeniable as at the very least the formal leadership practices set up by one individual may not be followed through by the successor.

In the words of the HoS:

I think that's important – you have a new leader come in who's been in a different international school and popped around in another international school, they don't understand the context. It takes years to grapple with and understanding your context and staff is important to do in your job as a leader. Yes, we want stability there.

Moreover, the school fees are relatively low in comparison to the other international schools in the city. And this in turn means that there is a lower budget for a teacher's

remuneration. The HoS brought up this point as he realised that it was imperative to provide competitive salaries if the school was to attract and retain its personnel:

I should mention lower tuition means lower budgets, so lower budgets mean it's difficult to compete with salaries in big international schools. So, we have had a really high turnover in the past. ....the main thing that we want to do is make sure that our salaries are competitive for the instructional leadership team positions of coordinator and above. We want to keep the stability there. So, the other staff coming in and going, that's always been happening in international schools at the management and instructional leadership levels. We want stability there. So, salary packages have been reviewed as well. They like it here, they feel supported ...

## **The IB**

### *Promoting community building*

Some of the participants viewed the IB as being a vital factor in community and network building:

The level of community I guess the IB gives you and even if there are no other IB schools around, you can always have a PD session and you're bound to run into at least another person very similar...that sort of community and collaboration the IB is very good at and helpful. (Teacher)

A PC pointed out that there was sometimes a time gap between a question that was sent to the IB and the answer that they received. The upside of this was that it helped him to critically evaluate the issue and arrive at his solution. Therefore, a perceived shortfall, in reality becomes a learning situation.

## **5.6 Advice network and time-use: MLs across the levels**

In conjunction with the data from the individual interviews and the focus group interviews, there were two surveys that were conducted with the participants. The first one looked at the 'advice networks' prevalent in the school. It explored the pathways taken in the school when support, suggestions and advice were sought in areas linked to teaching and learning, capacity building and leading beyond the school. In addition the program coordinators also undertook a 'time-use' survey. These surveys add richness to the data obtained from the interviews by providing additional dimensions of understanding. The following sections discuss the findings of these surveys.

### **5.6.1 Learning and teaching advice network**

Table 13 captures the results of participants' responses to the question about whom they consult for advice regarding learning and teaching. The HoS, PS and SSPs are represented in orange, PCs in green, SACs in blue, CSLs in yellow, and teachers in purple. The arrows represent the directions of seeking advice. Several observations may be made of these results. First, the network may be divided approximately into two constellations based on the two divisions that comprise the school. The left constellation represents the PS and the right the SS. Second, the HoS and the two Principals primarily link connections between the two schools, in terms of seeking advice on teaching and learning. In other words, advice seeking across the two constellations is mostly limited to advice sought from the SLs, the HoS, PSP, and SSP, although there is one instance of a PS SAC liaising with the MYPC. This

seems to reflect the former's specialism in literacy, and discussions around the transition from primary to secondary school.

Table 13 Proportion of indegree centrality by nominated leaders

Leaders	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion
SLs	3	24%	3	42%	3	44%
PCs	3	31%	3	27%	3	21%
SAC	7	20%	6	14%	6	9%
CSLs	4	4%	4	4%	6	11%
Teachers	29	20%	28	10%	29	13%
Others	1	1%	2	2%	2	2%
Total	47	100%	46	100%	49	100%

Table 14 Proportion of indegree centrality nominated leaders by groups

Leaders	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion	No. of Leaders	Indegree Centrality Proportion
SLs	3	24%	3	42%	3	44%
MLs	14	55%	13	45%	15	41%
Teachers	29	20%	28	10%	29	13%
Others	1	1%	2	2%	2	2%
Total	47	100%	46	100%	49	100%

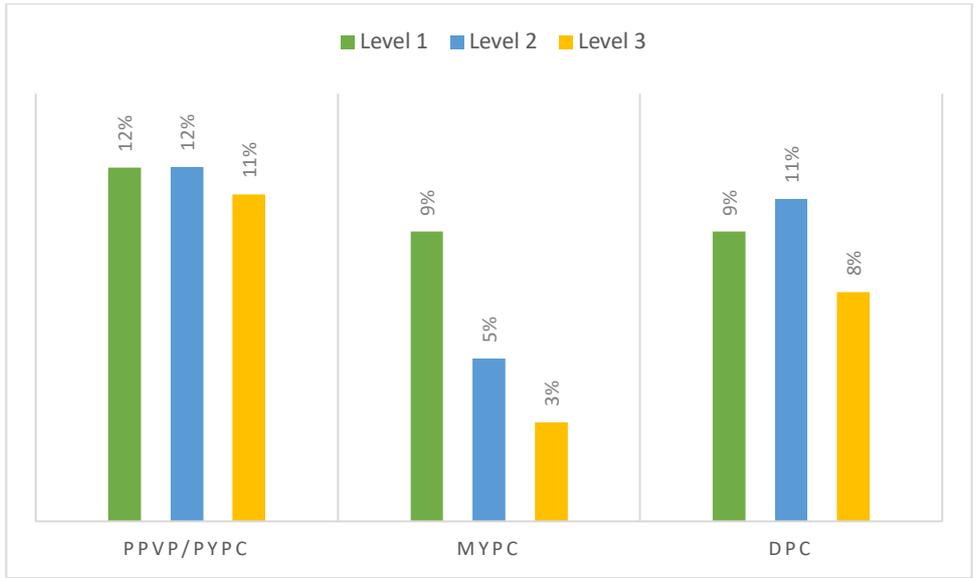
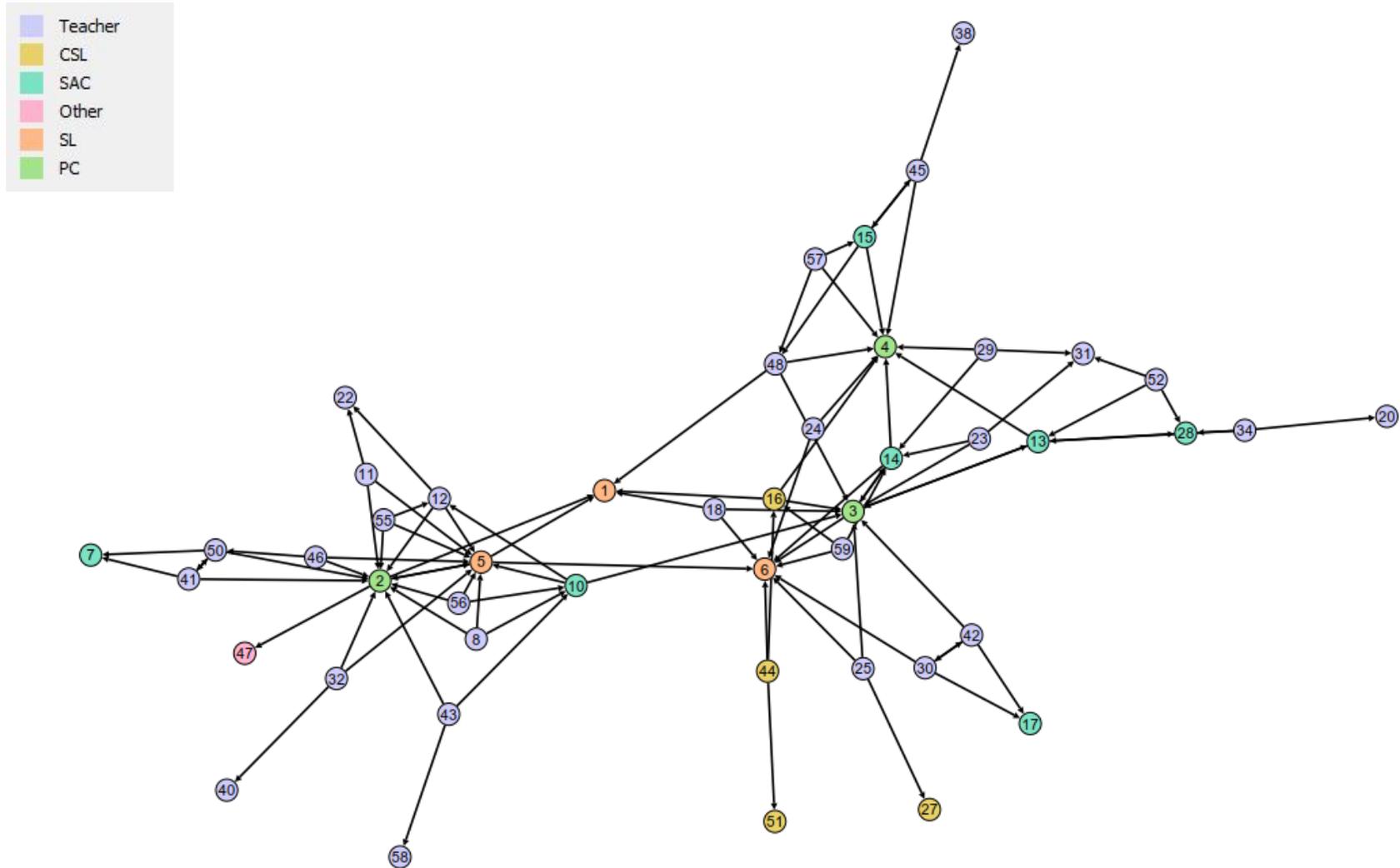


Figure 20 Changes in advising activities by PCs

Figure 21 Level 1 Advice network Japan



Formal leaders, SLs and MLs, appear to be most often sought for advice around teaching and learning. This is represented by normalized in-degree, meaning the relative proportion of total inbound linkages attributed to individuals. Proportionately, formal leaders account for approximately 80% of advice seeking (See Table 14). PCs accounted for the single largest proportion of advice seeking at approximately the same proportion each (PYP = 11.57 %; both MYPC and DPC = 9%). Given the small sample size, this finding is only indicative of PCs' significant influence on teaching and learning that is also shown in the qualitative analysis.

Although we are cognizant of the limitations of the data set, the advice network data represented here coheres to the findings of the qualitative data and the organizational design of the school, in which school Principals work closely with PCs who in turn work with SACs and teachers to lead instruction.

### 5.6.2 Capacity building advice network

In Level 1, PCs had the highest proportion of advice seeking (indegree centrality). For Level 2, we find a significant shift in that MLs are less likely to be consulted on matters related to capacity building/organizational development (see Table 13).

Figure 22 depicts participants' identification of three individuals that they most frequently seek advice from on capacity building. Given a low response rate, the network is incomplete but serves as another indicator to probe the qualitative findings. In the Level 1 advice network, the PYP emerged as the most sought after for advice on teaching and learning (indegree centrality). However, the Level 2 advice network, focusing on organizational leadership differed, here the SSP emerged as receiving the leading proportion of advice seeking (indegree=0.222). This may reflect the qualitative data, which shows how the SSP invested much energy (with the HoS) in developing structures for capacity building and aligning appraisal to other organizational policies and procedures and coaching the MYP and DPCs in these activities. As the leaders who invested the most time in organizational development related to SAC and PC capacity building, it makes sense that they emerge prominently in this level of leadership. It is also significant that PCs are also frequently consulted in this domain, almost to the same indegree as for Level 1, whereas SACs and non-formal teacher leaders (Other) are less likely to be consulted. Figure 22 depicts that few teachers consult other teachers in this area, but are more likely to consult PCs or SLs. That PCs are still significantly identified in this area may relate to the tendency for teachers or SACs to consult them regarding capacity building related to teaching and learning initiatives, as is designed structurally through the school-wide teacher appraisal system. This may explain the similar structure in the Level 1 and Level 2 results.

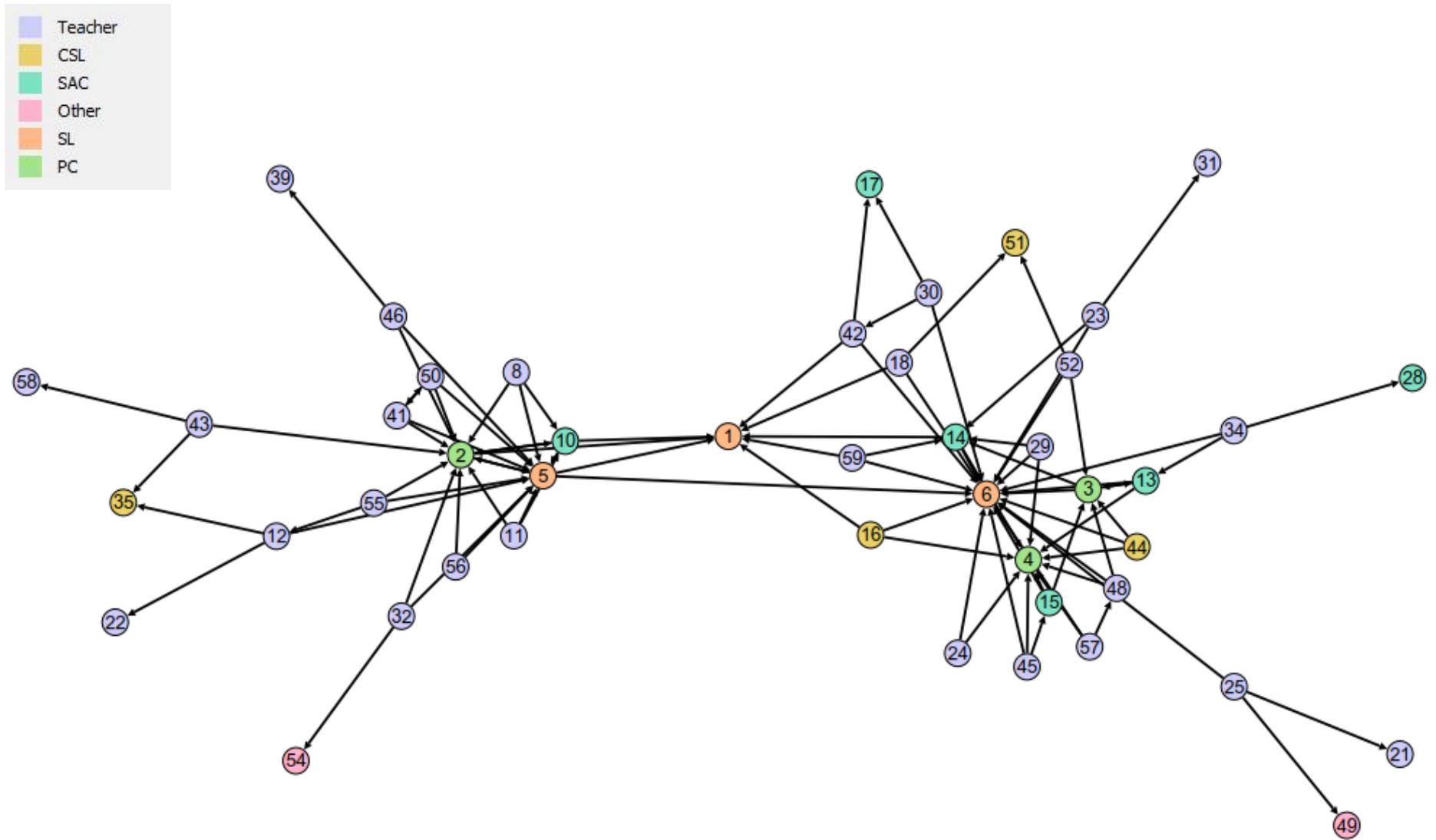


Figure 22 Level 2 Advice network Japan

The Level 2 network map also shows the HoS as receiving advice from a broader array of SACs and teachers, in addition to PCs and Principals, than was the case in Level 1. This may reflect the positional responsibilities of the different leaders whereby teachers are more likely to seek advice from Principals, PCs and SAC about teaching and learning, but would in the case of organisational concerns also seek advice from the HoS. For example, the qualitative analysis indicated that SACs were invited to provide feedback on policies related to assessment and student admissions. In such a manner, organizational concerns would increasingly be addressed to the HoS.

### 5.6.3 External/system advice network

The results of the third advice network analysis represent a significant change in the proportion of MLs' indegree. Compared to Level 1, PCs' share of indegree advice giving dropped by 10%, SACs by 11%, however SLs rose by 20% and CSLs by 7%. The overall drop in PC's and SAC's leadership in this area may reflect a more limited role in leadership in response to the external environment. Primarily, activity in these areas seems limited to connecting with the IB, developing networks with other schools (which may also be construed as capacity building), and bridging culture through interactions with parent communities. Further, the data suggest that SLs are perceived as the most appropriate advisors in matters related to the external context, which is coherent with the theoretical framework. While external connection making could influence the school-wide ecosystem, the SLs, have greater positional authority for decision making and providing support for external / system leadership.

Taken a whole, MLs (PCs, SACs and CSLs) advice are sought after to a similar proportion as SLs, and represents an overall drop from 55% (Level 1) and 45% (Level 2), indicating a persistent, although dropping, role as advisors. A slight increase in CSLs' activity may reflect the nature of their positional roles, which require them to seek resources or build networks beyond the school. However, in two instances the CSLs at Level 3 have Director titles, which may place them as SLs in the operations side of the school's organisational structure. The shift in advising at Level 3 is different for each PC. The PSVP/PYPC an shows almost consistent proportion of engagement across all three levels. This may be explained because of the vice-Principalship role and tendency to co-lead with the PSP. For the MYPC and DPC's, Level 3 is the lowest domain of engagement. DPC advising in L3 may reflect mediating work among IB and SACs around DP examinations as three of seven advisees held positions as SACs and one as CSL for student care.

Structurally, the Level 3 may (Table 14) show an increased number of CSL's (from 4 in Level 1 and Level 2 to 6 in Level 3). While some CLS's remain the same, there is also some change in the CSL's who are engaged at Level 2 and Level 3. This seems to reflect the nature of CSL roles. Whereas CSL's in Level 1 have direct roles in instruction, such as CAS and IT coordinators, at Level 3 CSL's such as directors of admissions, operations and career and university counsellors are included. These specialized roles seem to explain why MLs as a whole are still consulted at Level 3.

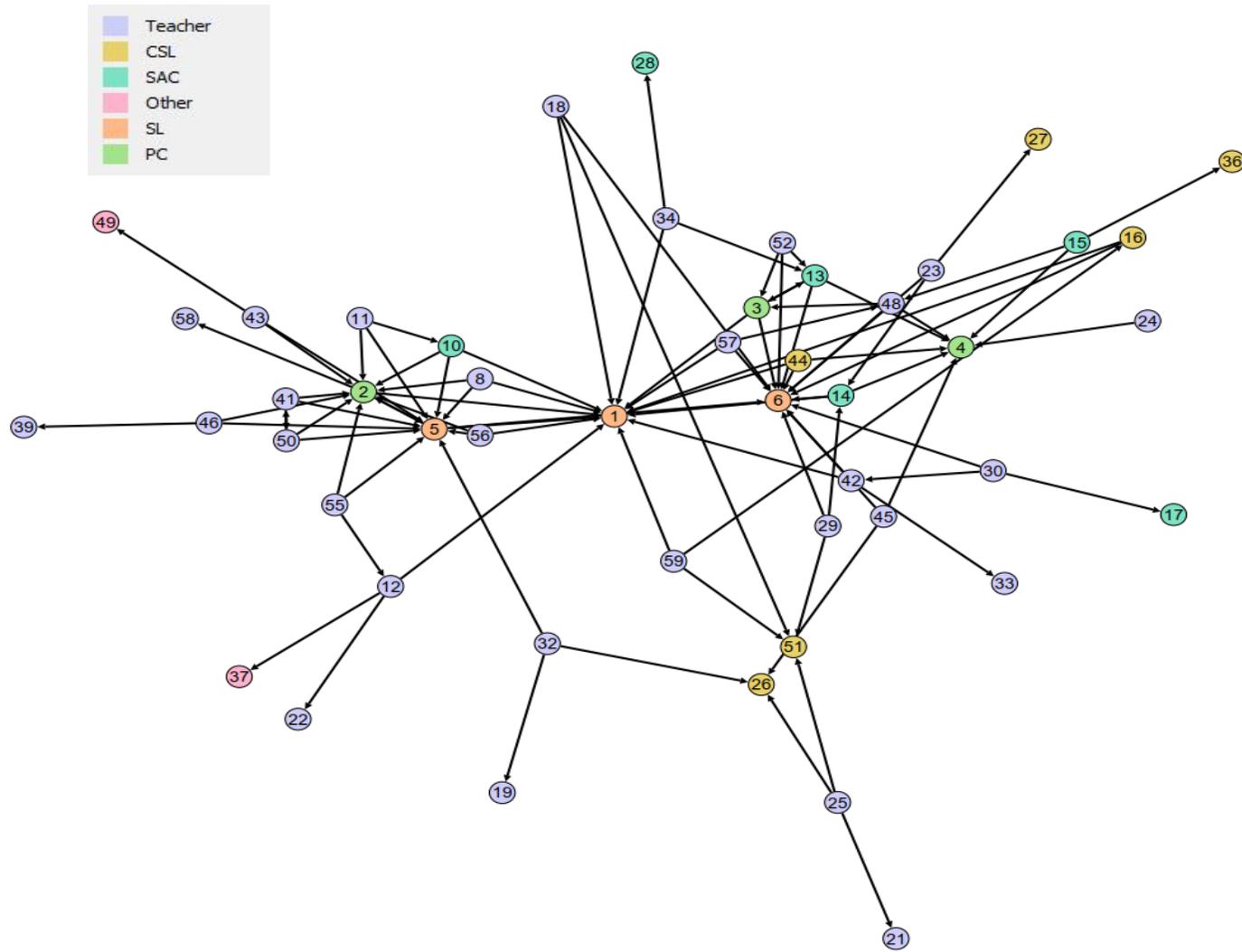


Figure 23 Level 3 Advice network Japan

#### 5.6.4 Time

In order to estimate the time that IB programme coordinators focused their efforts on leadership activities, the three coordinators recorded the approximate amount of time spent in work related to five broad areas of work: (a) routine classroom teaching and student-related duties; (b) managerial work for department or area of responsibility; (c) leading teaching, learning and innovation; (d) leading PD and school improvement; (e) leading external to the school; and, (f) other activities. As a representation of only one week of work, the survey only captures the programme coordinators' work over one period of time. We asked the PCs if the results were typical. The DPC observed that during the data collection period, he was engaged in grading assignments. This served to skew the results in favour of classroom activities. Subsequently, the DP did the survey again for a week that he identified as a more typical. As only three participants, the PCs, completed the surveys, the data results are limited in their implications, and serve primarily as an indicator of the scope of work engaged in during office hours. It does not account for work completed in evenings and on weekends.

Given the focus of this research on leadership, Figure 24 does not report the time spent on classroom work and other non-leadership activities, but shows the proportion of leadership activity in relation to their total reported working time. The data shows that time spent on leadership was invested primarily in leading learning and teaching, and professional and school development.

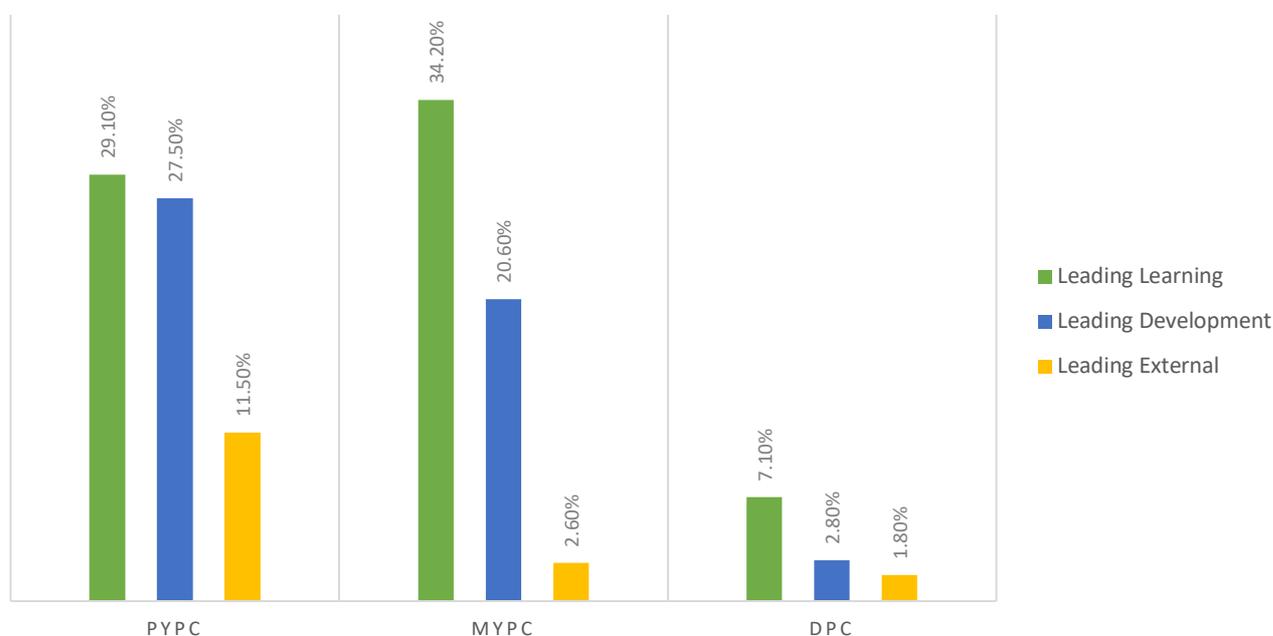


Figure 24 Proportion of time-use on three leadership activities by PCs

Figure 7 focuses on the distribution of leadership activity time only to allow comparison of different levels of leadership activity proportionately (not actual hours) across PCs. The

results also indicate that most leadership engagement is around Level 1. Despite an expected trend, very significant proportions of leadership activity are invested in Level 2, ranging from 23 to 40% of leadership time. That all PCs have teaching responsibilities (MYP and DP in actual regular classroom teaching and PYP in support roles) may account for some of the Level 1 leadership activity. The PYPC's dual role as PVP may account for a larger proportion of time spent in Level 2 than is the case of the other PCs. The interdisciplinary nature of MYP and the examination support role of the DPC may explain the variation across Level 2 and Level 3 activity. These findings align with the qualitative data and are indicative of how formal job roles influence actual time-use.

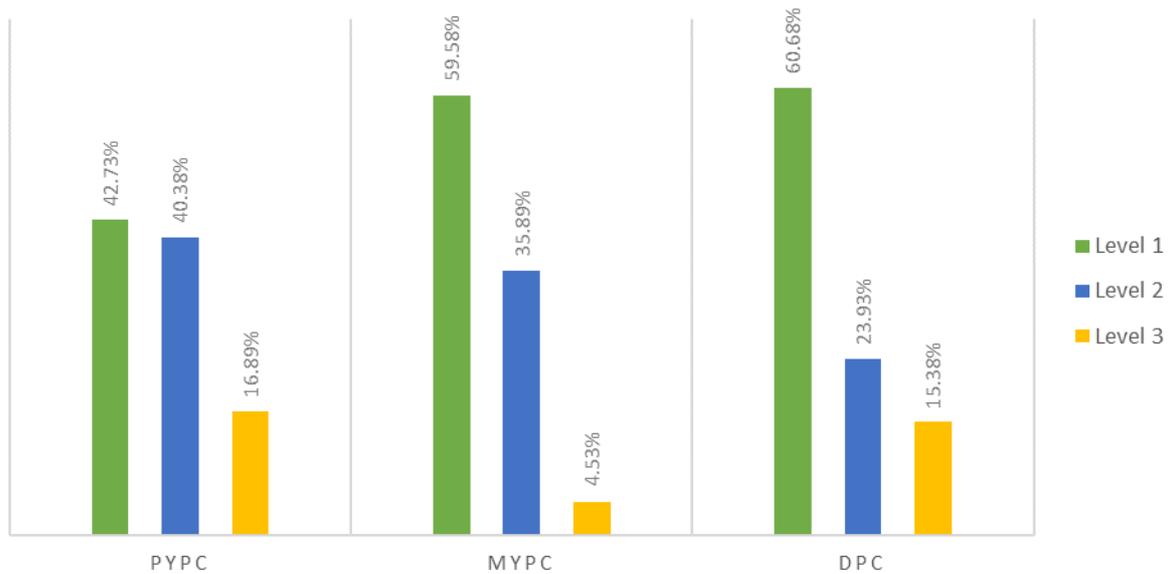


Figure 25 PCs' proportion of time-use in leadership activities

## 5.7 Chapter summary

The Middle School leaders in this school are ones who hold positional leadership roles that are along a metaphorical grid in the school's organisational system. However, a modest degree of leadership was also shown by those teachers who did not have formal leadership roles but, nonetheless, exerted leadership by innovative practices or by contributing to the teaching and learning in the school.

Both sets of MLs have areas of responsibilities that overlap. This is an unsurprising finding as issues related to teaching and learning, school capacity building is of import to the school in general. An overall analysis of the data reveals that PCs are involved with all levels of leadership, whereas the SAC tended to be more focused in teaching and learning and to a lesser extent to building capacity and community leadership activities.

The model of middle leadership in this school is collegial in nature; leaders tend to work in collaboration with their colleagues to bring about change and improvement in the school. Although the IB provides supportive guidelines for the school, there are some areas where there is scope for improvement. The pact of leadership influence in terms of MLs is largely in areas pertaining not only to the enhancement of teaching and learning but has

dimensions related to the personal and professional growth of the other staff members as well. The findings strongly indicate that MLs are involved in capacity building tasks, as well as focusing on maintaining the quality of teaching and learning. The participants were all invested in the process of teaching and learning, which they perceived to be the core function of the school. The planning of the curriculum and co-curricular activities, assessment, pedagogy and its attendant activities were a part of the repertoire of the MLs. The PCs are working towards maintaining the IB standards and philosophy. The SACs and PCs worked in conjunction with each other through each had their focus of responsibility. As far as capacity building is concerned, the MLs had the opportunity to engage in tasks such as conducting and attending personal development programmes, building teams and engaging in activities related to mentoring and coaching. Middle leadership in this school is somewhat affected by certain contextual contingencies – like the impediment brought about the lack of Japanese. On the other hand, the context has also led to positive leadership growth as the MLs of the school have taken advantage to build networks across schools in the region, especially since in Japan networking between schools is not a common practice.



## Korea Report



## 6 Korea School

### 6.1 School background

Korea School is a branch of an established school in the United States. Korea school was founded in 2010, with 260 students (kindergarten through to Grade 7). The school received the PYP accreditation in May 2013, DP in April 2015 and MYP in February 2017.

#### 6.1.1 Vision and mission

The school has as its vision: Develop global citizens with keen minds, exemplary character, self-knowledge, and the ability to lead. The school aims to provide its students with a balance of academic, experiential and ethical skills so they are well prepared to interact in the world of today and have the life skills to become decision-makers and leaders in a highly complex and fluid future landscape. The school emphasizes its Outdoor Education program - from the Third Grade, students begin building fundamental skills that serve as a consortium for outdoor adventures in Middle and Upper School. The school has as its core values, compassion, fairness, honesty, responsibility and respect and these are aligned with the IB Learner Profile which encourages students to be courageous, balanced, knowledgeable, caring, reflective, principled, open-minded, communicators, thinkers, and inquirers.

#### 6.1.2 Staff and students

The staff is recruited from countries around the world. More than 80 percent hold advanced degrees and many have had experience teaching abroad and have experience in teaching in schools that are of this kind. This school is an “international” school as opposed to a “foreign” one. The difference between the two lies in the number of expats/foreigners that the school is required to have in their student demographic at all given times. “Foreign schools” are required to limit their ethnically Korean demographic to a small percentage of the student demographic while “International schools” have no such limitations. Each school has a slightly different interpretation of what it means to be a “foreigner,” with conditions that range from the country of citizenship, amount of time spent overseas, and nationality of parents/guardians. However, even with these limitations, most international and foreign schools have a high ethnically Korean population. In this school too, the student body is largely Korean.

#### 6.1.3 Formal organisational structure

The organizational structure of the school, at first glance, appears to be rather complex in terms of its structure, so tables have been included in this report for easy understanding. In terms of organisation, the school has four major vertical divisions: Students Well-being, Primary school (pre-Grade 5), Middle and Upper School, and Administration section. There are Cross-School teams, which are responsible for extra-curricular activities and activities that associate with student’s social development and well-being, are under the supervision of the Principal of Students Well-being. In the Primary School, there is a Grade Level Leader (GLL) in each grade level, and they report to the Primary School Principal. The PYP Coordinator and the Assistant Principal assist the PS Principal in overseeing all grade levels. The Subject Area Coordinators (SACs) lead curriculum departments and collectively focus on subject learning across the grades. Likewise, all the curriculum departments and the Student Support Teams report to the Principal; and the PYP Coordinator the former while the

Assistant Principal assists the latter department. The structure is similar in the Middle School and Upper school. There are two Principals in charge of the Middle and Upper school separately with both Principals being supported by the Dean of Students and the Director of Secondary Students. Some GLLs are also the team members in the department. There are cases where there are multiple department leaders in the same department, or no department leaders in the faculty at all.

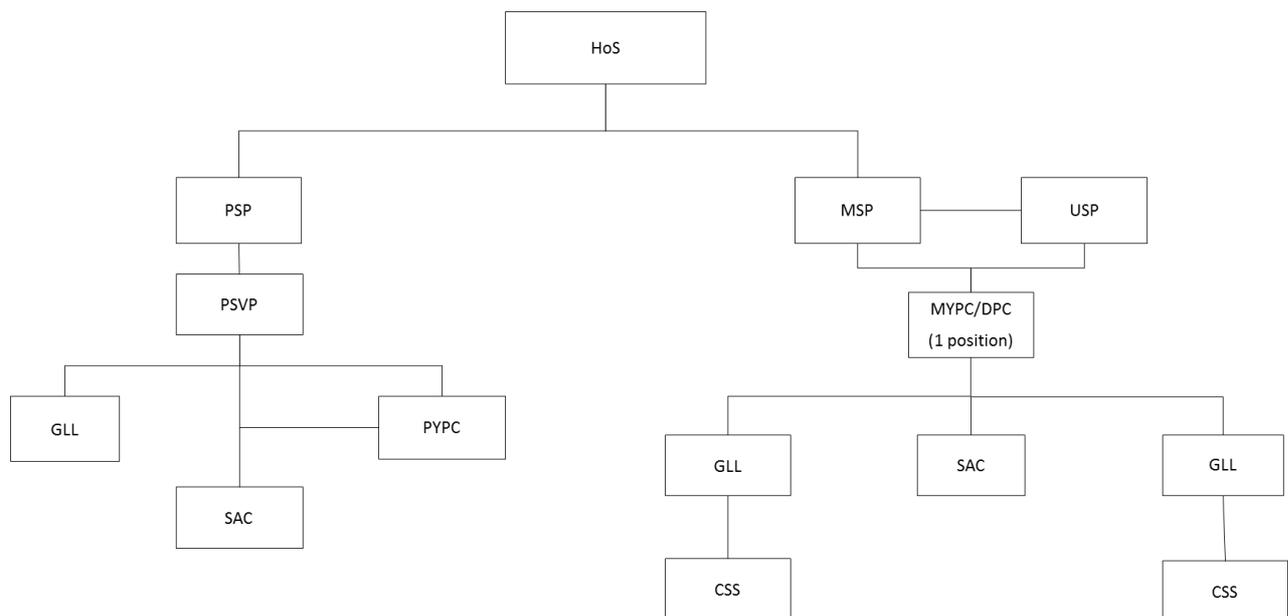


Figure 26 Organisation Structure Korea

#### 6.1.4 Participants

To develop a deeper understanding of how middle leadership functions in Korea School, the research participants came from the senior leadership team as well as the middle leadership pool (representing all forms of middle leadership).

The case report is based on 23 individual interviews conducted with 21 participants. One of the participants was interviewed twice as he has two roles as a Subject Area Coordinator (SAC) and Cross-school Leader (CSL). Besides this, an interview was conducted with a participant (MYPC/DPC) who was employed to replace the IB Coordinator (MYPC/DPC A) who left the school after the MYP authorisation. This person also holds the role of Director of Learning.

In this report, the Head of School (HoS), Secondary Principal (SSP), MS Principal (MSP), Primary Principal (PSP), Assistant Principal Primary (PSVP), Director of Learning (DoL) comprise the SLs.

The largest group of participants are the MLs. They are further subdivided: IB Programme Coordinators, Coordinators of different aspects of IB programmes, Subject Area Coordinators, leaders with responsibilities across the school, such as the Heads of Inclusion and Outdoor Education, and grade level leaders. Table 15 lists the interview participants by position.

Table 15 Interview participants and their positional roles within the school organisation (Korea)

Job Title	Level	Code
Head of School	SL	HoS
Secondary Principal	SL	SSP
Middle School Principal	SL	MSP
Primary Principal	SL	PSP
Assistant Principal Primary	SL	PSVP
Director of Learning	SL	DoL
PYP Coordinator	PC	PYPC
MYP & DP Coordinator (Former)	PC	MYPC_A
MYP & DP Coordinator (New)	PC	MYPC_B
Head of Physical and Health Education	SAC	SAC
Head of Language and Literature	SAC	SAC
Head of Language Acquisition	SAC	SAC
Department Chair of Individuals and Society	SAC	SAC
Personal Project Coordinator	SAC	SAC
Department Head of Inclusion	CSL	CSL
Dean of Students	CSL	CSL
Outdoor Education Leader	CSL	CSL
Director of Outdoor Education	CSL	CSL
Grade Level Leader Primary	CSL	GLL
Grade 2 Level Head	CSL	GLL
Grade 5 Level Head	CSL	GLL

Grade 7 Level Head	CSL	GLL
Grade 9 Level Head	CSL	GLL

Collectively, the PCs, CSLs, SACs and GLLs form the middle leadership segment in the School.

In addition to the interview, some of the Interview participants were invited to participate in the time-use survey and advice network analysis.

The collated data provides a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of middle leadership, seen through the lens of a distributed model of leadership, on three key levels, learning and teaching, building capacity and leading beyond the school.

## 6.2 Middle leadership: expectations, beliefs and understandings

### 6.2.1 Senior leaders' expectations of middle leadership

#### Sharing responsibility

Probably due to the international nature of the school (a large majority of the faculty are international) the school structure formally distributes leadership broadly. The data highlights that operationally SLs and the MLs are focussed on working in tandem with each other in collaborative teams. The HoS stated, "we share that responsibility. I don't sense any distinct hierarchies between senior leadership to middle leadership". A point of view, such as this resonates with models of distributed leadership, where leadership tasks are dispersed, or shared, and performed by a number of different people in an organization. The SLs and the MLs have a structured schedule of meetings (for example once a week with GLLs) with different groups (Principals with the HoS, Department Heads and the HoS) to supervise leadership operations through changes and decisions are not taken unilaterally but after consultation and deliberation. In brief, the SLs are "are always involved in every sort of cohort of leaders that come together as a committee". Interestingly, the lead of these meetings was shared by both sets of leaders.

The HoS succinctly summed up his views on middle leadership by stating that MLs are placed between those that are "full admin" (the SLs) and "full faculty". Metaphorically, they are like conduits as they are agents of communication between the two segments as they bring the concerns of the faculty to the senior leadership and vice versa. His view is that middle leaders turn senior leadership's strategy into good classroom practice on a daily basis.

#### Engaging in critical evaluation

Another SL commented on the flatter hierarchical structure in the school and noted that, "We encourage our MLs to ask why. The why has been the theme that we have talked about the last couple of years" (PSVP). The meta-context is clearly indicative of the fact that the MLs are not expected to follow directions without questions, but rather are encouraged to evaluate and critically question (and then take decisions). This signposts that leadership in the school is not invested in the senior leadership team only.

## **Building alignment between the programmes and beyond.**

In practical terms, the SLs expected the MLs to be, “looking at the transitions of the programs and the alignment of the three IB programs (SSP)”. This is an expansive role because it has a wide range of functional responsibilities. For example, the GLL was charged with a “relational policy” that had a pastoral dimension and included tasks such as conflict resolution among the students (PSVP). The HoS expected that the MLs needed not only to align the IB programmes but also needed to bring about alignment with the school mission:

In the Middle School in particular, we try to distinguish the curricular objectives versus the character objectives [...] We want to focus on the character development of our kids, to build exemplary character, which is one of our missions of the school. Therefore, there is a vertical alignment and expectation. We spend time and give leadership to department chairs and Grade Level Leads on par in terms of their scope and scale of their leadership (HoS)

However, they cautioned that innovations initiated by middle leaders must be prioritized in light of school aims:

We cannot take up every initiative; we need to make a decision about what is going to be most effective in improving learning at this moment in time (SSP)

### **Competencies and skill-sets**

Apart from the practice of leadership, the SLs highlighted that there were a few competencies and skill-sets necessary for successful middle leadership. The HoS suggested that “open, transparent and frequent communication is very crucial for leaders”. In addition, senior leaders expected MLs to put students first, “leave [their] egos at the door and only to bring the children’s best interest to heart” (MSP) and role model “energy and the passion” to their teams (SSP). As this is an IB school, the MLs are required to “stay organised and focused on the fundamental piece” [IB philosophy] (PSVP) and the “nuts and bolts” (PSVP) therein. They are perceived to be vision holders who have the ability “to link between the importance of a strong curriculum and strong planning” (SSP). Moreover, SLs would like the MLs to be “risk-taker who take different initiatives, unpack the why and apply their autonomy to take the step further” (PSVP).

It is of interest to note that the SLs believed that the ultimate goal for middle leadership was not just to perform their set responsibilities but to develop a more holistic vision of the education that the school offered. To help the MLs to attain the wider landscape of the school leadership, one SL wanted “to pull [MLs] back a little and look at the bigger picture”(PSP).

In sum, the SLs expected the MLs to manage tasks such as planning and executing the curriculum alongside other leadership functions such as leading innovation, vision building, whilst understanding the larger perspective of the school’s mission and aims for students.

#### **6.2.2 Middle leaders’ understanding of their roles**

Middle leaders reported an understanding that their roles encompassed administrative and accountability measures as well as more visionary leadership.

The data highlights that a component of the leadership activities that the PCs engage in are linked to administration. PC (MYPC\_A) summed up the connection between administrative tasks and change leadership:

Leadership is all about change and changing practices. However, you have to tick boxes and do the paperwork.... To do that, it's a straight management role. You are really doing 50-50 [between leadership and management] because you are doing change management, which is leadership, and you are bringing in a lot of leadership training into change management.

This perspective indicated an understanding that management and leadership are contingent on each other. He went on to explain that authorisation from the IB demanded documentation and paperwork that was “non-negotiable”. Though this work can be delegated, it was ultimately his responsibility to see that this important work was meticulously executed. He noted that the proportion of administration tasks increased with seniority in the school’s organisational structure.

### **Democracy in the workplace**

An earlier section has delineated how the SLs believed that the MLs worked in conjunction with them and that the school was not fundamentally hierarchical. Findings from the MLs corroborate this. As a PC pointed out, the SLs were not “bosses”, they just had a different set of roles and tasks. The programme coordinators and the Principal interacted together. He noted that the senior and middle leadership mutually listened to and communicated with each other and this enabled the growth of leadership in the school.

The data emphasise that the view of school leadership held by the SLs and the MLs is one where leadership tasks and activities were distributed and not invested in just a few. MLs and SLs explicitly articulated an additional, and linked, dimension and that was a model of ‘Servant Leadership’. Leadership, as the HoS pointed out was to serve and support all the teachers and students:

There are two verbs that are used a lot: serve and support. The idea is that you can serve and support every teacher and students. ... This role seems to be a leadership role...

### **Informal leadership**

A significant finding is that teachers who are not in formal leadership roles contribute to leadership activities in the school in all sorts of ways. One of the ways is by conducting action research to improve pedagogy, given that research related work is seen to be a germination ground for nascent school leadership to develop.

There were other instances reported too where such informal leadership took place in support of good learning and teaching practices is explicit in the data extract below:

Our department is about language acquisition, it is not language literature. English is the second language. We have two English teachers in our department..... When it comes to writing some sophisticated statements of enquiry, they can be very helpful... for everybody in the department. (SAC)

This illustrates how MLs further distribute leadership, by engaging informal teacher leaders to support the completion of team tasks.

### **6.3 Level 1 leadership: leading for teaching and learning**

#### **6.3.1 Who are the leaders?**

There is little argument that teaching and learning are the core function of most schools, and this school is no exception. The data highlights that leadership tasks and activities related to teaching and learning are distributed between people in positional leadership roles and other teachers too. However, there are demarcations in the leadership roles in each segment. For example, the job of the coordinators is to map out the scope and sequence of the content of the curriculum in a developmental and graded manner. The SAC's work more directly with pedagogy and focus on bringing about alignment. The GLL leaders' focus is more broad-based as they work across several grades on areas such as common English usage. The GLL leaders do not have any evaluative roles, they focus on the whole person development of the students and work in conjunction with the Principals, coordinators and teachers.

The School is a relatively new one and therefore PCs and SACs expend much of their leadership capacity in areas linked to teaching and learning, like setting up and delivering the curriculum. One middle leader opined that in his perception, as the school becomes more established, leadership engagement may diminish. The underlying assumption is that there will be a lesser need for change and innovation and that maintenance mode will prevail:

When schools get bigger, when they are more established, it is hard for the curriculum coordinators; the leadership side of it dwindles (MYPC\_A)

While the data and circumstances of this study limits the positioning of a definitive stance regarding this point of view, an argument could be posited that far from being a diminishing state of leadership, the more established the school gets it is likely that leadership tasks will disperse and undergo modifications or adaptations. It is unlikely that the curriculum and its delivery will remain in a state of homeostasis and will not require regular inputs for change and innovation.

#### **6.3.2 The practice: what and how do they lead?**

Our analysis emphasizes that most of the leadership activities of the PCs, CSLs, SACs and GLLs are anchored in work linked to the IB. However, the nature and scope of each segment of leadership are demarcated, although due to the collaborations and teamwork there are overlaps and inter-linkages.

The IB Learner Profile has given the school the directions as noted by a Coordinator:

IB Learner Profile: the learner profile is coming through, infiltrating more recently the DP. I think that helps a lot. I think PYP is a big influence on the MYP in recent years with the inquiry-based learning coming in more, making it more concept-based as well. (SAC)

## Curriculum leadership

The data highlights that curriculum leadership is at the core of the coordinator's role. As the School is relatively young, some of the current MLs had the opportunity to develop the MYP from scratch:

The school leadership at the time found me and ask me over to set the IB program. It was predominantly the MYP and also to oversee the DP as well, and establishing those from scratch. (MYPC\_A)

The school is new to MYP, there is a lot to do. There has been a lot to set up since day one. So I feel what I am trying to do is to organise things in place, make sure we have curriculum that set out. (SAC)

Also, the accreditation process, especially in the context of the MYP created intensive work in curriculum planning and the timeline of the authorization, starting from the preparation stage to revision stage, created different duties to the school leaders. Presently, a framework is in place and a degree of flexibility is allowed but as a GLL pointed out, the DP framework needs to be followed, "otherwise, you will have trouble".

The addition of MYP meant that the leaders had to oversee all aspects of curriculum leadership and this included the facilitation of the students' transition in a continuum school. However, as some of the MLs pointed out, the transition between PYP and MYP is an area that had some lacunae (especially related to the curriculum), which they were trying to fill:

One of my dreams is to make sure there is a continuity that I can prepare the students in [the transition]. Therefore, when they go to middle school, they would not be too shocked. We do have our transition day [for students], but it was not focusing much on the curriculum. This year, departments in middle-upper school met with us and talked about the transition at the whole school. It is a work in progress, we are looking at the entire articulation of the school, making sure that we have no gaps in between. (GLL)

### Curriculum leadership: other tasks

The work of the coordinators had more a more expansive side. Although the PC is not directly involved in unit planning for particular subjects, nonetheless he initiated the discussions, brainstormed unit planning and helped teachers to understand the mapping of unit planning:

We start the conversations. We ask 'What knowledge do we want our students to know? What is our critical content? What are the big ideas? What kind of attitudes or dispositions are we looking for to engage in and how will we do it? What skills do we need them to have or to cultivate in order to do other things? What action might this lead to or what are we hoping that it might lead to? Once we start talking these questions, a unit takes shape. [...] I guess my job is to really help teachers see how of all these things are connected (PYPC)

By virtue of their positional roles, the SACs had very close ties with the learning and teaching systems in school. Correspondingly, to supervise the day-to-day teaching and learning processes, they had operational responsibilities as well. This included organizing

and leading meetings, overseeing the operations within their departments and keeping an eye on the teaching quality at class. They were also involved in mentoring and building the capacity of their team members, while also engaging in conflict resolution. Therefore, just like the coordinators, their roles had an expansive dimension – they needed to learn how to organize meetings, evaluate their teams, organize resources, communicate with others effectively and so on. A SAC raised the interesting issue of dealing with new teachers who were far more experienced than the coordinators or SACs, which involved dealing with such issues brought into play skills and communication tactics that often transcended their expected leadership roles.

### **Bringing alignment**

The data reveals that in response to the need of transition, some SACs (for example, Language and INS) were planning the MYP curriculum in such a way that it would be an effective bridge to DP and bring about a sense of vertical alignment between the three programmes. They built a degree of flexibility in the system so that students are able to try out different subjects before they chose their final set of subjects in the DP and in some cases the students' interests and needs fueled the addition of a new subject:

As we are building up this program, we keep on tossing out the idea of leadership, reviewing the DP courses, and swap and add some new subjects in. Until we get the student population to support the subject, we are keeping the program that we already have. For example, we do not have a Geography course [in the DP]. We are making sure students in the Grade 6 and Grade 10 programme will get their dose of Geography. (SAC)

An innovative practice suggested by the PC to the SLs was how the transition could be more effective if teachers in the PYP and the MYP could swap courses in order to enrich their understanding of students and the system:

I put a proposal together for the Principals that all of the 6th grade teachers do making the PYP happened and all of the 5th grade teachers do an MYP course. I would like to start with the knowledge. You need to have an understanding of where your kids are coming from and where they are going to. (PYPC)

Proposing changes to teaching assignments is an example of how PCs can recommend and introduce innovative practices in schools to address curricular needs.

### **Distributing instructional leadership**

Another way that instructional leadership tasks are dispersed in this school is by involving a large number of staff members in supervisory roles for the Personal Project. The IB requires students to hand in their Personal Project to the IB examination board. To smoothen this process, all teachers in the middle and upper school will take on the responsibility of being supervisors of students in the coming year. This pairing was done with a lot of thought by the MLs so that the 'matching' is beneficial to the students:

Right now, I am trying to figure out how to pair students with supervisors. We want to give students selections. We also want to make sure all of the teachers and supervisors opt-in. That has taken me a lot of time. (SAC)

### **Expanding the scope of the curriculum.**

Expanding on notions of holistic growth and the all-round development of the students (as embedded in the school's vision), a Cross-Leader pointed out that the goal of the school was to transcend, go over and beyond, the formal curriculum so that the students gain an education that is aligned with the school's core values:

The idea is that we do not care about the skill, it is just the medium. Within the program, we knew that we could build skill within whatever the medium is. We can go deeper into the curriculum of the sense of self, understanding community, and the expression of the actual world.

In many ways, this ties in with a discussion earlier in this case report where the SLs believed that MLs should look at the whole picture and develop a sense of leadership that was aligned to the mission and vision of the school in a more holistic manner.

As the HoS pointed out, the leaders had to have 'passion' about their subject, its importance, curriculum and pedagogy so that they can impart the same passion to the students.

### **Promoting good pedagogy**

To create a culture of effective pedagogy that leads to good learning, MLs engaged in leadership tasks that were as varied as individual trouble-shooting sessions with team members to address challenges that the teams encountered, to holding consultation meetings with team members on a monthly basis. Their roles consisted of directly involved with pedagogy at times and at others, less so (for example, offering emotional support to teachers).

One SAC noted that his role was supervisory in nature. He has set up a regular schedule of individual meetings with teachers in order to go through and resolve any problem that might arise. The underlying assumption of solving problems as and when they occur may be more effective than allowing the problems to take on systemic proportions. It also fosters closer interpersonal communication between the MLs and the teachers that they work with. In addition, he noted, "I also drop into classes a lot, as much as I can". (SAC) The coordinator delineated that he is taking proactive steps to promote good teaching in the school. Taking the initiative, he tried to individualise teaching units within the prescribed curriculum to complement the "strengths" of the individual teachers. He viewed this as an all-inclusive process through the lens of departmental teaching as a whole rather than individual teaching:

So I feel what I am trying to do is to organise things in place, make sure we have the curriculum that set out, but also meeting the needs of every individual teacher so they have that strength, while following the guide that is put in front of us, any changes and development that are happening. One the big thing I want to focus on is how with teaching in the department ....rather than just the paperwork. (SAC)

### **Promoting consistency in collaboration**

Other leadership tasks linked to teaching and learning included the promotion of consistency and the standardization of practice across the board in areas like assessment, using of tools like ATLs, the inculcation of innovative practices in areas like unit planning and so on. The extract below highlights the systematic and step- by- step process that the PYPC undertakes to guide teachers to trans-disciplinary collaboration. He identifies a theme first and then they looked at an aspect of that theme that would suit the interests at a particular grade level seen through the lens of the PYP curriculum. Teachers then contribute ideas to create a unit while his role is to make sure that there is vertical alignment. Therefore, far from being an *ad hoc* collaborative effort – the result is consistent and apposite to the aims of the task at hand:

I go through all these processes on how to guide teachers to trans-disciplinary collaboration. We begin with the transdisciplinary theme first. We looked for aspects of the theme that can be interesting and appropriate for that particular grade or level. The goal is throughout students' time in the PYP. Teachers might just talk and express ideas that could create one unit. My role as a curriculum coordinator is to make sure there are vertical articulations (PYPC)

A SAC pointed out that they were looking proactively at ways and means to promote cross-disciplinary collaboration:

This year is all about looking at what we have and what we can change. Next year is trying to align some of our Korean lang-and-lit programs with our English lang-and-lit programs ...we can cooperate [Korean and English Departments] next year. (SAC\_B)

A possible reason for this could be limited by the nature of certain subjects (such as Outdoor Education), which did not have inter-disciplinary units with the other departments. However, even in these instances as the MLs noted, the subject could serve as a platform to bridge the two separate subject areas – for example, students made use of the opportunity of outdoor activities to practice their skills learnt in the other subjects:

We do not want to bring homework to the outdoor. It is supposed to be a time away from that. However, if we do it intentionally and thoughtfully, [...] we are using Outdoor Education as a bridge. For instance, we have a data collection unit in our 7th-grade course in the PE and Health lesson. Students use the tools of science, like graphing and charting and collecting their heart rate, respiratory rate and body temperature at the trip, like after rock climbing, hiking, sleeping outside and inside the sleeping bag or the tent. Our outdoor activities instructors were able to implement that into that interdisciplinary lesson. Teachers in PE, Math and Science will follow up in their class later. Our department just provided a fieldwork component to it. (CSL)

Collectively, the SACs and the Coordinators stated that they were invested in expanding the scope of each discipline and if there was trans-disciplinary collaboration, the SACs would then seek advice and suggestions from the teachers who had specific knowledge in the subject, in order to improve unit planning:

Teachers in the MYP years, they really decide on whether they want to work on integrated units, or have a specific Geography unit, or History unit. (SAC)

We [SACs] do talk to the other SACs. For example, we have created a project that we have a unit [in Language learning] about songs and different times. Students will

create their own songs. We approached music teachers to get their feedback, and talked to students whether they are capable of doing so. (SAC)

Even in terms of inclusive education, CSLs worked with teachers in collaboration and empowered teachers to merge inclusion into the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. The CSLs with their expertise in inclusion talked to the students, their parents, PC and the school counsellor, and they adjusted the graduation requirement for the students with special education needs so they could attain a secondary school diploma other than the DP by meeting the graduation requirements of a US state.

### **Enhancing pedagogy through research.**

In this school, some of the MLs and informal leaders are actively involved in research aimed at enhancing pedagogy to support student learning. One SL highlighted that the school had a team to collect data and undertake research on pedagogy. A CSL who was involved in the data analysis to map the student performance with corresponding pedagogy emphasized that:

Myself and various specialists sit down looking at the map testing that we are using and the other forms of student performance data and try to break that down and analyze what is going on and thinking about how we can actually use that stuff to improve our teaching. (CSL)

A PC pointed out that research findings supported specific teaching approaches that helped to ease teachers' resistance against changes in pedagogy. Concurrently, some teachers were involved in setting up a resource database to support research:

One of the teachers is also a research person. He is always setting up the data banks that provide enough resources for us (GLL)

In a bid to enhance their professional knowledge GLL noted the advantage of conducting pedagogical research in other schools. They were working on convincing the team members to conduct the research in their grade level:

We have been prepared for a yearlong study, to collect the data from the students and to be the researchers. This was new, and this is me personally pushing this research. Not everybody stays in their comfort zone... It is new to the team, so I tried it. In the beginning, my team members were scared and apprehensive. I explained that we do this for the kids. [...] It does not really make sense if I were stuck here about enquiry but then we plan everything that is not an enquiry as well. As a leader I think I had a big push of the way this year. "Why are we doing this?" Every time we have a meeting, every time someone will ask. Hopefully that transcends the team as well. (GLL)

### **Extra-curricular activities planning**

A distinctive feature of this school is its Outdoor Education Program and the entire school is expected to participate. The rationale behind it is to promote a holistic vision of students' development in-and-outside school boundaries:

The Outdoor Education Leader takes over the structure, builds a logistics department - to gas up the vehicles, to make sure the boats are there waiting for us, and prepare the food. (CSL)

Running the Outdoor Education program is complex and involved problem solving and decision-making activities by the middle leadership teams, at the planning stages to diminish individual and institutional risks:

The adventure programming environments are risky by nature, it is the physical risk. In addition, the program and operation is the institutional risk. It is an institutional risk of school as an institution. We are really trying to prevent every type of risk: financial risk and physical risk. (CSL)

Furthermore, a specific CSL needed to “stay up on trends, policy procedures, staffing, training, and programming” to keep the quality of outdoor activities.

As Outdoor Education forms an important plank in the school’s instructional programme, the school had developed an entire leadership structure specifically to support this learning enterprise. This points to how school missions can drive the development of leadership structures.

### **Pastoral care and advisory programme**

The data highlights that the school stresses on pastoral and advisory care for the students and many of the MLs were engaged in such activities and this included disciplinary actions if needed:

We are working on the ways to support the students. We are looking at curriculum as well. Grade level lead is not more than just the ‘nuts and bolts’, it also comes to the curriculum looking at how everything is articulated with everyone and how to support the specialists [in term of social development] as well. (GLL)

I am working as an advocate for students and many of that ends up being like disciplinary issues. I am working with students in trouble. That ends up in a bunch of things like conflict resolution and a little bit of counselling, and sometimes resolution of the conflict between students and teachers as well. (CSL)

Despite, the fact that the MLs at the level of leading teaching and learning unambiguously display leadership capabilities related to instructional leadership, the data highlights that there are subtle differences in which such leadership is operationalised. The leadership displayed by the SLs were supervisory in nature with strong administrative dimensions. They laid out policies, expectations and structures for MLs and teachers to follow.

The Coordinators and the SACs mostly identified their roles as pertaining to instructional leadership. The GLLs has pastoral care as a strong component of their leadership roles. All sets of MLs work directly with teachers. The data highlights the facts that all groups of leaders worked closely together with no leadership function being isolated in terms of roles or relationships.

### **6.3.3 The situation: tools, routines and contexts**

#### **Tools**

In order to accomplish the work of instructional leadership, SLs and MLs utilise structures, frameworks and mechanisms either devised by the IB or crafted by them. Tools include documents, rubrics, criteria that direct leadership activity by focusing efforts and energies.

Routines are established, regularly scheduled events that are used to facilitate engagement leadership by supporting time-bound progression or completion of tasks. Contextual issues may also determine the focus of leaders' energies.

Inarguably, the IB provides a set of inbuilt tools. For example, a PC noted that the ATL standards are a useful tool for documenting all the skills that are taught to the students. However, he has taken the initiative to develop a more pertinent version of the standards. He declared that in order to impart these skill sets to the students the teachers themselves must first learn the same set of skills. Therefore, he has designed a whole range of resources for teachers to use. These vary from subjects like, "how to give a TED talk" to "Strategies to organise a discussion".

Similarly, a SAC who has contacts with the IB and understood the IB requirements has created a toolkit of strategies to facilitate student-teacher communication as a supportive measure to enhance and provide support to teachers:

Hopefully teachers will walk away with a big toolbox, a strategy that worked for me when I was a supervisor – communicate with the students via Google classroom. We are teaching and equipping students to use the calendar to communicate with their supervisors. Supervisors should not be chasing down the kids or in reverse. I think [the information sharing platform] is relevant, timely and it is not overwhelming. Instead of giving a glut of information of what supervisors need to do; I need to package the information neatly, so everyone knows what they need to do and they can execute. I am aware of my audience who are busy and multitasking. (SAC)

## **Routines**

Throughout this case, it became evident that the school has in built structures and systems that afforded the teachers support by way of standard procedures. In the secondary school, the HoS has weekly meetings with the Principals. The HoS noted that the departments are "vertical" from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, with each department being the subject areas. The job of the eight subject areas of the IB, MYP, DP, is to hold regular planning meetings to make sure that the scope and sequence of each area are in alignment.

## **The local context**

It needs to be noted that school is unique in that it was originally an American school with values propagated in the American system. However, the immediate context of its location is in Korea and the school also has a high proportion of local Korean students. The curriculum planning at the initial stages was complicated as it had to account for both the cultural contexts – American and Korean. Even presently, incorporating the local context within the IB context proves to be somewhat challenging and is an area that needs further investigation:

One of the areas that our school needs to explore more is the cultural context. This is an American school that suddenly starts in Korea, so the cultural context; the cultural layer and the context of background principles are different. That is definitely an area we need to spend more time on developing. One of the ways we are trying to do is that two of our GLL s are creating a curriculum, and we are encouraging them to offer more local perspective curriculum and bring up some local issues. (CSL)

## Supports and challenges

Though the IB provides sound scaffolding it also offered its own set of challenges. The general belief in the school is that the MYP still required time to be fully integrated with PYP and DP, “most teachers in the middle school are confused about what the PYP is, and what exactly are they teaching” (SAC). To meet the challenges of transitioning between programmes, a SAC has carefully tracked the concerns in the application of the MYP Programme in his subject, and discussed with the SLs ways to fine-tune the curriculum. One of the issues that he perceived was incoherence between the assessment criteria and the subject. In conjunction with the SLs, he took steps to change the assessment to maintain students’ interest in learning the subject:

PHE supposes to be a practical subject. However, in with the next chapter, nature changes radically with the different criteria, and seems to focus on written assessment tasks. A lot of PHE practitioners and I share ideas that activities can be done, such as vlogs or presentation, instead of a written test.

I think these are the original thought. We had a lot of discussion in this school [... on] how to make the lessons as practical as possible. We allocated particular lessons in the middle school and the upper school, and we have a new syllabus. (SAC)

### 6.3.4 Section summary

The sections above have discussed in detail the roles and responsibilities of the MLs by way of their contribution to teaching and learning. A recurrent notion that has run through the data is that education is holistic and goes beyond the curriculum and that MLs take a step back and see the whole picture. Interesting, the Secondary School Principal put forward an even more expansive notion of the teaching and learning in the school. He opined that all educators in the school are striving to improve education per se on a collective level. This means that the ultimate beneficiary of this may be another school, another community or another group of students and it did not matter as it will benefit all on a wider systemic level:

So, everyone is working as educators to help move forward the education and learning of the students, so what we are doing is building someone’s capacity ... this might benefit another school or another group of students or another community, but it doesn’t matter, because we are in this together and we all benefit from someone else, like this community helped to develop a strong learner in that community. I think it’s a collective ideal that we all have, so each school should develop a good system to develop their students and develop their teachers to be good learners. (SSP)

### 6.4 Level 2 leadership: leading for capacity building

The SLs explicitly stated that they expected that MLs would contribute to building capacity, especially as the school grows bigger, not just among the staff but also the students. The coordinators undertook school capacity building in the majority though the SACs, GLLS and CSLs have some contributions as well:

For example, the PC is the driver. Since there is no way a person can effectively support the 90 other staff members. It is about developing capacity. I think part of the leader’s role is to prepare leaders for tomorrow (PSP)

#### 6.4.1 The practice of capacity building: what and how do they lead?

##### Contributing to instructional capacity: reflective practice

In line with the general principles of good learning (that knowledge is acquired and assimilated in a series of progressive steps), a PC pointed out that teacher teams also needed to build on their prior knowledge in order for them to get a clearer grasp on things in order to enhance the professional capacity of the team members. This is especially true when it came to how change and innovation related to practice. The extract below highlights this issue and focuses on the basic supportive network that the MLs offer the teachers:

We talked about acknowledging prior learning [of teachers'] and students' issues. I think acknowledging prior learning of adults is super important. If you are introducing and changing the managerial tasks without acknowledging their prior knowledge, they will feel uncomfortable and dumb; and they are not contributing to the community. To me, that is one of the most important aspects. (MYPC\_A)

Self-reflection was used by different MLs in the school to build capacity. An SAC encapsulated the significant role of reflection in the practice of leadership by noting:

School capacity starts at the beginning of your reflection, as well as the end of your reflections. Quite often I speak to the teachers: "you know you are running to a wall of with something. Where is that wall coming from? What can we do to fix it?" Here is some school capacity. Within our own department, for example, nobody had MYP experience, so we all went to get training at the very beginning together, so it was a wall in a sense that we didn't have an expert in our subject area, we had to figure out that ourselves for a little bit. That led to us sitting down together and discussing as a group, like who needs to go to the workshops, and ultimately benefitting us all together. (SAC)

One of the ways that teachers could keep records of their reflective practice was by developing portfolios. Teachers are expected to set goals in their portfolios at the beginning of each year and meet their administrators to discuss their success in achieving the goals. Therefore, developing personal portfolios is also seen as a way of enhancing instructional leadership. It is seen as a structured, formalized and graduated way of building capacity.

##### Contributing to a school culture of collegiality and collaboration

Collaboration is often viewed as a means to enhance professional knowledge and PD of other staff members and is a common-sense assumption that in any model of distributed leadership needs to have a collaborative element for it to be viable. As mentioned in earlier sections, a key phrase in this school is collaboration. Both senior and MLs collectively emphasised the collaborative nature of their roles and stressed the importance of working in teams. A GLL declared unequivocally, "this is my team and we really feel strongly about this".

The genesis of collaboration is getting people to work together. The data highlights that all segments of MLs work together to within the umbrella of the IB and in keeping with the school ethos and vision. Nonetheless, there are differences in terms of role demarcations. This is expected and entirely normative. A CSL summed this up by stating that leaders in

different areas had their own 'world' and the challenge was to enlighten each leader about the other's world so that they worked together as a cohesive whole:

The biggest challenge for us has been roping them [other MLs] in our world.... It is interesting, for example, we need to work closely with the school Principals, although we are independent from them. We cannot function without their support. On the other hand, we are colleagues and nobody is supreme, we are a school within the school (CSL)

One of the ways that the MLs built collaborative teams was by motivation. A strategy that was used by the GLL was to encourage his peers to have a holistic vision rather than getting mired in managerial tasks:

And actually having all the department chairs going together, it'd be really great, just in a sense that make people conscious about the fact you are in a leadership role, I mean a lot of those people who come are task managers, and they look at a specific line items in the job description, but not the bigger picture, and it's a visible leadership position. (SAC)

The data highlights that MLs in this school believed that team building facilitated communication and built trust among peers. For instance, a SL provides one-on-one, "conversations to support difficult colleagues" (GLL). The democratic nature of the school's organisational structure was mirrored within departments in order to promote collegiality. A SAC said that he provided his team with a "mission" and encouraged his team members to arrive at solutions by consensus. He noted that people needed "a framework" to work in and at the end of a meeting decisions taking by consensus created accord amongst his colleagues.

### **Sharing leadership tasks**

As the discussion has touched on earlier, a large number of leadership tasks in this school are driven by the coordinators –not unexpected as concepts like changing, innovating and planning are at the core of their role responsibilities. However, the data shows that the coordinators desired to distribute their leadership amongst other staff members. For example, a PC (PYPC) noted that the GLLs could learn leadership tasks if they were enabled to hold the department meeting:

What I would like to do in the department collaboration meetings, to give them [GLLs] the opportunity to collaborate. I will be just here to offer a lens and a voice. [...].... I would like the grade level leads to set their own agenda ....Hopefully [the meeting] would empower and support the grade level leads; as well as give them the new perspectives that meetings are not only focusing on managerial tasks.

Concomitantly, data from the GLLs reveal that they too are invested in a devolved model of leadership. As an example, in department meetings, the GLLs invited their team members to share job tasks and involved team members in the decision-making process by voting:

I like sharing the load. I do not like to be dictatorial. It is not my style. I like people giving input in order to take their consensus. What we wanted to choose, we voted and decided by the majority. (GLL\_D)

There is however a 'side effect' of collaboration. On the one hand, working in teams and building a culture of collegiality provides for excellent conditions of distributed leadership functions, as it "provides strategically more learning opportunities" for individuals like interns to take on a leadership role in areas like teaching (*PSP*), and provides instances of informal leadership opportunities. On the other hand, however, once staff members have attained the capacity for leadership, they leave to take on positional leadership roles in other schools, leading to a high rate of turnover:

When you have people coming and going constantly, sometimes expertise or that driving force leaves. It has been a succession planning to continue (GLL)

## **Recruitment**

Generally speaking, recruiting new staff members is the purview of senior leadership teams in schools. However, in this school certain MLs were invited to participate in the hiring process, albeit screening and gauging the applications rather than actively hiring:

Mainly, it is the curriculum focus as the department chair, and helping with recruiting, looking through the resumes with the administration and just offer my department's perspective on, when it comes to hiring as well. (SAC)

## **Building capacity for middle leaders**

### *Professional development: formal and informal*

This school has invested heavily in formal PD undertakings. It has allocated a substantial amount of money each year for individual PD courses. Therefore, MLs have had the opportunity to attend workshops in other countries (for example Hong Kong) or host intra-school and in-school PD activities (such as Google Classroom, Google Conference). In addition, in order to spend the financial resources more effectively over larger groups of individuals, the Assistant Principal expounded on initiatives in the Primary School for the development of all staff instead of individual personal development activities. He called it a 'school-wide' initiative:

So, it is not a part of their own PD, it is part of a school-wide initiative. We are sponsoring it and our school is sponsoring it versus the other PD where the teachers can use that money more or less in their own PD. ... You know, I think we were trying to distribute leadership across the board. So, we have a lot of different types of leaders not just the GLLs...So, we have a lot of MLs in different ways, and we are investing in different ways.

In the context of the school plan to involve all teachers and leaders at school to be leaders, one of the tasks of an experienced PC (MYPC\_A) was to enhance the professional knowledge of all staff in IB settings:

We have pushed a lot for the PD of leadership within the department chair group. I had meetings with the department chairs one on one, hopefully once a month or once in two weeks; ...The idea is to build the capacity for them to be able to plan with the teachers and implement their IB program. Since it is impossible for one coordinator to do all of it, we are trying to build the capacity of the department chairs. We moved the department chairs to the curriculum; the grade level leads will be next, and then the GLLs. (MYPC\_A)

Apart from formal workshops or PD events, there were informal instances of PD too – a form of development by opportunity. For example, as the MYP is relatively new to the school, a SAC decided to plan the common ground for the units with their team members and viewed this exercise as a form of PD:

Language acquisition is different from other subjects, because we have four different languages. We try to work on common grounds. For example, we plan some common units that can be shared by all languages and we are working on that. Since we do not have much time, we have not yet planned too many units. We did plan some units because we take this opportunity as the PD. When we develop a unit planner, we go through each step, for example, to design the key concern, the related concern and enquiry, the statement enquiry, and learning activity, assessment, because it involves each step. That is MYP unit planner. So when we get together and go through these, everyone will get clear about the unit planner (SAC)

A CSL employed a similar approach. Since the outdoor education consists of intensive logistical support and risk management, the CSL perceived that the process of planning and risk management could develop the mindset for both students and staff members, his *de facto* team:

Outdoor education is much mission-drive, curriculum-driven. We use the same activities, the same risk management method. We use the tasks as a medium for a growth development of people, can be for children and can be for adults. (CSL)

### **School capacity building**

#### *Capacity building for informal leaders*

The discussion thus far in this section has focused on the capacity building of the MLs, that is leaders who have formal positional roles within the school operational system. However, leadership in schools tends to involve a range of formal and informal leaders. Data from this school highlights that teachers contribute to capacity building by taking on leadership tasks.

Yet, at first, there is an interesting conundrum that needs to be discussed. A Coordinator opined that there was little by way of trickling down leadership roles for teachers who were not in leadership roles:

I don't see that. Although I think they all want that, they all desire that, but for various reasons, one's personal perception of capacity is limited, meaning that they didn't have enough professional capacity growth capacities. They feel that... although we are trying to support them in that way, so that they, themselves, can relay this to their members of their team, I don't think we are at that stage yet.

However, as interspersed through this case report, there are plenty of instances where teachers have indeed, taken on leadership roles (for example, innovative practices in pedagogical leadership). In addition, the HoS pointed out that the school had adopted many teacher-led school-wide initiatives. Indeed, in his perception, most of the initiatives were 'bottom-up' in nature.

Recognizing and encouraging the leadership potential of a colleague, a SAC has taken systematic steps to disperse his leadership influence to encompass others in his team:

We have a very strong Spanish teacher in our department. He is also a MYP leader and workshop leader. He is involved with many IB related things with me. He is new, and he just came last year. I think he is very helpful. When there is a department meeting and we do common unit planning, I take one group and he takes another group. ...He is definitely good at training people. He does not only train Spanish teachers. They work together; as well as with Chinese teachers. He also helps Korean teachers because they share the classroom. They are just next to each other and then they observe the classroom. (SAC)

Along the same vein, a CSL (GLL) stated that teachers have the responsibility to support, mentor and lead the interns in the school. In addition, a teacher who is proficient with technology is being encouraged to share his skills and create programmes to document learning.

To summarize, teachers who are not in a positional leadership role in the school's organizational hierarchy can and do take the onus of leadership by themselves. This again adds support to a distributed model of leadership.

#### *Contributing to school-wide policies and initiatives*

The data shows that the MLs took the lead on some school-wide policies and initiatives, this being a key component to capacity building. The MYPC\_A declared unequivocally, "We basically developed the policies. There are four policies in IB and they have to develop collaborated with all members and stakeholders presenting in some way". The work on developing the policies as she explained in detail was in conjunction with other MLs and the senior leadership team.

The HoS noted that a key initiative was taken at the MYP level and this was "psyche changing":

I wanted to drive in the middle school was the philosophy of the re-dos, re-takes and do-overs, so a student who did poorly on an assessment should be given an opportunity to re-do it. It was a psyche changing initiative, and so, I needed the MYPC at the time, to say it's okay by the IB, that we had the flexibility... we needed somebody with a deep understanding of the IB to tell me what I am free to do, because the needs of overlapping our identity as Chadwick, and in particular, in MYP, it spans from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade, but we have this Middle School, I want it to be very distinct.

Moreover, as the MYP was new to the school, some SACs had suggested introducing a 'curriculum coach' to the school to provide support and training to teachers:

We are bringing in ideas to the school, like having the curriculum coach next year. We realised there was a need for that. There has been too much work to split a teacher between grade 6 and 12. (SAC)

#### **6.4.2 The situation: tools, routines and context**

As noted in earlier sections, the school has invested a substantial amount of resources in PD programmes with a view to expertise sharing; this was evident in the data. Consequently, this has resulted in the import of innovations that serve as useful tools in capacity building. For example, CSLs stated that they would like to improve the quality of pastoral care in the

school. One of the strategies that they used to attain their goal was to adopt a conceptual framework that they learnt from a workshop in the following year:

We want to start training teachers to be better advisors so that they are more than just content providers. They are more really focusing on pastoral care aspect in their actual job and the advising role. Two teachers and I went to the Response to intervention [RTI] workshop this year in the US. That is amazing especially the workshops on the PLC [professional learning community] and how they look like. Therefore, next year, we are going to do a soft start with RTI. It is a whole plan on how to roll this thing. It will be a multi-year process but starting next year is a soft start, trying to form a guiding coalition.

The IB provided an inbuilt set of rules but leaders need to adapt these to the contingencies of their contexts, by taking proactive steps to enhance the internal capacity building. MYPC\_A, a coordinator stated, “the policies and procedures are actually run the schools. It’s all about capacity and knowing when to change and review policies when it’s not working”. After a year of MYP authorisation, the new PC (MYPC\_B) perceived that the unit-planning tool (Managebac) was not user-friendly. He has started searching for a replacement to support curriculum mapping whilst in the meantime he is using online platforms:

Recently we use a lot Google Doc, Drive and Google Classroom. We use the team drive a lot. We have Managebac that I hate and I think is terrible so I try not to use it often but we have it. In terms of technology tools, Google right now is a go-to place. We are actually looking some other tools to be potentially implemented in the future for curriculum mapping because some curriculum mapping does not work in Managebac. (MYPC\_B)

Another SAC stated that he had noticed a few applications and tools were not convenient for curriculum planning and so he has put up a big board that allowed everyone to discuss and to make changes. The board served the purpose to encourage open discussion on curriculum planning, as well as created an open atmosphere for teachers to collaborate and share opinions:

I feel like everything is put into ‘Google Documents’. We can see it and we can understand it, but it is overwhelming. We just made a big chart on the board. Everyone has a marker and they all went up. The goal was to talk to the person beside you.. We were having a conversation. The Korean teacher spoke about the assignments she did and that sounded great. Moreover, we realised there is nothing like that in English sections, so we made a note and we wrote that down. [...] There was an open conversation. Now my goal this year was to make sure that everybody felt comfortable in sharing their own thoughts and opinions about it and that I think works very well. (SAC)

### **School developed tools**

The development of portfolios provides a useful school developed tool for GLLs to use. A GLL pointed out that the tools helped in specific goal setting exercises for the lessons, helped in documentation and, in addition, helped in evaluation and feedback from the students:

So, we use portfolio and we have to make a team goal, and individual goals and they are supposed to evaluate them this time of the year...it is a great way of having

records of everything. And kids can explain their learning too, and it has been very helpful when it is time to prepare report cards and pulling out all the important

### **Routines: change and innovation**

The leadership team had regular meetings related to both IB instructional capacities and leadership capacities. For example, the DoL noted that in order to effectively mentor interns, he held in-house PD programme for them weekly, in addition he saw teachers involved in the KCR program daily and did training with them that was dependent on the MYP or the DP programme. Despite the fact that the scheduling of meetings is in place, this is a process that is subject to change. The PYP coordinator said that he was considering changing the frequency and nature of his meetings with the GLLs ("step up a bit more"). He wanted the meetings to be focused on "[The GLLs] pedagogical leadership, confidence, and strength" and in giving him "a better lens on what's going on with the team".

### **Supports for middle leadership capacity building**

#### *Creating conditions for autonomy*

A significant internal support mechanism aimed at capacity building was the promotion of a workplace culture that encourages autonomy. In this school, the data reveals that in the early years the SLs had to be more directive but now the MLs have gained expertise and therefore have more autonomy:

So in these early years, when we had this new staff to IB, we had to be more directive to help them move forward, because most of our teachers just didn't have the cultural experience, or the academic experience in our programs (SSP)

Overall, the teachers are encouraged to be independent critical thinkers and embedded in this is the notion of autonomy and as the PSVP noted.

In addition to PCs, the data is unambiguous that other MLs and the teachers are involved in the process as well:

Everything and anything that we do at the grade level, in the Middle School at least, are all teacher initiated. GLLs will have a lot of support and freedom to do that (HoS)

Conversely, the issue of autonomy is somewhat contentious, as the findings suggest. The school provided the leaders with the release time lessons in order to augment the autonomy for the department to "personalise their teaching" (CSL). Conversely, a GLL perceived that they were just "information feeding (GLL)" to the students and this was not conducive to autonomy.

#### *The context of IB*

The introduction of the IB provided for an interesting context with regards to capacity building. At the initial stages, the teachers were overwhelmed, and this issue was addressed by getting an expert on board and to hire experienced personnel. The advantage of both to build personal capacity and to provide for in-house training. The professional network in IB or the specific subject area developed an individual's professional capacity as well as

providing the opportunity for leaders to share and explore initiatives in the professional community.

In keeping with promotion of a spirit of inquiry, a hallmark of the IB ethos, a SAC said that she was keen to see how teachers promoted the practice of asking questions in class and discussed this pedagogical skill with the teachers after class:

During the lessons visiting, one of the main things I am trying to notice is to see how teachers are using questioning and how they are allowing students to question as well. (SAC)

A GLL explained that he sometimes modeled units to his team to demonstrate how to implement units when there was a plan:

The unit plan is new this year. PYP has six units. [...] I divided the unit to each teacher, so each teacher has responsibilities for one unit. In grade level lead, I took two. I took the exhibition and I took the first unit, just to model it how it looks like (GLL)

## **6.5 Level 3 leadership: leading beyond the school**

### **6.5.1 Who are the leaders?**

Since the school has invested in PD programmes for the staff, it may be reasonable to suppose that many of the MLs have had opportunities to extend their leadership to contexts beyond the school. The PCs are a part of a larger IB community:

[...] PCs have a lot more jobs alike and a lot of more collaborations between different coordinators and different schools. You do develop a very close relationship with other coordinators. (MYPC\_A)

Other leaders, like the CSLs, also have opportunities to engage in hands-on activities that reflect their leadership influences, and these are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

### **6.5.2 The practice: what and how do they lead?**

#### **Changing community mindsets**

A key area where the middle leadership of this school drives change in the community is by propagating the concepts of inclusive education. In general, the literature on inclusive education in Asia highlights that this is an area that needs much more focus, in practice and research.

Within the education system, as a CSL pointed, there is a paucity of inclusive supports in the IB, and therefore she took the lead of conducting workshops that shed light on inclusive education for IB leaders in the region:

They have rewritten a workshop. I went to the IB workshop before and they had covered very little about inclusion. [...] By meeting with the IB official and presenting with her at the regional workshop. She asked me how we achieve excellence in inclusion, the conversation went around. Since I am more adverse in the IB. I can say things with more impact. They said, "We need the workshop leaders." Moreover, they got me in the workshop training. (CSL)

Talking about a special case, where awareness heightened and changed perceptions of an entire community, the leader noted:

We are slowly building connections and trust in the community. We have a young student last year who graduated, she struggled all of her life. Finally, she was diagnosed with a reading disability. She opened up and realised, "I am not dumb, I am not stupid, these are things that I can do." She made amazing art; a lot of the artwork is from her senior project of drowning in dyslexia. ...She has made a film and now shared with parents about how the brain works differently. The Korean voices, the authentic voices, being able to say, "Now this is ok [for inclusive education]." Those parents are my best assets. She graduated last year, and I still call her mom and say, "I need you to talk to this mom, I need you to get them [to know your story]." (CSL)

### **Educating the parental community**

As in many other Asian countries, the cultural context makes for a heavy emphasis on academic subjects with little or no interest in areas beyond this. This school is unique in terms of the strong emphasis that it places on its Outdoor Education program. The Cross-leaders who were responsible for the outdoor education, worked on convincing the parents, government and society in general about the value of outdoor education with the hope of bringing about a change in the mindset:

In the community capacity, there is no peer equivalent of what our programme does in South Korea. ... ..In the programme, we want to work with more Korean interns so that we can build capacity in South Korea... We work with the community a lot. We have our community climbing wall on Monday nights, where we open up to the community to come in here. We work all the time with government policies, school accountability, social changes in Korea, and how the public perceives our program. We seek their understanding. (CSL)

### **Networking in the IB community**

Being a part of the IB network means that the school had ties to an extended community of similar schools. The PCs, the SACs and the CSLs worked on building professional networks to build capacity in the school:

We already have the IB network established. It is strong in this region. We have the PCs network. We meet twice a year and when you meet, you break off to another network. We have a strong network and we use that network to help connect teachers together. Even organising workshops make connections. Being part of the IB, as if I am doing an online course that we are trying to connect workshop and school visitors. There are connections. (MYPC\_A)

A PC, who was the chairperson of the IB network in East Asia, encouraged the members of the professional network to share practices:

Building the curricular commonality is part of my responsibility. We have an IB network established in Korea and Japan. It is called the PYP East Asian network. MYP has the same thing. I happen to be the chair of the network this year. So that is the responsibility of the coordinators of all the school, it's to cultivate that network to share resources, to discuss like what's up and coming, what's new, what are you doing

for, e-portfolio, what sort of literacy resources are you using? That is the strong part. (PYPC)

Going beyond the concept of face to face networking, some MLs used social media to network, both inter-school and intra-school, thereby having an accessible resource to bring to the school ideas of best practices and initiatives:

I use Twitter a lot, and I have many connections to Twitter. We have our own Facebook interactive group. I set up a Twitter group and now there are 600 members. The purpose behind it is to share ideas and discuss criterion. Over the past years, I met people who joined the conferences. Those people have experience in the MYP. We discuss changes at school and how we could make the changes as practical as possible. Some schools do not have as much time as we do, and some school struggle with space. They were doing the written work in the practical time. We do not want that. We therefore have the opportunity to discuss with others outside my department and to help me bring [good practice] to my team. (SAC)

### **Engaging the local community**

As far as the more local community was concerned, MLs consciously attempted to build relations within the community:

My external work is working on a new initiative the school related to advancement with leadership team members. We are working with an external community member, alumni, etc. It is a sort of school advancement. (MYPC\_B)

In addition they were trying to train local people to take on roles in the Outdoor Education program. This was expected to have multiple benefits such as spreading awareness about the programme to the locals and creating trained personal among the local community so that they could help in planning logistical issues:

We are trying to hire and train local instructors. What we've learned is to train them, such as becoming the logistics manager. They will be working on networking and recruiting. With the nature of this subject, our programme needs consultants for course areas and work with the government. The person has to coordinate network or spread the network within Korea, for everything local-based resources. That is for the staffing consultants, interns and instructors. That is also for the equipment, inventory, food, and planning, because all the stuff is locally based (CSL)

### **6.5.3 Context**

The interaction between the school leaders and the community aimed to serve students in the long run. The norm and culture had created some challenges to maximise the effectiveness of certain learning and teaching areas (especially non-academic areas). In this case, the MLs worked to bring about a change in the mindset of the extended school community insofar as it was possible in order to incorporate the wider vision of the IB and the schools within the strictures of the local culture.

### **Challenges in the local context**

As mentioned earlier, the school is a branch of an established institution in the United States. Although the teachers are largely expatriates, the student body is mainly Korean. Some of the challenges are associated with these contextual factors have been discussed in

earlier sections. For example, the MLs have to protect the interests of the non-Korean students' marginalisation, as "clichés" could form in the school. In addition, the DoL pointed out that considerable tact and delicacy was needed to tackle the perceptions of the Korean community in general about the school:

I think for international schools, we can be a target. Because we are a private school that is super expensive, we are often the target of scorn by Koreans who are completely opposed to this kind of privilege. ....Speaking of government policies, we have two layers of accountability. One, to the Korean government, and the administration there, there are only certain kinds of people that we can hire, because of all these regulations. That is a form of big accountability, it goes without saying but it was not the norm in the past. Everyone has their police clearances, the qualification has to be accepted by the Korean administration. And, of course, we have accountability to the California campus as well.

In addition, managing cultural norms is a part of the repertoire of the MLs. For example, it is an acceptable and expected cultural more that teachers would be treated to meals by the parents as a gesture of thanks. However, recently set up anti-graft laws in Korea make it impossible for teachers to accept anything at all ("even a cup of tea") from the parents. This may be seen as a social rebuff by the parents though in reality the teachers cannot do anything about it.

## 6.6 Chapter summary

The work of middle leaders at Korea school are influenced by a determination from the top that all teachers are highly professional and the have capacity to lead. The schools specific mission prioritises experiential learning and outdoor education. This entails a range of specialist middle leadership positions and accompanying organizational structures.

Similar to other schools, formal structures encourage subject area coordination in the different programmes, and year level coordination around a comprehensive student well-being programme. Accordingly, the school utilizes comprehensive senior and middle leadership positions to enact its programmes. As the school matures, its instructional leadership has become further distributed through the creation of new positions to support school-wide aims as well as the support specific aspects of the instructional programme, such as creating the positions of Extended Essay Coordinator, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, or Dean of Students. As the school curriculum develops, middle leaders are increasingly working on developing trans-disciplinary collaboration.

The school utilizes teams and teambuilding to enhance and disperse professional knowledge and in so doing to build professional capacity. Middle and teacher leaders alike were found to engage in pedagogical research and the analysis of student data. Such research seemed often to be conducted at the initiative of middle leaders themselves. In some subject areas, the SACs encouraged deep reflection on instruction near the end of an instructional unit. This routine, facilitated by a reflective tool, stimulated discussion around improving instruction. In addition they participated in and conducted formal and informal PD programs both inter- and intra-school.

The MLs contribution to leadership activities outside school included interactions within the parent body, the IB network and other community networks as well. Its mission

emphasizing experiential learning requires additional engagement with community organizations and government to identify resources and to ensure compliance of activities with the law. This is illustrative of how a school mission can influence leadership activity.



## Comparative Analysis

Comparative Analysis



## 7 Comparative Case Report

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates findings across the four case studies in order to uncover leadership structures and practices which are common across schools and those that are contextually contingent. It does so by comparing the different school contexts, the ways that middle leadership is conceptualised in the four schools, and finally how leadership is operationalised. As with other areas pertaining to the leadership of MLs, there are occasional overlaps and commonalities – this happens because facets of leadership do not happen in isolation. There are inter-linkages and interconnections that taken together provide for rich, complex and effective forms of leadership.

This chapter serves as a summary only, critical discussions encompassing details are discussed in each of the cases in the chapters earlier in this report. The chapter concludes by positing several propositions about middle leadership in general and middle leadership in IB schools specifically that emerge from the comparative findings.

### 7.2 Comparing contexts for middle leadership: the situation

#### 7.2.1 The organisational situation

Despite each of the schools being PYP-MYP-DP continuum schools that house all three programmes on site, each has unique missions. These include providing affordable and high-quality education (Japan), promoting mindful global citizens who act ethically (Hong Kong), developing excellence in languages (China), and prioritizing experiential learning opportunities (South Korea). All articulate vision statements and learning outcomes that align with the IB mission and Learner Profile.

Table 16 The organisational situation by school

Structures	China	Hong Kong	Japan	South Korea
Vision / mission	‘Inspiring Global Minds’	Mindful global ethical citizens	Affordable high-quality	Academic, experiential and ethical learning  Character development
Governance	Accountable to the regional government	Accountable to a large educational consortium	Accountable to the school owner	Accountable to a parent school in the USA
Programmatic uniqueness or emphasis	Excellence in languages	Promoting mindfulness and pastoral care	Focus on academic and skills for further education, and after-school life	Outdoor and experiential Education

Student composition	Primarily high income  Predominantly ethnically Chinese  Wide range of nationalities	Primarily middle-high income  Predominantly ethnically Chinese  Wide range of nationalities	Primarily middle income  Ethnically Japanese with a high population of Indian nationals  Wide range of nationalities	Primarily high income  Predominantly ethnically Korean  Wide range of nationalities
Organizational structure features	Both SACs and GLLs work with PCs in Primary level  One MYPC and one DPC collaborating with GLLs and SACs in Secondary level	GLLs with responsibilities for pastoral care curriculum with PCs and SACs.	PYPC is also PSVP with wider range of responsibilities than secondary PCs.  Primary PC reports to PSP.  Secondary PCs report to SSP	Parallel curriculum and leadership structure between outdoor education and regular school structure
School Culture	Directive on occasions	Leadership tasks are shared  Egalitarian with a “devolved” model of leadership	Non-hierarchical culture	Descending directive when more programmes are in place

Table 16 compares the organisational features of each school. In most cases, each school’s unique vision and programme aspects are mirrored in respective organizational structures. In each instance, the schools have common core leadership positions such as HoSs, Principals, and programme coordinators. While PC positions are mandated by the IB, whether they are enacted at senior leadership (Korea, Hong Kong) or middle leadership levels vary across schools (Japan, China). Additional leadership positions cohere to programmatic emphases. For instance, in Korea, an emphasis on experiential leadership entails an outdoor education leadership structure and MLs with responsibilities for experiential learning programmes, in Hong Kong Deans and year level coordinators are focused on developing and implementing a pastoral care curriculum, and in China English as Additional Language coordinators reflect the school’s emphasis on language proficiency. MLs tend to have narrowly defined roles that are defined by SLs and embedded into school structures to account for contextual attributes such as unique school missions, student compositions and programmes.

Structurally, all four schools are divided into primary and secondary divisions with separate Principals for each. However, structures vary across the four schools. In Japan and China, MYPC and DPC each report to a secondary school Principal, whereas in Hong Kong PCs are also VPs. The China School also has two PYPCs, whereas in other schools each has one person per coordinator role. The model in Korea varies. There is a director of studies in both MYPC and DPC, and a Dean of Students is responsible for pastoral and academic care. Both work closely with middle and high school Principals and subject area and teams. These variations in positional authority seem to be in part a function of each schools' historical development and areas of priority.

### **7.2.2 School culture**

All four schools are unique in terms of their contexts, being 'International' in their local settings. The China school, which was established by the regional government to serve the needs of the expatriate population and is fundamentally linked to a successful government school. It is international by way of offering a curriculum that is not local. Asian schools tend to be hierarchical in nature, thereby reflecting the socio-cultural mores of the region. Nonetheless, the cultures of the four schools are by and large non-directive and egalitarian. The schools in Hong Kong and Japan follow models of leadership and organisation that are decentralised. The school in Korea had a more directive senior tier of leadership but once the IB programmes were accredited and in place, the model has gradually become more dispersed. In the Chinese school, the school culture appears to be more directive. While this may be explained by the formal organisational structure of the school and the fact that there is a degree of governmental investment in the school, it could also be reflective of the nascent nature of the school and the IB programmes as much of the school's focus has been in the authorisation and re-authorisation of the IB programs. A key barrier to the functioning of middle leadership in schools is the tight controls exercised by the senior leadership teams which hinders the development of middle leadership functions. However, in this research, the four schools encouraged the growth and development of middle leadership, albeit with variations. Even in the case where the controls are tightest (the China School), a significant and strong stratum of middle leadership is helping the school to develop.

### **7.2.3 Context-based leadership activity drivers**

Across all schools, specific initiatives seemed to motivate a great deal of middle leadership activity. In Japan, a highly structured teacher appraisal system provided a focal point for middle leadership activity in that it established policies, practices and procedures that PCs and SACs worked to enact through providing feedback and engaging in capacity building activities. In China, re-authorisation of the PYP and candidature of the DP also served as a catalyst of middle leadership activity—in particular for programme coordinators who became the "go to" leaders for teachers and other leaders around programme enactment. The Hong Kong school provided MLs with alternatives to appraisal, such as conducting a school-based action research or inquiry project. This permitted MLs (and experienced teachers) to target focused areas for personal development, allowing some individuals to emerge as experts in specific areas. In Korea, an emphasis on experiential learning resulted in a comprehensive curriculum development process, led by specialist MLs with specific responsibilities for engaging teachers and students across all year levels in experiential and outdoor education. Although each school had a range of MLs, specific initiatives influenced

the nature of the work of at least some MLs in different schools. This suggests that such drivers can be utilised deliberately to shape and focus middle leadership.

#### 7.2.4 The IB situation

The IB with its well-defined standards, procedures and ethos is the common tie among the four schools. Much of the middle leadership tasks in all four schools are focussed on areas overtly or covertly linked to the IB. While the roles that the IB plays in determining the functioning of middle leadership in each of the schools is discussed in detail in the case reports, there are a few salient points that are worth mentioning here.

Each of the four schools is set in Asian contexts while following a curriculum that is not local. In many cases, this means that explaining the tenets of the IB to the parents becomes an important responsibility of the MLs. This is because Asian parents by and large tend to be overly focused on relatively narrow academic goals whereas the IB has much more expansive learning outcomes. Secondly, in some of the contexts, the MLs have to deal with the fall-out of their students attending highly pressurised after school coaching programmes (*Hagwon* in Korea, *Juku* in Japan). Thirdly, the schools though relatively insulated from the external issues of the respective local education systems, nonetheless need to be aware of these issues (as in the case of Mother Tongue Education in Hong Kong). The China school is unique amongst the group of participating schools as it is more intrinsically a part of the local system. Leadership distribution at China School further reinforces the need for this IB school to be aware of its host culture within its leadership system. Fourth, because of the unique nature of the international schools, there is a high turnover of the staff. This means that there is a potential for lack of continuity in processes and systems – under these circumstances the IB becomes a standard of stability.

The IB has core attributes that make up its Learner Profile. In all cases, the school's core vision complements these attributes. For example, the HoS of the Japan school explicitly stated that the school's mission is similar to the IB and that everything that they do is aligned with the IB. The 'relationship' with IB depends on the individual school's context. For example, in the China school, the emphasis is on the accreditation and reaccreditation process, which has made the school somewhat inward looking with collective energy being focussed on getting the necessary approvals. The Korean school has completed the IB recognition process for all programmes and now the focus is on a more holistic view of the process. On the other hand, the Hong Kong school is more established in the IB system. The MLs have gained valuable expertise in the IB and are now seen to be resource people within the school, within its consortium, and for regional schools authorised by the IB.

Although all schools offered the IB continuum, participants in different schools related different needs, which again influenced MLs' work. Authorisation and re-authorisation phases determined the balance of MLs' work—particularly PCs—around managerial or leadership activity. PCs in this study when undergoing authorisation or re-authorisation reported that some aspects of their work entail completing documentation. Other aspects of the IB, pertaining to the teaching and learning programme, drove engagement in middle leadership activities, such as coaching teachers in the implementation of ATLs. The IB, to a certain degree, provides structure for PCs and SACs around which to engage in managerial and leadership activities. This is elaborated further below.

Vertical alignment across the three programs is seen as a critical practice in all four schools. This is highlighted by the interview data. While it appears to be a common-sense assumption, given that the schools are continuum schools with the PYP, MYP and DP programmes running in a sequential manner, nonetheless this is an area that needs attention in almost all the schools. The MLs pointed out that the transition from PYP to MYP has some lacunae (China, Korea). Perhaps one of the reasons may be because the MYP is less structured than the other two programmes. However, as a coordinator in the Japan school pointed out this gave the coordinators a lot of leeway in terms of creativity and innovation in teaching the programme. In China, there has been a tendency for each of the three programmes to run independently, due to the almost annual authorisation process over the past five years taking place, and this may be the reason why there are transitional gaps.

In addition, being nested within the IB system has provided opportunities for the MLs to grow professionally. In all four schools, the IB has afforded opportunities for PD and networking. In some cases, as in the case of the Hong Kong school, the IB has afforded the MLs considerable stature in their roles by way of their expertise in the IB system. Indeed, the IB has also enabled those teachers who are not positional leaders with considerable training in leadership exercises. While in one hand, this means that teachers tend to leave their schools (as seen from the data in the Hong Kong and Korean schools) to seek leadership positions elsewhere, seen from a leadership perspective it means that leadership is being dispersed in broader educational contexts.

Table 17 IB situational influences by leadership level and school

Leadership Levels	China	Hong Kong	Japan	Korea
Level 1	ATLs as a driver of professional conversations	ATLs as a driver of professional conversations	ATLs as a driver of professional conversations	ATLs as a driver of professional conversations
	IB expectations of PCs provide role clarity	Modifying the IB tools to suit the immediate context, for example the MYP planner	PCs translated the IB ethos to the staff through a collaborative and supportive structure	MYP authorisation as the driver to the MLs involving in curriculum planning
	Authorisation as a driver of ML work in the curriculum: training, accommodating, updating curriculum.	Feedback from IB that provides guidelines for planning.	Modifying IB structures like assessments	
		Developing a database of teaching		

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		strategies for MYP		
Level 2	<p>IB authorisation /documentation creates a shared vision for teaching and learning</p> <p>IB Standards and practices for vision and direction setting</p> <p>School funded PD provides avenues for stakeholder identification of areas for future growth</p> <p>Implementation of remedies to solve problems of practice to enhance school capacity</p>	<p>Coaching and mentoring in IB is provided to new teachers for capacity building in instructional leadership</p> <p>Building professional networks within the IB in the region</p> <p>Teacher appraisals and evaluations including Teacher Inquiry</p>	<p>Coaching and mentoring by PCs and SACs</p> <p>SACs developed a toolbox of strategies for building instructional leadership</p> <p>Teacher appraisal system</p> <p>IB related PD</p> <p>Focussing on alignment</p>	<p>Professional network in the IB creates opportunities for professional learning for personal and school capacity building</p>
Level 3	<p>School staff utilise IB resources to develop leadership capacity.</p> <p>Heavy workload surrounding authorisation and re-authorisation of IB programmes effects the priority of external capacity building</p>	<p>Membership in a consortium of IB authorised schools supports enhanced teacher and middle leadership activity beyond the school</p> <p>Clarifying and consolidating IB policies, practices and ethos for parents</p>	<p>Translating IB ethos to parents.</p> <p>Proactively building networks – this is new in the context.</p>	<p>The absence of a professional network in the region encouraged MLs to setup local professional networks to gather resources</p>

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### 7.3 Conceptualising middle leadership

This study aimed to provide for a deep and thorough understanding of how middle leadership functioned in IB schools across four regional contexts. A key and pertinent issue was raised by a participant in the Chinese school who emphasised that distributed leadership transcends notions of a delegation of responses into assuming the agency of more substantive issues. This observation encapsulates and resonates with successful models of distributed leadership in literature and in practice.

SLs across the schools espoused a distributed approach to leadership in which senior and MLs engaged in middle leadership responsibilities. These were expressed as “every person is a leader” (China), “devolved” and “flat” (Hong Kong), “shared” (Korea), and “team” (Japan) approaches to leadership. In each school, leadership tasks were distributed across a number of individuals. In some instances, leadership is galvanised around formal MLs. In other instances, informal leaders, or teachers who lack positional or hierarchical authority are looked to for their specific pedagogical expertise and work with SLs, MLs, or instructional teams to plan instruction and assessment or build capacity in colleagues.

Despite espousing distributed leadership, SLs viewed roles of MLs differently. In China, the school director drew on her experience of professional learning in government schools by which MLs serve as coaches and mentors to novice teachers, and as leaders of classroom-based research, but noted that some MLs in the school felt uncomfortable with sharing practice. For her, changing school culture to foster the sharing of instructional practice was a priority for effective middle leadership. In Hong Kong, the Principal expressed a view of distributed leadership in which tasks were shared across a number of people and MLs work alongside SLs. Also important was an expectation that MLs influence teachers in the adoption of new practices. The HoS in Korea viewed MLs as conduits of communication but, more importantly, as having distinct roles in capacity building by developing other leaders, and in initiating innovative practices. Part of this entailed helping MLs to “see the bigger picture”. In Japan, MLs (SACs and PCs) had distinct roles in mentoring teachers on instructional practices by providing feedback on observations from instructional rounds and written units of instruction.

Looking across all schools, SLs had strong expectations for middle leadership that regardless of formal hierarchies emphasised shared responsibilities based on pedagogical expertise, with specifically delineated roles for capacity building—Level 2 leadership. Among these, particularly for PCs, were building capacities that teachers need in order to embed the IB philosophy in the curriculum and to advise SLs on strategies to meet standards and practices.

For their part, PCs viewed their roles as having distinct responsibilities. The data evidenced sharing leadership with SLs in areas in which they had specific expertise. PCs particularly understood that their work entailed both management and leadership functions. The former was partially driven by IB documentation requirements (particularly for schools undergoing recognition processes) and the latter by working with other leaders and teachers to change instructional practice. Where PCs did not also hold Vice-Principalship posts, they related some freedom from administrative duties that other SLs (Principals and VPs) would take up. This permitted PCs to focus more energy on IB-related documentation,

instructional leadership and capacity building. In contrast, where PCs were VPs or directors of learning, in Hong Kong and Korea, they tended to have more immediate access to Principals and had a broader purview in decision-making, and also were increasingly likely to be a point of contact for teachers seeking support for a wide range of issues beyond the curriculum. While concurrently holding Vice-Principalship positions may increase interactions among PCs and teachers, and provide for positional authority and stronger collaboration with Principals, it also may diffuse the focus of their work.

Other MLs had academic and student welfare responsibilities. They were primarily SACs and GLLs. Some had responsibilities related to specific aspects of IB curriculum support, such as CAS, Personal Project and Extended Essay coordinators. Across the schools, these MLs perceived that their work included clerical aspects of documentation, selling initiatives from SLs, answering questions about the curriculum, facilitating the collection of feedback to inform senior-leaders' decision-making, and organising curriculum co-planning meetings with teachers.

Three of the schools (all but Japan) developed separate year level posts for students' pastoral care that included responsibilities for developing (with a VP or dean of students) and implementing a pastoral care curriculum. These MLs served as a focal point for monitoring students' progression and also for attending to their well-being.

Table 18 Senior and Middle Leaders understanding of middle leadership roles

Leaders	China	Hong Kong	Japan	Korea
Senior Leaders	Drawing on Chinese school practices  Developing a culture for distributing leadership and sharing practices  Developing mechanism to distribute leadership such as role description and the use of ML-led Communities of Practice	Developing colleagues Developing curriculum  Promoting the IB Philosophy  Sharing leadership	Advising and implementing IB Standards and Practices  Mentoring and coaching through teacher appraisal system	Building capacity  Transmitting information  Stimulating innovation at year and subject levels  Aligning programmes to school mission  Focusing on IB programme requirements
Middle Leaders	Roles are clearly articulated	Role determined by	PCs capacity building and instructional leadership, mediating	Changing practices;

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PCs supervise both programme implementation and curriculum articulation	formal definition	programme requirements	change management
PCs lead the SACs	Shared responsibility for whole school leadership	Intermediaries among teachers, SLs, parents	Collaborating with SLs but with differing roles
MLs engage practices for collaboration and build collegiality	Administrative responsibilities	SACs as connecting teachers to leaders; intermediary with parents/community	Completing “non-negotiable” paperwork
Work towards a cohesive instructional programme	First contact for curriculum issues		Conducting feasibility analyses of experiential education site visits
	Devising and implementing a well-being curriculum		

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## 7.4 Operationalising middle leadership

### 7.4.1 Leadership practices: instructional, organisational, system/external leadership

The research found instances of middle leadership enacted at the three levels. Although, as indicated above, SACs and GLLs predominantly view themselves as having instructional leadership roles.

The data highlights an overwhelming commonality in matters related to teaching and learning as this was seen as the central focus in all four contexts. Within the parameters of the IB curriculum there were some variations, for example the Hong School has a well-articulated pastoral care program, while the Korean School emphasized its outdoor education programme. Standards and practices related to the IB drive much of what MLs do though there is variation in this area. For example, in schools which have ‘younger’ IB programmes such as the Chinese school, more attention is concentrated on the authorisation and re-authorisation of the three IB programmes, at least at the time of data collection.

What does the data reveal in terms of capacity building in school, which the study classifies as Level 2? The MLs in the four schools contribute to the building of capacity in all sorts of ways. Data from all four schools reveal that there are generous budgets allocated for formal PD programmes and that training, coaching, mentoring, modelling were a part of the leadership repertoire of MLs, especially the coordinators. In some stances, the MLs have contributed to school-wide initiatives and change. In Japan, the appraisal system provides pathways for building personal and professional capacity. The three other schools also had various forms of feedback, appraisals and evaluations.

As far as Level 3 is concerned, being nested within the IB system means that the schools have an inbuilt mechanism for extending leadership opportunities with other IB schools in the region. In some instances, it was a pioneering effort (Japan School) and in others, it was a more established pattern on inter-school collaboration. In addition, IB programmes, such as CAS, organically encourages interaction out of the school environment. Of the four schools, the exercising of Level 3 leadership was perhaps the most limited in the Chinese school. Perhaps one of the key reasons for this could be that due to the relative inexperience of the PCs and other MLs, a more inward-looking view within the school has developed. The SLs believed in and encouraged their staff to share their skills and expertise within the school. MLs in the Korean, Japanese and Hong Kong schools respectively also have to manage the lacuna between parental aspirations and the ethos of the IB system. In many ways, one of the leadership tasks that they had was to interpret IB standards and practices to the parents. Finally, it is worth noting that the Korean school was the most proactive in terms of engaging with the immediate (regional) context – sensing that there was a gap in terms of interactions with the local population, the school reached out in terms of training local Koreans to be a part of its outdoor education programme (which in itself was a new concept in a Korean educational context.)

Table 19 Overview of middle leadership practices by leadership level and school

Leadership Levels	China	Hong Kong	Japan	Korea
Level 1	Aligning scope and sequences within and across programmes Obtaining resources Collaborative work on instructional planning and assessment Distributing input on policy development Creating structures for discussion and providing support	Curriculum leadership Guiding professional learning about IB components Co-teaching. Curriculum writing Giving direction to planning processes	Clarifying IB expectations, standards and practices Skilling teachers in assessment practices	Curriculum Leadership Bringing alignment between PYP, MYP and DP Matching students with supervisors for the personal essay Expanding the scope of the curriculum Promoting good pedagogical practices Promoting standardisation of practice across the

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				board in areas like assessment, using tools like ATLs
				Conducting research
Level 2	Team building	Contributing to the school culture	Supporting structures to build capacity: the appraisal system	Encouraging reflective practice
	Guiding professional dialogue	Distributing leadership tasks	PD activities, coaching and mentoring	Building a culture of collegiality and collaboration
	Providing feedback	PD activities, coaching and mentoring	Providing feedback	Sharing leadership tasks
	Engaging in appraisal practices	Professional and community network building	Building a culture of collegiality and collaboration.	Engaging in formal and informal PD
	Developing succession planning strategies	Contributing to school policies	Contributing to school-wide initiatives	Contributing to school-wide initiatives
	Utilising PD to build school capacity			
Level 3	Interpreting recognition and accreditation standards and practices	Building Networks with other IB schools	Building Networks with other IB schools	Networking with other IB schools
	Developing nascent networks to better facilitate in-house PD practices	Interpreting IB standards and practices to parents	Changing mindset	Systematic plans for integrating with the local population via the outdoor education programme
		Building parental networks	Interpreting IB standards and practices to parents	

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#### 7.4.2 Leadership tools and routines

It is generally accepted that routines are the processes that leaders undertake to help schools run efficiently. In time these routines become the acceptable norms as they are

underpinned by the school’s mission, vision and goals. Tools, both metaphoric and real, act as scaffolding or pathways for achieving leadership goals. In all four schools, there are tools and routines in place that help the MLs to function effectively. Complementary to this notion is the existence of appraisal and evaluation in schools that standardize practices and provide powerful tools for feedback and improvement. The appraisal system in the Japan school guided much of the work of teachers and the middle leadership teams. In the Hong Kong school, teachers had the freedom to opt for Teacher Enquiry as a form of evaluation – this enables the teachers to self-direct their appraisal process if they choose to take this option. A common thread in terms of routines is the regular meetings that targeted the building capacity of other MLs and teachers. For example, in the Japan school, the MYPC and DPC emphasised co-led scheduled meetings to promote and develop the SACs toolbox of managerial and leadership strategies.

Table 20 Tools and routines used by MLs by leadership level and school

Leadership Level	China	Hong Kong	Japan	Korea
Level 1	IB common planners Unit plans ATLs POIs Computer-assisted software such as Managebac Scheduling of common planning times and faculty and team meetings Support for CoPs	IB common unit planners - templates used to guide the process and help clarify expectations Training newcomers in what needs to be done including documentation. Formal Feedback System	Teacher Appraisal System IB based skills Internal Assessment guidelines provided by the IB	Portfolios to help with goal setting. Expanding on ATLs Replacing Managebac with other user-friendly tools like, Google Doc, Drive and Google Classroom Proposed RTI programme from the next year.
Level 2	Formal teaching team meeting schedules Expectations for MLs around roles for	Appraisals and evaluation Teacher Enquiry as evaluation	A regular schedule of meetings “Vertical” collaboration	Regular schedule of meetings, increasing/decreasing the frequency and the format depending on the situational demands

	feedback and ATLS		Structures to support capacity building: for example, the appraisal system	
	Meetings of ML teams with PCs			
	Embedding PD in school development		Organised distribution of leadership	
Level 3	Use of job-a-like and other external tools to support the development of the PYP, MYP and DP	IB and the Consortium provides the tools and routines (communication, conferences, workshops)	Providing translators (individuals and software) to help with communication	Developing networks outside the school Incorporating local employees into school programmes
	Providing a forum for professional interflow			

### The IB tools and routines

Many of the tools and routines adopted by schools in general, and the MLs in particular, are driven by the IB curriculum. For example, Unit Planners help to guide the process of teaching and learning and make the learning outcomes clear and explicit. While this is not compulsory at the DP level, the DPC at the Hong Kong school has incorporated this as he believed that it would help set expectations of what needs to be done to teach the course, understand the expectations of the course and thereby help teachers to have in place their preparation and documentation.

The IB has its own set of tools and deliverables that are supposedly the same in each school. Nonetheless, MLs in each of the schools have set their own stamps on the curriculum so that it best fits the needs of their particular contexts. For example, the Hong Kong school took the bold step of not going ahead of an additional graduate diploma as the leaders believed that it would overburden their students. Similarly, the DPC noted that he was working on an electronic database for explicit strategies and learning experiences for teaching ATL on the one hand and minimizing documentation on the other hand. In the Korean school, the leaders suggested that teachers of PYP and MYP swapped classes to help in the transition. Also, in Japan, the portfolio-based appraisal system allowed a sustained focus on instructional practices, often related to IB programme attributes.

### 7.4.3 Leaders-plus. Working with others

Spillane (2006) identifies three clear distributions of leadership practice: *collaborative* distribution in which two or more leaders co-perform a leadership activity at the same time and place; *collective* distribution in which leaders “work separately but interdependently to in performing a leadership function...at different times and in different places” (Spillane & Coldren, 2011, p. 37); and *coordinated* distributions when leaders work either separately or together on multiple leadership tasks that occur in sequential order to accomplish a routine. As the table above illustrates, in all four schools there are instances of MLs working with others. Terms such as MLs working ‘in teams’, in collaboration’, and in general working with other leaders (both middle and senior) and with teachers crop regularly in the interview data from the participants from all schools. Therefore, MLs work collaboratively, collectively and in coordination and their leadership functions may sometimes occur separately and other times, concurrently.

Table 21 Middle leaders’ leadership activities by school and type of distribution

Distribution	China	Hong Kong	Japan	Korea
Collaborative Distributions	Curriculum development and planning	Curriculum development	Appraisal system involves both collaborative and collective distributions	Capacity building
	Directional planning for inform curriculum	Developing schedules		Curriculum development
		Working with teams to develop ATL across subjects		The PCs and staff members plan the school-wide policies with together
Collective Distributions	Division of tasks to be undertaken by smaller, more specialized and more nimble teams which feedback to the larger group	Classroom interactions	Enacting and supporting teacher appraisal	Outdoor activity as the opportunity for field study in other subjects
		Consultancy	Teaching observations	
		Co-writing units	Developing new plans for instructional leadership	
		Developing curriculum		

Coordinated Distributions	Curriculum alignment  Whole school policy development  Establishment of a mechanism to permit the embedding of IB standards & practices in school development practices	Directing curriculum planning processes  Redeveloping curriculum units	Creating templates, reviewing these, seeking inputs, and implementation  ATL mapping	Creating unit planning for MYP
Informal and unplanned	The establishment of a second PYPC to support the separation of language subjects from the common core and the strengthening language teaching and learning	Sharing ideas  Brainstorming  Exploring curriculum connections	Sharing ideas informally	Encouraging teachers and MLs to develop a holistic vision of education and not getting mired in smaller tasks  Arriving at decisions by consensus

Additionally, as discussed above, by and large the schools tend to have organizational structures that are conducive to such kind of activities. However, in reality, the functioning of leadership is interlinked and does not work in demarcated and tightly defined sections. A representative example of how different types of leadership distributions may be drawn upon to enact the same innovation or initiative occurs in the case of the Japan school where a grounded and systematic teacher appraisal system has been put in place. At each stage of the process, a teacher worked with a ML (and at the final stages with the SLs) in a systematic plan of feedback and evaluation all with the goal of guiding and developing leadership and teaching practices. Amongst the initial steps in the appraisal were observational rounds, or “walkthroughs” by PCs and SACs. Following this, PCs and SACs provided a systematic, informed and formative feedback to teachers on pre-arranged and specific areas related to teaching and learning. Most often, teachers upon discussion and reflection themselves identified areas of attention. Thereafter, the Principals and the HoS conducted summative observations to add perspective to the appraisals. This format encapsulated the basic principles of collaboration. As far as working collectively is

concerned, all four schools reported instances of teamwork and collective work. In the Hong Kong school, the GLLs and SACs led meetings collaboratively within subject areas to develop the scope and sequences in each discipline. Interestingly, the exercise delineated above can also be seen from the perspective of collaborative work.

In terms of collective distributions, in Japan School, the MYPC and DPC individually mentored and provided feedback to teachers. In addition, they co-lead subject area training with SACs, thus working sometimes independently and at others interdependently to increase leadership capacity. Interviews with SLs in Hong Kong suggested an expectation that MLs would work as a team, collectively. For SACs, this might entail taking collective responsibility for decisions that a team makes for the whole school.

Across the schools, PCs and SACs would frequently lead teams in coordinated distributions around curriculum work, in which PCs would set expectations, act as a consultant to team leaders, or train leaders to effectively lead team activities (China, Japan, Hong Kong). SACs, would often lead the subsequent team activities independently, but at times they would do so collaboratively with the PC. PCs related working in coordinated distributions around tasks related to improving curriculum or capacity building activities. For instance, in Hong Kong, PCs developed an overarching curriculum development process but would work collaboratively with SACs or teams as needed. In Japan, PCs and SACs had specific roles in the teacher appraisal system. These were coordinated, depending on a rough sequence of completion. In China, curriculum alignment and systematic planning structures were guided initially by PCs, with SACs and GLLs leading their teams to perform these tasks collaboratively with the relevant PCs primarily for authorisation and re-authorisation purposes. At times, GLLs are seen to take the initiative in leading curriculum activity. This was particularly observed when forging cross-curricular links between subjects or when working with PCs to develop new curricula.

Overall, MLs tended to enact their leadership in response to priorities and frameworks established by SLs. This may entail working with formal leaders identified in official organisational frameworks, leading in response to specific initiatives.

However, in some instances, the MLs themselves were a part of the framework setting process. This occurred in instances when the school had newly adopted the IB programme as can be seen, for example, with the MYPC in the Korean school.

### **Informal leadership**

The data in all four school highlights that by no means is leadership only a formalised activity. There were plenty of examples where leadership occurred spontaneously or was displayed by teachers who did not hold formal positional roles. In the Hong Kong school, instinctive leadership activities occurred when GLL periodically discussed cross-curricula links around a topic of study. If this was deemed feasible then more formalized curriculum planning processes are followed up. Informal leadership occurred (or was acknowledged) more often in some of the schools and less so in others. For example, data from the Korean school highlights that, in this school context, informal leadership occurred as a number of teachers undertook educational research to help to improve pedagogical practices. Informal leadership was widely practised in the China School, under the senior leadership who

espoused that “anyone could be a leader”. The development of the creative arts and programmes in languages are evidence of this practitioner-led approach within small communities of practice. The DP at the Hong Kong school expressed that some school processes were the result of a “bottom-up” approach where the teachers have played a steering role.

#### 7.4.4 The IB and leadership distributions

##### Advice network findings

A comparison of the advice network findings across the four schools for the three levels of leadership highlights that there are different trends. In the discussion below, these trends are organised by different types of school leaders and thus highlight how the MLs advice giving compares to the overall leadership advice giving in schools in terms of proportional value.

#### 7.5 Senior leaders

While considering the total proportion of advice giving by each type of leader (See Table 22), an increase in SLs’ advice giving is observed in Level 1 and Level 2. In the Japan School, this increase continues through to Level 3, and this coheres with the literature. In China, a modest decrease from Level 2 to Level 3 is seen (approximately 10%) for Principals and VPs, whereas in Hong Kong the decrease is approximately 30% collectively. In Hong Kong, SLs give comparatively less advice at the Level 1. However, their engagement sharply increases from 4% to 25% in Level 2. On the other hand, whilst considering the average individual indegree portion, a different picture emerges (as is shown) as on average SLs in Japan and China take on larger proportions of advice giving in each level than is the case in Hong Kong. A possible reason for this firstly may be because the Hong Kong case represents the secondary school only, i.e. excluding primary school participants except for the PYPC. Secondly, it may also reflect that PCs are concurrently VPs in the Hong Kong school, whereas these roles are separated in China and for MYPC and DPC coordinators in Japan. Thirdly, another reason could be that it reflects a broader array of individuals having leadership responsibilities in Level 1 and Level 3 and this is elaborated below.

Table 22 Proportion of advice giving by leaders in 3 schools

	SLs			PCs			SACs			CSLs		
	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3
China	18%	31%	28%	21%	21%	32%	6%	8%	7%	12%	11%	8%
HK	4%	25%	18%	13%	23%	29%	35%	21%	29%	20%	10%	8%
Japan	24%	42%	44%	31%	27%	21%	20%	14%	9%	4%	4%	11%

## 7.6 Middle leaders

Comparatively, the data shows changes in middle leadership engagement for PCs, SACs and CSLs. In Japan, the proportion of collective advice giving by PCs across levels decreases as SL advice giving increases. This differs from China and Hong Kong where PC advice giving increases from Level 1 through Level 3, indicating the larger collective proportion of PC leadership advising in those levels. It is interesting to note, that in Hong Kong, on average, PCs account for double the increase from Level 1 to Level 3. This may be explained by differences in organisation structures as in Hong Kong PCs also are VPs. Such dual responsibility may lead to a wider array of Level 3 responsibilities being enacted in that organisational context when compared to Japan and China where programme coordinators are not VPs.

SACs and CSLs in Hong Kong appear to take up larger proportions of advice giving across the three levels when compared to Japan and China, thereby indicating a wider distribution of leadership across different sorts of MLs. It is likely that this is reflective of organisational design features, and programmatic emphases, such as the Hong Kong school's emphasis on developing a well-being programme led by Deans at each grade level and structures in China and Hong Kong that include academic GLL for PYP and MYP programmes. This may also reflect the relative maturity in experience of the school and its teachers with IB programmes.

Using Hong Kong as an example, it may be noted that the collective proportion of leadership activity does not reflect the amount of any individual leader's activity. PCs' and SACs' total proportion of Level 3 activity are each 29%. However, whilst there are only two PCs nominated as advice givers, there are 11 SACs. Thus, an inference could be made that SAC's engagement in Level 3 is very widely distributed, whereas PC advice giving is centralised around two leaders. It reveals that while SACs are engaged at Level 3, no individual SAC is very active in Level 3 on an individual level while collectively it is almost the same as PCs.

When considering SACs Level 3 advising across all schools, we find that on average individual SACs do not account for more than 2.62% of total indegree centrality. However, we observe that average individual indegree in Japan and Hong Kong is approximately 3 times and 5 times (respectively) greater than China. The Hong Kong school's context reflects a system level engagement across the consortium that the school is a member of, which provides the school with an external network for intensive work. In China, leaders in the primary section seemed most engaged in leadership activity around programme re-authorisation, and this galvanised support around primary PCs rather than SACs.

## 7.7 Time-use survey

An online *Instructional Leadership Daily Practice Log*, or *Time-use Survey (TUS)*, was sent out to the schools before or after the interview data collections. Participants completed a daily log that accounts for their instruction and leadership activities. The TUS provides data on the work patterns of participants' work within school and across schools. Participants were asked to report on what they considered to be a "typical week".

A total of 37 MLs completed the TUS. Table 23 shows the sample by school and middle leadership role. Some groups of leaders have response rates that allowed us to conduct

within-group comparisons, such as PC groups in China, Hong Kong and Japan. All PCs completed the TUS, as did SAC groups in China, Hong Kong and Korea and CSL groups in China and Hong Kong. In term of comparison across all schools, PC groups are the only available groups. However, there was only one PC participating in the TUS in Korea, under the circumstances that the PC in Korea holds a dual role as MYPC/DPC. This narrows the scope down to the cross-school comparisons of MYPCs and DPCs. While comparing the time-use for leadership activities, the PC in Korea who holds a dual role will appear twice in the comparison table in MYP and DP to examine if there are differences in time-use pattern. Additionally, since the absence of participation in TUS by the SACs and CSLs in Japan, cross-school comparison for four schools are infeasible for SAC and CSL group.

Table 23 Time-use survey participants

School	PC	SAC	CSL	Total
China	4	8	6	18
Hong Kong	3	3	4	10
Japan	3			3
Korea	1	4	1	6
Total	11	15	11	37

### 7.7.1 Programme coordinators' time-use

Table 24 shows the time-use proportion of PC leadership activities in each of the three levels as percentages of their total duties that include managerial tasks and classroom teaching. The average time-use proportions point out that PCs in all four schools spend the most time on leading learning (Level 1), less time on leading capacity development (Level 2) and the least time on leading in response to external forces (Level 3). This distribution is in line with expectations and applies to most PCs, except the MYPC/DPC in Korea, and the DPC and PYPC 74 in China. This may be explained by virtue that the PC in Korea holds two PC positions (MYP and DP) and broader purview as Director of Learning. The result is that CSLs spend more time on leading learning, thereby freeing the MYPC/DPC to focus on Level 2 and Level 3 activities. In China, one PYPC reports similar time spent on Level 1 and Level 2 and none on Level 3, whereas the other PYPC, who is Chinese, does spend 20% of leadership time on Level 3 activities. This may reflect the latter's cultural and linguistic resources that allow for stronger connections with the external community and government. The higher percentage of involvement in Level 2 for PYPC 74 cross-refers with the finding in the advice network in Level 2, suggesting that the PYPC works intensively on the building teachers' and MLs' capacity regarding the PYP re-authorisation. She also stated in her interview that engagement with external organisations were her personal projects which she engaged in outside of her school work.

The ranges of time-use are widely spread in Level 1 (5.43% to 36.07%) and L2 (7.61% to 34.92%). Time-use in Level 3 are relatively narrower (ranged 0% to 18.90%). Interestingly, the DPCs have reported the least time spent on leadership in all duties. This may be explained by DPCs engagement in other activities such as administrative work related to the DP or other roles (e.g., Hong Kong and Korea), or teaching responsibilities (e.g. Japan). Below we compare the findings by type of programme coordinator to shed light on this distribution.

Table 24 PCs' proportion for total time-use in leadership activities

School	PCs	Leading Learning	Leading Development	Leading External
Japan				
	DPC	7.10%	2.80%	1.80%
	MYPC	34.20%	20.60%	2.60%
	PYPC	29.10%	27.50%	11.50%
	Average	23.47%	16.97%	5.30%
Hong Kong				
	PSVP/PYPC	22.86%	20.57%	9.14%
	SSVP/DPC 4	16.35%	14.57%	10.70%
	SSVP/MYPC 3	26.39%	17.60%	10.56%
	Average	21.87%	17.58%	10.13%
Korea				
	MYPC/DPC	9.06%	27.17%	18.90%
	Average	9.06%	27.17%	18.90%
China				
	DPC 92	5.43%	7.61%	5.43%
	MYPC 18	29.55%	13.64%	11.36%
	PYPC 74	32.28%	34.92%	0.00%
	PYPC 81	36.07%	22.95%	14.75%

Average                      25.83%                      19.78%                      7.89%

Table 25 shows the breakdown of time-use for PYPCs in three schools as proportions of leadership activities only. The trends in the three levels replicate the above, although most spend almost equal amounts of time on Level 1 and Level 2. This suggests that PYPC's play important roles in developing the capacities of teachers and other leaders.

Table 25 Proportion of time-use in different leadership activities for PYPCs

School	PYPC's	Leading Learning	Leading Development	Leading External
China	PYPC 74	48.03%	51.97%	0.00%
China	PYPC 81	48.89%	31.11%	20.00%
Hong Kong	PSVP/PYPC	43.48%	39.13%	17.39%
Japan	PYPC	42.73%	40.38%	16.89%
Average		45.78%	40.65%	13.57%

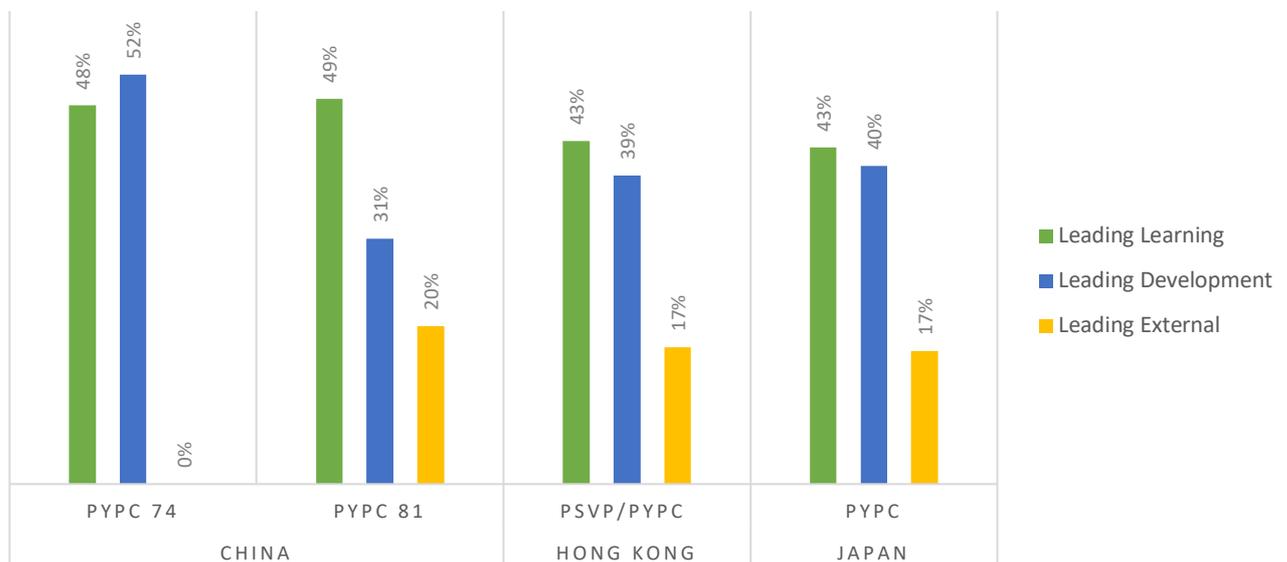


Figure 27 PYPCs' proportional Time-use in leadership activities in 3 schools

MYPCs across the four schools are also seen to engage in all three levels of leadership, but with decreasing involvement in Level 2 and Level 3 when compared to Level 1. The exception is in Korea, which may be explained by the multiple leadership roles held by the DP/MYPC and MYP authorisation activities that require more engagement in Level 2 and Level 3.

Table 26 Proportion of time-use in different leadership activities for MYPCs

School	MYPCs	Leading Learning	Leading Development	Leading External
China	MYPC 18	54.17%	25.00%	20.83%
Hong Kong	SSVP/MYPC 3	48.39%	32.26%	19.35%
Japan	MYPC	59.58%	35.89%	4.53%
Korea	MYPC/DPC	16.43%	49.29%	34.29%
Average		44.64%	35.61%	19.75%

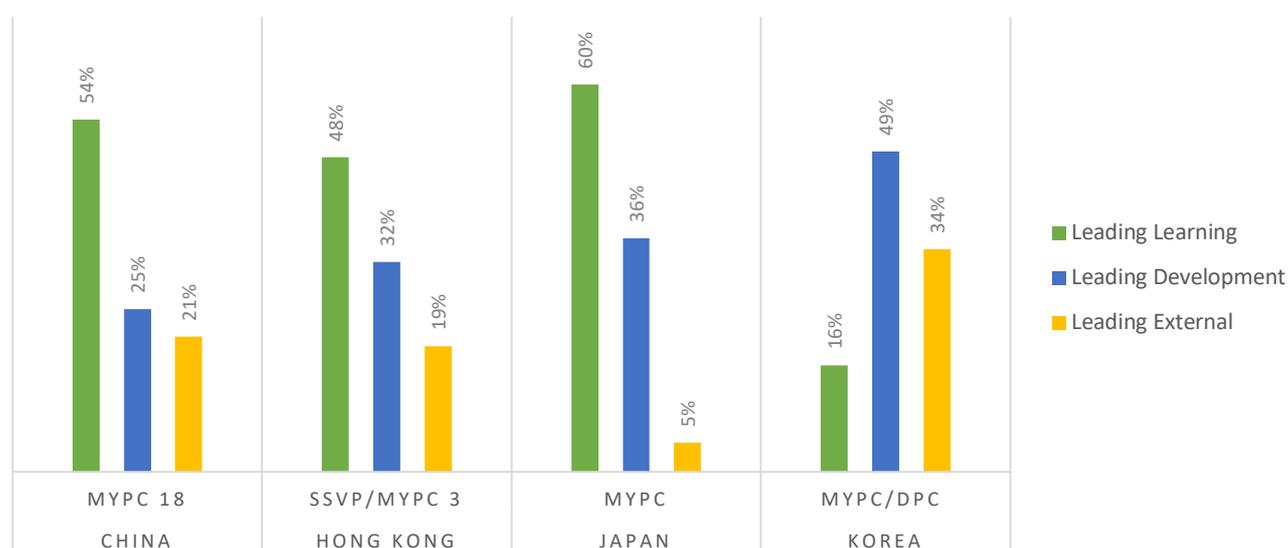


Figure 28 MYPCs' proportional Time-use in leadership activities in 4 schools

DPCs' proportional leadership time distributions differ from other PCs. For Korea, the DPCs engagement in leadership reflects activities such as MYPC (explained above). In the case of China, the DPC reports a larger proportion of time on Level 2 and Level 3 than in Hong Kong and Japan. This may be explained by the DPCs work in preparing the school for DP authorisation for the first time, which required building capacity across the school, developing school policies to align with IB standards and practices, and liaising with the IB. Hence, IB authorisation processes seem to influence PCs' time spent on leadership activities.

Table 27 Proportion of time-use in different leadership activities for DCs

School	DPCs	Leading Learning	Leading Development	Leading External
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China	DPC 92	29.41%	41.18%	29.41%
Hong Kong	SSVP/DPC 4	39.29%	35.00%	25.71%
Japan	DPC	60.68%	23.93%	15.38%
Korea	MYPC/DPC	16.43%	49.29%	34.29%
Average		36.45%	37.35%	26.20%

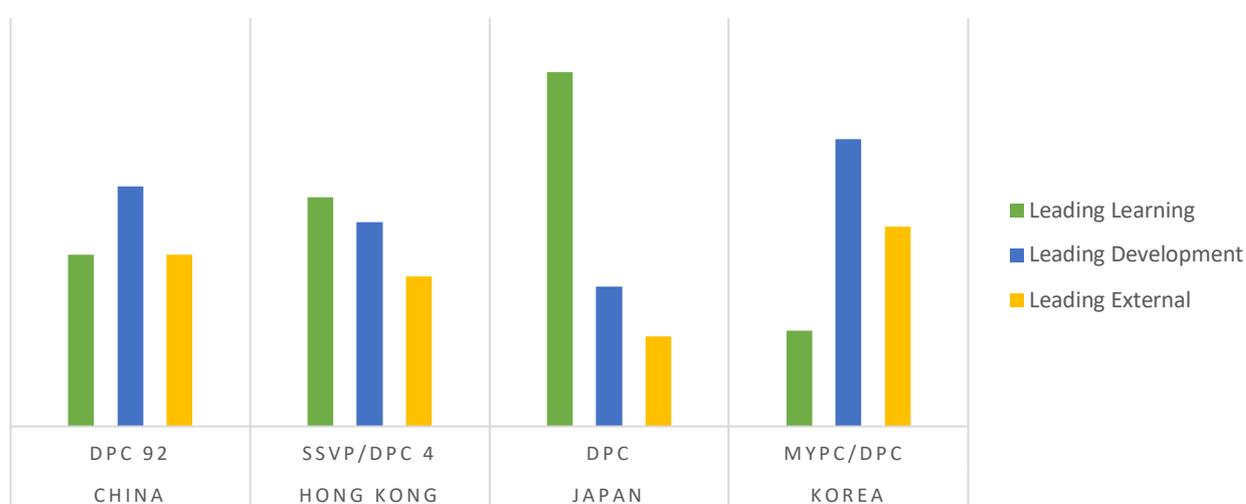


Figure 29 DPCs' proportional Time-use in leadership activities in 4 schools

### 7.7.2 Subject area coordinators' time-use

The time-use results for SACs show that most time is spent on teaching—which is expected because most SACs have significant teaching responsibilities in terms of assigned hours to teach during a week. With the time that remains, leadership activities for most SACs are focused around Level 1 activities, relatively little in Level 2 and almost no engagement in Level 3. There are a few exceptions that shed light on conditions impacting on time spent on leadership activity. SAC 33 is a primary level language lead in a school where language development is a stated school priority and the examination of language policies are part of the PYP re-authorisation process. These factors may account for significant engagement in Level 1 and Level 2. The social network analysis partially supports this perspective: a PC nominated SAC 33 as an advisor regarding capacity development. In Hong Kong, SAC6 reports time spent in Level 3 that is beyond the average for SACs in any school. As explained in the case report, this is most likely related to work in EE and leading PD activities beyond the school.

Table 28 SACs' proportion for total time-use in leadership activities

School	SACs	Leading Learning	Leading Development	Leading External
China				
	SAC 28	3.36%	0.28%	0.00%
	SAC 33	26.25%	14.95%	0.00%
	SAC 35	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	SAC 52	4.67%	0.00%	0.00%
	SAC 75	9.11%	7.13%	1.30%
	SAC 78	30.65%	8.06%	0.00%
	SAC 80	10.00%	4.12%	2.35%
	SAC Z	18.54%	5.62%	0.00%
	Average	12.82%	5.02%	0.46%
Hong Kong				
	SAC 11	6.23%	5.06%	0.39%
	SAC 6	6.28%	4.04%	7.27%
	SAC 7	7.12%	4.98%	1.76%
	Average	6.55%	4.70%	3.14%
Korea				
	SAC X	6.45%	4.30%	0.00%
	SAC Y	15.48%	2.44%	0.00%
	SAC Z	25.70%	11.97%	0.35%
	SAC/CSL	27.80%	33.59%	2.32%
	Average	18.86%	13.08%	0.67%

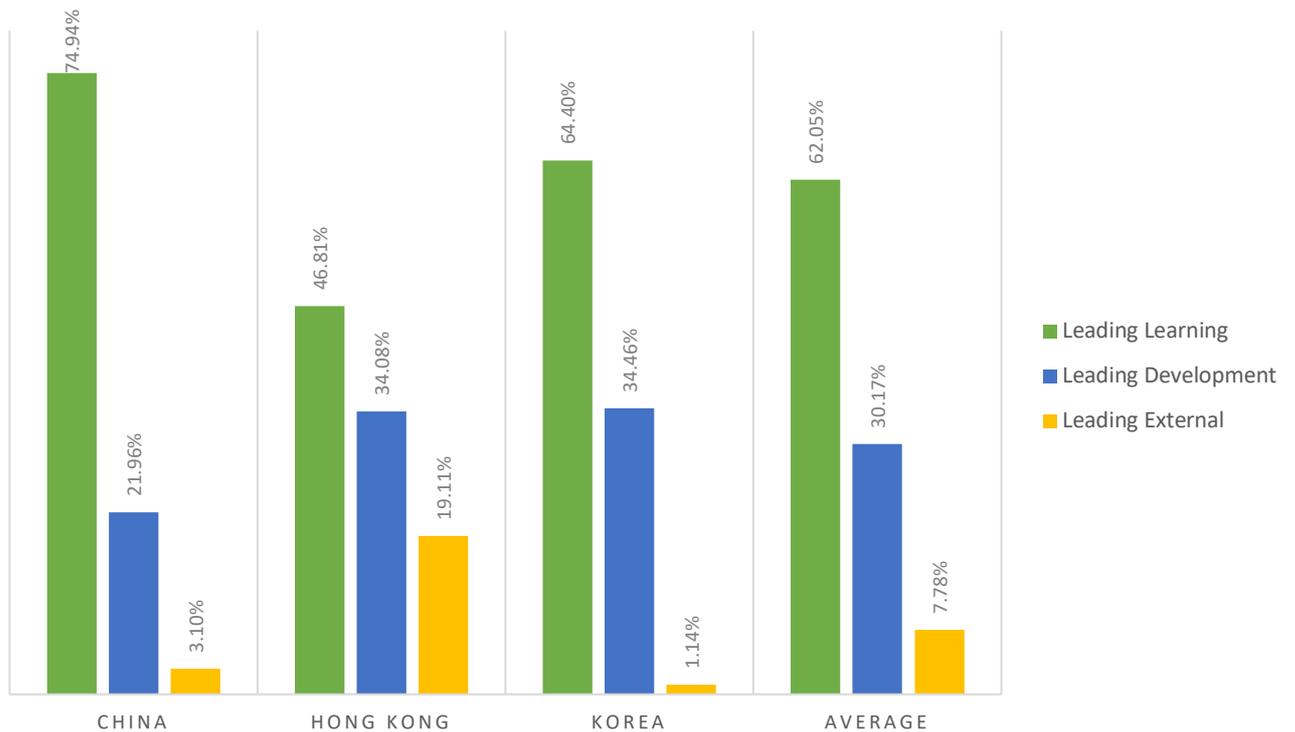


Figure 30 SACs' proportional Time-use in leadership activities in 3 schools

### 7.7.3 Cross-school leaders' time-use

Typically, CSLs included GLLs who have responsibilities for grade level curriculum and the pastoral care of students at that year level. In most of the instances below no particular rationale stands out to explain levels of engagement. In the case of CSL 11 in China, who reports a great deal of time-use in leading at Level 1, the advice network also shows that three people from her year level consult her about the Level 1 activity. In this sense, she is identified as a *de facto* leader of learning in the school. The Hong Kong case report (Section 4.11.4) explains the variation in CSL time-use, which reflects differences in formal leadership responsibilities and irregular activities engaged in during the sampling period. In Hong Kong, CSL 9 reports a relatively high proportion of Level 3 time-use. This reflects a formal position as CAS and Community Engagement Coordinator, positions that require leadership engagement beyond the school. As explained in the case report, the time-use patterns for CSL's with pastoral care and student life responsibilities were consistent with advice seeking patterns.

Table 29 CSLs' proportion for total time-use in leadership activities

School	CSL	Leading Learning	Leading Development	Leading External
China				
	CSL 11	66.67%	0.00%	0.00%
	CSL 34	16.12%	10.75%	0.90%
	CSL 7	5.00%	4.69%	0.00%
	CSL 84	4.22%	6.09%	0.70%
	CSL 9	8.74%	17.48%	0.00%
	CSL 90	8.87%	6.73%	0.31%
	Average	18.27%	7.62%	0.32%
Hong Kong				
	CSL 8	5.37%	10.45%	0.00%
	CSL 9	10.00%	10.63%	11.25%
	CSL Y	13.85%	9.91%	18.24%
	CSL Z	9.10%	5.14%	2.44%
	Average	9.58%	9.03%	7.98%
Korea				
	CSL	7.73%	4.97%	0.00%
	Average	7.73%	4.97%	0.00%



Figure 31 CSLs' proportional Time-use in leadership activities in 3 schools

## 7.8 Chapter summary

In sum, a key finding of the study across the four schools was that the core of the work of all MLs, irrespective of whether they are PCs, SACs or GLL, is the teaching and learning processes in the school. This, of course, is not an unexpected finding as there is little argument that the primary function of schools is to impart education to its students. By and large, PCs were engaged in organisational and systemic work, whereas the focus of the SACs was more to do with their subjects. A *prima facie* assumption appears to be that PCs are engaged with extending their leadership beyond the school. However, a closer analysis of the data reveals that whilst the SACs may not be as engaged in leadership activities as the PCs on an individual level, collectively their engagement with leadership activities that transcends the physical boundaries of the school is not less than the PCs.

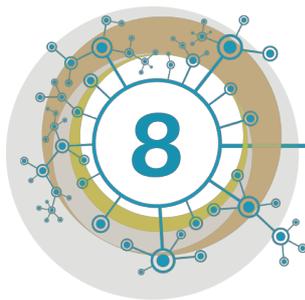
The IB and its attendant standards and practices, tools and routines, and networks and workshops provide opportunities for the MLs to enact their leadership. Challenges faced whilst implementing programmes provide opportunities for MLs to create and develop instructional capacities. Strong internal structures (such as the teacher appraisal system in Japan, or the Teacher Enquiry form of evaluation in Hong Kong) and the scaffolding provided by the IB affords stability and constancy for middle leadership to flourish and for a distribution of leadership activities. This is important in contexts where there is high staff turnover.

MLs focus is on activities such as PD, mentoring and coaching in the four schools in order to build capacity. There was an underlying belief that MLs worked in collegial and collaborative teams.

Membership of a consortium, such as in the case of the Hong Kong school, and the IB provide a fertile ground for networking and influencing colleagues within their own schools and schools within the system. This suggests that they are bringing about influence and improvement, especially in relation to Level 3. However, a more modest but important change that MLs have brought about is that of a mindset change amongst the parents – especially since there are often synaptic lapses between the expectations of the parents and the IB ethos.

An interesting finding from the four schools is that there is a causal relationship between the school culture and its place at the continuum that depicts its IB status. In a school where the IB system is nascent, as in the case of the China school, the school culture is more directive. Schools tended to have more flexible and egalitarian structures and they get more established in the IB system, as in the case of the Hong Kong school.

Finally, it is important to note that in most schools, informal forms of leadership, that is the leadership of teachers who are not in positional leadership roles, are recognized and lauded by the MLs. Often such informal leaders provide useful guidance and suggestions for the enactment for more formal middle leadership roles.



## Conclusion

Conclusion



## 8 Conclusion

### 8.1 Chapter introduction

This report analyzed qualitative interview data from four case study sites, which was supplemented by advice network and time-use data. In addition, a comparative case report considered how the case study schools compared in relation to the study's theoretical framework: The situation, conceptualization of middle leadership, leadership practices, tools and routines. Specifically, it related impacts of the IB situational context to middle leadership. This concluding chapter references the data to directly answer the research questions and frames the responses by articulating propositions on middle leadership. This chapter also discusses the limitations of this research and avenues for further study.

### 8.2 Responses to the research questions

#### What leadership activities do MLs engage in?

Proposition 1: Middle leadership accounts for the largest proportion of leadership activity in schools, which middle leaders enact through a wide range of strategies—although their influence may be of less impact than that of senior leadership. Senior leaders can influence the direction of middle leaders' work and their capacity development through school-based aims, structures and initiatives.

Middle leaders were found to engage in a range of leadership activities around instructional, organizational and external leadership. In most instances, their individual engagement, as indicated by interview data and supported by time-use and advice seeking patterns, was greatest in instructional leadership (Level 1), less involved in organizational/capacity building leadership (Level 2), and least in system/external leadership (Level 3). This trend is consistent with findings hypothesized in the literature reviewed in Chapter 1. The previous chapter related in detail engagement in the different leadership levels. However, several important patterns emerged, which we explain here.

First, although individual SACs, CSLs, and GLLs, spend relatively small proportions of work engaged in leadership activities, as a collective, they appear to dominate the overall leadership practice within schools. In other words, while senior leaders and programme coordinators may individually have the greatest influence, the collective leadership activity of middle leaders may be greater in terms of their proportion of advice giving. Time-use and partial advice networks seem to affirm this finding. However, more comprehensive school advice network studies are needed to probe the impact of middle leaders' advice giving. That is to say, a large overall proportion of advice giving is not necessarily equivalent to overall influence. Nonetheless, schools should be aware of the significant proportion of leadership activity that is engaged in by middle leaders. The findings point to the importance of middle leaders' understanding and upholding schools' broad aims and in being developed as instructional, organizational and even system or external leaders.

Second, PCs spend significant proportions of their work in Level 2 and Level 3. This results directly from the nature of their positions as internal experts who interpret IB standards and practices, and as liaisons among school leaders, teachers, and the IB. The nature and focus

of this work seem to be contingent on each school's maturity in delivering IB programmes and on the school authorization or accreditation cycle.

Third, where other middle leaders have specific IB responsibilities or have developed expertise in IB-specific knowledge and skills, such as CAS coordinators or teacher-leaders in ATLS, they tend also to engage in work beyond the school and in capacity building. This influence can extend beyond the school through leadership in IB-sponsored activities that link schools, such as leading IB workshops or organizing and moderating discussions in regional networks. Schools can stimulate emergent middle and teacher leadership through sustained support in formative appraisal processes and inquiry projects. Middle leaders' influence may be enhanced further when IB schools are more formally networked as part of a consortium.

Fourth, a school's particular mission can drive middle leaders' engagement in leadership activity through the creation of mission-led positions and structures. Notable examples were evidenced in Korea School's mission for experiential learning and outdoor education, Hong Kong School's development and implementation of a pastoral care curriculum, and China School's value placed on developing students' language capacity. Where such priorities are actually enacted, they can stimulate leadership activity.

Fifth, middle leaders draw on a range of strategies to build capacity in others. These may provide opportunities for school-based professional learning through structured school appraisal or inquiry systems, providing feedback through classroom observations and encouraging structured professional reflection. Senior leaders can support middle leaders' development by establishing such structures and mentoring middle leaders in their implementation. Middle leadership capacity is further enhanced by observing peers in other schools, participating in professional networks that include those with similar responsibilities, or leading PD beyond their school. These opportunities for development seem to work best when supported by a consortium of schools or sister schools. IB has been working to enhance regional networks for this purpose. However, many IB schools in East Asia are not part of formal consortiums. This means that IB regional networks can provide a significant opportunity for peer-to-peer support that is needed to build capacity. For the most part, PCs seemed to take advantage of this opportunity. Extending these to other middle leaders may further support the PD of middle leaders who do not work in a consortium of schools.

Finally, we found evidence that formal middle leaders who are members of international schools' host societal culture may serve as conduits among the school, family and community groups. Through this process, middle leaders can extend their influence through a deep understanding of the external context.

### **How do middle leaders enact their leadership through interactions with other formal and informal school leaders?**

Proposition 2: Designed organizational structures, such as the relative positioning of middle leaders in formal school hierarchies and on teams, or formal responsibilities for mentoring or appraisal, can provide scaffolds for leading and opportunity to developing middle leadership capacity.

Formally designed leadership structures are seen to impact on the engagement of middle leaders with other school leaders. Across the schools we found variation in how leadership interactions are designed.

Often, middle leaders held more than one area of formal responsibility. In three schools, PCs had responsibility for two programmes (MYP & DP), or senior school leadership roles (Vice-Principals or Directors of Learning). When programme coordination and senior leadership roles were merged, PCs were seen to emerge as a focal point for a range of leadership activity. This condition entails trade-offs. Allocating to PCs Vice-Principalship or director-level responsibilities seemed to ensure their influence with Principals and a wide range of teachers and stakeholders. It also, at times, broadly diffused the focus of their work. For example, some PCs related that often their attention involved attending to disciplinary and routine administrative matters beyond the scope of their programme work or leadership practice.

Some PCs were positioned as middle leaders. This permitted a more discrete focus on the work of programme coordination, inclusive of building the needed capacity in teachers, networking with other IB practitioners, schools, the community and the IB itself. The extent of their influence on decision-making processes seemed to be a function of how clearly lines of responsibility and authority for were defined and understood as well as relational conditions. We observed that some schools' physical and organizational structures facilitated deep interaction among PCs and other leaders. This was seen to occur when PCs shared office space or worked in close physical proximity to Principals (Japan and Hong Kong). This frequently facilitated co-leadership simply because PCs and Principals engaged in frequent discussion with each other or would together engage teachers and other leaders in office conversations. Challenges would be addressed collectively because the physical space supported such engagement. Co-leadership also occurred when schools designed activities that required collaborative or collective work, such as teacher capacity building or curriculum design work. Formal structures, such as grade level curriculum teams led by GLLs or subject area teams led by SACs, served to facilitate opportunity for dialogue around the formal and informal curricula, pastoral care and experiential learning opportunities.

PCs also tended to work closely with individual SACs and teachers or with teaching teams. This would occur during formally organized meetings or more informally when SACs invited PCs to contribute to teaching team discussions.

Organizational structures also clearly facilitated the interactions among leaders and teachers. Examples of these included formally scheduled team meetings and professional learning sessions, the creation of formal positions to meet emergent student and curriculum needs (such as deans for pastoral care, or Personal Project coordinators). Formal appraisal systems in two of the schools served to structure capacity building activities. In Japan School, the appraisal system led to the cascading of professional learning and mentorship from Principals to programme coordinators to subject area coordinators to teachers. In Hong Kong school, it permitted middle leaders and teachers to develop and become known for micro-specialisms. In particular, teaching teams would draw on these specialists to enhance instructional planning and delivery.

Middle leaders contributed to the shaping of school cultures of team leadership and instructional team engagement. The schools had formal structures and lines of responsibilities, job descriptions, and leadership positions. However, participants in this study from across the schools tended to recognize that leadership is often “blurred” as team and collective decision making operate across schools. For example, mentoring of teachers in IB curricula were seen the collective responsibility of Principals, PCs, SACs and GLLs. This was particularly evidenced in the HK and Japan schools.

Middle Leaders interact with other middle leaders. For instance, GLLs and learning advisors worked to develop and skill others in pastoral care, whereas PCs work with departments to define lines of inquiry and fit with conceptual foci and Deans work with teachers on their inquiries.

Finally, the previous chapter related examples of how formal and informal leaders worked together in collaborative, collective and coordinated leadership distributions. Work in these patterns of distribution typically involved leading small teams to achieve collective goals, rather than working individually. Coordinated distributions seemed to be most at play during broad-based planning endeavours, such as policy or curriculum planning. Conversely, collaborative and collective distributions were more at play in the enactment and implementation stages.

Our network surveys tended to show that formal organizational design influenced advice-giving patterns. This included formal leadership relationships (e.g. PC to SAC) but also expert groups such as humanities teams and specialists for digital literacy. In many cases, middle leaders have dual roles such as PC and VP or SAC and GLL or PC of two programmes. A significant finding, despite the limited response rate, is that middle leaders account for most advice seeking in schools. Although senior leaders have the largest individual proportion of advice seeking, middle leaders have more as a collective unit. This presents an argument for the significant influence of middle leaders in providing advice – particularly in instructional leadership. In considering capacity building and external leadership, PCs influence tends to increase, which may be a function of their expertise in IB matters as they are consulted about IB standards and practices and networking across schools. Collectively, middle leaders were found to spend large proportions of their leadership time in Level 2 and Level 3 activities. Where participants reported higher time-use in Level 3 leadership than expected, this related to work beyond the school for the IB and in interpreting IB policy to school stakeholders, as shown in the qualitative and social network analyses.

### **How does the complex context of IB continuum schools impact on middle leadership activities?**

Proposition 3: Participation in IB programmes serves to enhance leadership opportunity for middle leaders, particularly for those in independent international schools, by specifying areas of expertise, linking middle leaders to networks (formal and informal) with leaders in other schools, and providing opportunity for leadership at policy, system and external domains.

All schools selected in this study were continuum (PYP, MYP, DP) schools. To varying degrees schools had put into place leadership structures that facilitated cross-programme discussions. In some instances, this was limited to issues of student transitioning across programmes, and interactions of PCs with other middle leaders were focused on this process. In other instances, SACs, rather than PCs had responsibility for vertical alignment of curriculum and worked with teachers to facilitate alignment. However, by and large, there was limited evidence that the continuum facet of the school influenced much of middle leaders' work. Primary and secondary school structures and programme requirements seemed largely to create distinctions rather than continuities in the work of middle leaders. When asked if having all programmes on campus made a difference to their work, PCs and middle leaders predominantly indicated that this was an area for future growth.

Although being a part of a PYP-MYP-DP continuum school had limited influence on middle leadership, being an IB school had impact on the nature of leadership tasks, opportunities to lead across the three levels, and the tools and routines. These are discussed in the responses to the other research questions and, therefore, are not rehearsed again here. However, participation in the IB served to draw discussion towards the IB's standards and practices. This most certainly influenced the nature of PCs work during preparation for authorization, but also engaged PCs and other middle leaders in activities to follow up on recommendations from IB visiting teams. Similarly, IB requirements for school-based policies (such as a language policy) can provide a platform for engaging middle leaders (PCs, SACs, and GLLs) in policy formulation activity. PCs in particular served a role as policy advisors to senior leaders, providing feedback on the extent to which school-based initiatives fitted with IB standards and practices. As schools grow and mature in delivery of IB programmes, additional IB-leadership roles tend to develop. This is accomplished by identifying teachers without formal position but who displayed interest or expertise in specific programme areas, such as ATLs, Extended Essays, or Personal Projects. In some schools, these responsibilities have become formal middle leadership positions. Whether working as middle or teacher leaders, their roles entailed building capacity by working with individuals or teams who request their support.

Participants related that the IB provided the opportunity to connect with colleagues in other schools. This tended to happen through formal mechanisms such as regional networks and workshops. Most PCs and many middle leaders related that the networks provided the opportunity to ask questions and clarify practices with colleagues at other schools. Participation as workshop leaders provided opportunities to enhance their influence beyond their own schools. The opportunity for PCs and other middle leaders to consult for the IB and with other schools provides a way to learn from other IB schools and improve individual capacity and their work in school. SACs often serve as the link between schools.

We found examples of PCs, SACs and teachers with cross-school coordinating roles (such as CAS coordinators) developing their own professional networks with counterparts at other schools. Although such networks are often not through official IB channels, the IB curricula provide a focal point for professional discussion. In at least one instance, an organically developed professional group made formal recommendations to the IB. This suggests the potential benefit to the IB of sponsoring the development of such networks.

Furthermore, the findings identified many examples in HK of teachers without formal leadership positions engaging in leadership or professional activities that extend beyond the school. In this sense, the IB supports the building of capacity for future formal middle leaders.

### **How do middle leaders further distribute their leadership?**

Proposition 4: Programme coordinators, subject area coordinators and grade level leaders may draw on a range of strategies to do their work. Where effective, this tends to emphasise developing team and individual capacity.

We were unable to probe this question at the department levels to a degree that would allow us to comprehensively define distinct practices in each school's subject areas. However, looking across cases, the data did show various practices engaged in by middle leaders.

Some SACs related that they more conventionally delegated work by identifying colleagues with particular expertise or interest, or by drawing on a principle of sharing work equitably. This was particularly true of departmental administrative responsibilities. Approaches that related more directly to distributing leadership mostly involved co-leadership of specific tasks, team work, and consensus building.

Frequently, middle leaders engaged teacher leaders—teachers without formal leadership titles but who are recognized for their particular expertise or professional insight—within their departments to support the completion of a team task. Teacher leaders provided professional knowledge and resources for completing instructional planning tasks, such as developing statements of enquiry in common planners, or capacity building, such as developing team members' capabilities in working with ATs. Engaging teacher leaders' specialized capacity to meet a team goal was typically used in a collaborative or coordinated distribution at the invitation of the formal middle leader. In some instances, middle leaders developed ad hoc subteams led by teacher leaders who would initiate a task or investigate a practice and then report back to the larger team for decision making purposes. In other instances, middle leaders, such as SACs would share responsibility for leading an activity (such as curriculum planning) by identifying teacher leaders to lead half of the team, whilst the middle leader led the other half in completing different aspects of the task. This finding illustrates the importance for schools not only to develop effective middle leadership, but also to identify and support teacher leaders in developing their specialisms and leadership capacity. Middle leaders play an important role in the processes of identifying and effectively utilizing teacher leaders within schools.

### **What strategies, tools and routines do middle leaders design or adopt to enact their leadership?**

Proposition 5: Middle leaders pragmatically but strategically employ a range of borrowed, adapted, and school- or self-designed tools to meet their responsibilities for implementing programmes and developing individual and team capacity. They use

formal and informal processes that include scheduled meetings and spontaneous opportunities to provide feedback and mentoring. Much of this can be supported through formal school structures.

The findings related to this question have been explicitly discussed in the previous chapter under the subheading *Leadership tools and routines*. In sum, the Middle Leaders and Programme Coordinators utilized a variety of tools and routines to enact their leadership. Routines primarily constituted a series of fixed meetings, observations, and feedback sessions designed for different purposes. Curriculum meetings were typically led by PCs or SACs and examined curriculum alignment, instructional planning, and assessment practices across programmes or subject areas. These considered vertical and horizontal articulation. Pastoral care meetings typically involved senior leaders, sometimes PCs, and grade level leaders or Deans to develop and implement grade level appropriate pastoral care programmes. As a result, most middle leaders are members of multiple teams where they hold different roles. For instance, one SAC may be the member of a leadership team involving all SACs and a PC, may lead her own subject area team, and may contribute to a grade level pastoral care team as a member.

Routine meetings support this integrated and layered information network. Senior leaders, PCs and MLs may also be involved in conducting observations, providing feedback and mentoring the more junior leaders or teachers with whom they work. This may involve formally structured and regularly scheduled sessions that formally connect to the development of portfolios, PD and appraisal structures. Alternatively, this may involve less formal, but required, sessions at the request of the mentee or teacher.

Routines at the system level may also drive the work of PCs and middle leaders. Typical across the schools were accreditation or IB recognition processes. As a part of these periodic processes, routines served as a focal point for PC-led discussions about curriculum improvement and action planning. PCs served the role of liaising among senior leaders, SACs and GLLs around IB-standards and practices.

The tools that were used may be classified as IB-designed, borrowed and adapted, school-designed, or self-designed tools. First, the IB's common planner focused PCs on working with SACs in making curriculum decisions, adapting the planner for school-based purposes, and suggesting enhancements to facilitate effective common planning across schools. In the case of a school that was a member of a larger consortium, the combination of the common planner and the expertise of the middle leaders enabled scaling up across other schools. Standards and practices documents and recognition documentation also served as guides to drive and focus conversations led by middle leaders—particularly programme coordinators

Second, borrowed and adapted tools were those developed by the IB or other providers and adjusted by leaders to enable and structure the completion of tasks. These included school-based adaptations of ATL standards and common planners as resources to guide and document instructional planning. Oftentimes, these were combined with other resources such as computer assisted curriculum mapping programmes or Google documents as mechanisms to store, share, analyze and reflect on instruction and assessment plans. Moreover, the process of documentation facilitated middle-leader led conversations around curriculum. For instance, school-designed curriculum maps that show the articulation of

ATLs from PYP through to DP and accounts for their differences at each level, allowed for focused discussion around programme coherence and to better understand and implement ATLs. PCs work with senior leaders to facilitate the design of such processes and with other middle leaders to implement them.

Third, schools designed feedback systems that document expectations of teachers and create a series of interrelated routines by which feedback is provided from middle leaders to teachers. In two schools, such feedback targeted specific instructional practices. In one school the feedback process was linked to a systematic appraisal system whereby teachers received formative feedback on targeted areas of work prior to summative appraisal. At times, middle leaders designed or used tools, such as electronic templates for informal feedback, to support focused aspects of their work.

### **What situational factors impact on the work of middle leaders?**

Proposition 6: Formal school organizational structures, mission, organizational cultures, stages of development and maturity of experience with the IB can influence the work of middle leaders across the three levels of leadership and can be utilized to hone leadership capacities.

We identified several situational factors that seemed to impact on how middle leaders do their work. Some roughly align with the three levels of leadership and others cut across or shape the extent of middle leaders' influence in the three leadership levels. Section 7.2 analyzes this across the case schools.

School missions and programme emphases serve to prioritize certain middle leadership positions and their roles and responsibilities by developing organizational structures, procedures and formal positions to meet such aims. In this study, these priorities related to language education, experiential learning and pastoral care, which had a significant impact on instructional and organizational leadership. Schools tended to embed systems and structures that brought further focus to the building of leadership capacity in middle leaders and teacher leaders. A clear example was a teacher appraisal system that required layering of mentoring and coaching from Principals to programme coordinators to subject area coordinators, and the engagement of leaders with individual teachers and teams at different structural levels to develop the capacity to make the system achieve its goals.

The design of organizational responsibilities also impacted on the scope of middle leaders' work. This was most strongly evident with Programme Coordinators. For example, in some schools they were positioned as VPs, while in others they reported to VPs as middle leaders. There was some evidence that this resulted in variation in the scope of work and with that variation in PC's relative engagement in the three levels of leadership.

The schools' stage of development and maturity with IB programmes seemed to impact on how broadly leadership is distributed among middle and teacher leaders. Younger schools with less exposure to the IB tended to be more firmly directed by a few senior leaders, at least initially. By contrast, more established schools, with greater experience in IB programmes, broadened the scope of responsibility to middle leaders and created additional formal positions for them. Engagement in IB authorization processes also served to drive middle leaders' external leadership as they (primarily programme coordinators, but

also SACs) served to interpret and contextualize IB standards and practices through interactions with other leaders and teachers.

### **8.3 Summary and recommendations for practice and further research**

This report relates the finding on research into the leadership practices of programme coordinators and other middle leaders in four IB continuum schools in China, South Korea and Japan. To accomplish this, four case reports have been presented. Within each report, we have mapped the formally designed leadership distributions, as indicated in organizational charts, and have reported on a range of strategies, tools and routines that shape the enactment of leadership at the instructional, organizational and system/external levels. For three schools we further illuminated how leadership is enacted at each level through the analysis of advice network and time-use surveys. The former serves to illustrate that while leadership interactions may follow the designed structure, there are variations in how middle leaders engage with other leaders and teachers from level-to-level. The penultimate chapter in this report serves the purpose of compiling and analyzing the major findings across the schools. The key findings have been reiterated above by responding to the research questions and presenting six propositions about middle leadership in IB schools and factors that impacts on it.

The findings of this research are limited to the data that could be collected from schools during periods of time and with access to as participants stipulated by the schools. This varied from case-to-case. While schools provided strong support for the research, constraints around survey collection meant that it was not possible to build comprehensive school advice networks. Ideally, further research that can build such networks would be able to allow for the nomination of unlimited numbers of advisors, which would enhance the identification of informal leaders. Conducting such surveys at several points in time would help to trace the changing impact of middle leadership around specific initiatives. This, however, requires deep insider support.

The findings of this research indicate that while senior leaders may have the greatest leadership influence in schools, middle leaders collectively account for most school leadership activities. This finding suggests that a coherent structure and agenda that supports leadership development (in addition to content area expertise) can facilitate effective programme implementation, pedagogical improvement and innovative practices. Schools can accomplish this through deliberately designed coaching, mentoring and appraisal systems that emphasise developmental purposes by employing effective feedback. The IB could further enhance leader development by considering how to infuse practices such as building effective teams or providing effective feedback into existing PD programmes that target middle leaders. Similarly, programmes that develop senior leaders may consider addressing strategies or sharing best practices through which school Principals can develop leadership capacity in middle and teacher leaders.

Clearly, the middle leaders who had the greatest opportunity to engage in leadership beyond their school were those whose school was part of a larger consortium. This allowed for leadership across the consortium, connectivity with other schools by SACs and GLLs, and drawing new insight back into the school. Recognizing that most IB schools in this region are not part of a larger district, foundation or formal network the IB may liaise with schools to

consider how best to enhance its existing networks. As an example, one middle leader with CAS responsibilities established a regional network for CAS coordinators. A similar focus on utilizing regional networks may be established for leaders other than PCs.

Two of the schools that participated in this research had specifically identified core strategies to develop leaders and to enhance their leadership capacity. In one strategy, a formative appraisal system that focused on developing teachers' instructional practices worked as a structure for senior leaders to mentor and coach middle leaders in leadership. In another, a teacher inquiry structure permitted experienced teachers to hone expertise that they shared with colleagues, leading to recognition as specialists in core areas of IB practice. Two other schools focused on building leadership structures around core missions of language education and experiential learning. These strategies served to identify, prioritise, and enhance specific leadership practices. Schools, therefore, may consider how similar approaches could serve to provide leadership opportunities for middle and teacher leaders.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. Interview Questions (Principals)

Research Questions	Interview Questions Principals
<p><b>LEADER-PLUS ASPECT</b></p> <p>What leadership activities do MLs engage in? (teaching and learning, capacity building and system/external leadership)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you share a little bit about why leadership is structured the way that it is at this school?</li> <li>2. How are PCs/MLs selected for their posts?</li> <li>3. What do you think might explain the pattern of PC/ML's engagement in the different levels of leadership?</li> <li>4. What in your view is the main work of PCs/MLs in each category? Is there something obviously missing?</li> <li>5. What do you think might challenge their effectiveness? Are there any factors which may inhibit ML work in Communities of Practice (COPs)?</li> <li>6. What is done in-house to help develop them for their roles?</li> <li>7. How have PC/ML work changed over time?</li> <li>8. What makes for a successful PC/ML? Are there any factors which may support ML work in COPs?</li> <li>9. Are MLs in your school active in setting school direction and school policy? How is this done? Does this work focus Teachers' attention on Student achievement in your opinion? If so, how? How does or could this filter through to form a student-focus faculty?</li> <li>10. Do these external networks help MLs with their work with their Teacher Teams or COPs? How?</li> <li>11. Do MLs in your school have the opportunity to engage with MLs in other schools or to develop networks outside of the school? In what capacity and how?</li> <li>12. Do MLs have any role in engaging with community stakeholders or government? If so, what is the nature of this? If not, is it desirable?</li> </ol>
<p><b>THE PRACTICE ASPECT</b></p> <p>How do MLs enact their leadership through <b>interactions with other formal and informal school</b> leaders?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Do you co-lead or collaborate? Do you expect your MLs to do likewise?</li> <li>14. Are there differences in how MLs in your school do their jobs? What accounts for these differences?</li> <li>15. How successful are MLs in your school in building and working with teacher teams? Why is that?</li> <li>16. How do ML use their Teacher teams to focus on improved student achievement? Is this encouraged? How does this impact on their COPs or teacher teams?</li> <li>17. Do MLs regularly engage in dialogue with other MLs and key staff? What are the main foci of this dialogue? When does it occur?</li> <li>18. Do PCs and MLs have autonomy in decision making over their areas of responsibility? Can you illustrate how this may impact on Teachers' focus on Student Achievement?</li> </ol>

	<p>19. What do you see as the particular areas of challenge that MLs face?</p> <p>20. In interacting with leadership, other middle leaders, teachers, other stakeholders?</p> <p>21. Focusing Teachers' attention on Student Achievement?</p>
<p>How do MLs further distribute their leadership?</p>	<p>22. Do MLs in your school delegate work to other teachers? Is this formal or informal? Does this delegation have student achievement foci?</p> <p>23. In your opinion, does delegation strengthen Teachers' focus on student achievement or is it best done directly from the ML?</p> <p>24. Do they have a role in developing the capacity of others?</p> <p>25. Are there differences in how MLs in your school lead?</p>
<p>THE SITUATION</p> <p>How does the complex <b>context of continuum schools</b> impact on middle leadership activities? What <b>OTHER situational factors</b> impact on the work of MLs</p>	<p>26. How do you distribute (or structure) leadership at your school to ensure that the school's mission is addressed? Does the purpose for this distribution have a focus on student achievement and accomplishment?</p> <p>27. How does the school's unique mission/vision impact on MLs' work? Does it allow them to effectively lead their Teams?</p> <p>28. Does working in a three programme school bring challenges? Do these challenges impact on MLs influence their teams?</p> <p>29. Do MLs at this school need to navigate the cultural setting? If so, what is the impact?</p>
<p>What <b>strategies, tools and routines</b> do MLs design or adopt to enact their leadership?</p>	<p>30. How much does guidance from the IB shape the work of PC and MLs? How does it shape their work with their teams?</p> <p>31. Are IB documentation helpful? How do they support ML-led Teacher team's focus on Student achievement?</p> <p>32. Does the school create additional documents, structures, committees to focus the work of PCs/MLs (and their Teacher Teams to maintain focus on Student Achievement)??</p>

Appendix B. Interview Questions (PCs)

Research Questions	Interview Questions Programme Coordinators
<p><b>LEADER-PLUS ASPECT</b></p> <p>What leadership activities do MLs engage in? (teaching and learning, capacity building and system/external leadership)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What led you to take up your position in this school?</li> <li>2. What does your position involve?</li> <li>3. How were you prepared for these responsibilities?</li> <li>4. What is the most challenging aspect of your job?</li> <li>5. Is the result of the time-use survey typical?</li> <li>6. What do you think explains this distribution? What activities in each category (in the table) are you most focused on?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Is there something not represented here that should be included?</li> <li>b. How do you address these?</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. How do you work with colleagues to identify and implement new practices? What supports or inhibits this?</li> <li>8. Do you help Teacher Team members to focus their efforts towards improving student achievement? If so, how?</li> <li>9. Are you involved in setting the school vision or developing school-wide policies?</li> <li>10. How do colleagues respond to school-wide initiatives? What challenges do they face? How do you support them?</li> <li>11. Do you have a role in developing others' capacity? How do you influence them?</li> <li>12. To what extent does your role involve implementing mandates from outside of the school? Are there any tensions in doing this?</li> <li>13. Does the school (or IBO) vision and policies constrict or free you to accomplish your goals? When it comes to improving student achievement, do these help influence?</li> <li>14. Are there ways that you are able to interact with colleagues in other schools or other organizations in order to develop your area of responsibility? How?</li> <li>15. To what extent do you have autonomy to initiate networks beyond the school?</li> <li>16. Are you free to identify your own goals for your area of responsibility?</li> <li>17. How would you like to develop more?</li> <li>18. What is done in the school to support your own development? Is this related to improving student achievement? Does this help you in your daily work?</li> </ol>
<p><b>THE PRACTICE ASPECT</b></p> <p>How do MLs enact their leadership through <b>interactions with other formal and informal school leaders?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Does your work involve dialogue or collaboration with other programme coordinators or subject area coordinators in the school? What is the focus of these discussions?</li> <li>20. Are there other teams that you work with? How do you influence them?</li> <li>21. Do you try to focus teachers' attention onto student achievement? How?</li> <li>22. Are others involved in leading with you? How do you establish a common point of view?</li> <li>23. What are the main areas that you are working on with others? Are you able to focus team members on student achievement? If so, how do you do that?</li> <li>24. Are there any "go to" people that you involve? How does this work?</li> </ol>

<p>How do MLs further distribute their leadership?</p>	<p>25. How do you engage or motivate others that you lead? 26. How do you delegate work to others? Is this done formally or informally?</p>
<p>THE SITUATION</p> <p>How does the complex <b>context of continuum schools</b> impact on middle leadership activities? What <b>OTHER situational factors</b> impact on the work of MLs</p>	<p>27. Does the school mission or values influence your work? Do they inhibit your work and influence on your team members? Do they support it? 28. Is being a leader here different from in other schools? If so, how has it changed the way you lead others? 29. What is the impact of being a three programme school? 30. What is the impact of being located in this societal culture?</p>
<p>What <b>strategies, tools and routines</b> do MLs design or adopt to enact their leadership?</p>	<p>31. Are there any formalized structures to focus or prioritize you work (committees, strategic plans, annual plans...) If so, is there a student achievement focus? 32. Are IB standards and practices, programme frameworks, authorization standards frequently used in your work? Do these help you lead your team members to focus on improving student achievement? If so, how? 33. Are IB provided tools, like common planners or routines like peer review of unit plans, sufficient for your work?</p>

Appendix C. Interview Questions (SACs/CSL)

Research Questions	Subject Area Coordinators / Cross-School Leaders
<p>LEADER-PLUS ASPECT</p> <p>What leadership activities do MLs engage in? (teaching and learning, capacity building and system/external leadership)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does your position involve?</li> <li>2. How were you prepared for these responsibilities?</li> <li>3. What is the most challenging aspect of your job?</li> <li>4. Based on the sheet (SEE 4 levels of leadership sheet), where is most of your work focused?</li> <li>5. Are you able to influence your team members' work? If so, how?</li> <li>6. Do you work with colleagues to identify and implement new practices? What supports or inhibits this?</li> <li>7. Are you involved in setting the school vision or developing school-wide policies?</li> <li>8. How do colleagues respond to school-wide initiatives? What challenges do they face? How do you support them?</li> <li>9. Do you have a role in developing others' capacity?</li> <li>10. Do you help Teacher Team members to focus their efforts towards improving student achievement? If so, how?</li> <li>11. To what extent does your role involve implementing mandates from outside of the school? Are there any tensions in doing this?</li> <li>12. Does the school (or IBO) vision and policies constrict or free you to accomplish your goals? When it comes to improving student achievement, do these help influence?</li> <li>13. Are there ways that you are able to interact with colleagues in other schools or other organizations in order to develop your area of responsibility? How?</li> <li>14. To what extent do you have autonomy to initiate networks beyond the school?</li> <li>15. Are you free to identify your own goals for your area of responsibility?</li> <li>16. What is done in the school to support your own development? Is this related to improving student achievement? Does this help you in your daily work?</li> </ol>
<p>THE PRACTICE ASPECT</p> <p>How do MLs enact their leadership through <b>interactions with other formal and informal school</b> leaders?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Does your work involve dialogue or collaboration with programme coordinators or other subject area coordinators in the school?</li> <li>18. What do you work on together with them?</li> <li>19. Are you involved with what goes on in MYP and PYP?</li> <li>20. Are there other teams that you work with?</li> <li>21. Are others involved in leading with you? How do you establish a common point of view?</li> <li>22. What are the main areas that you are working on with others? Are you able to focus team members on student achievement? If so, how do you do that?</li> <li>23. Are there any "go to" people that you involve? How does this work?</li> </ol>

<p>How do MLs further distribute their leadership?</p>	<p>24. How do you engage or motivate others that you lead? How do you keep their focus on student accomplishment and achievement?</p> <p>25. How do you delegate work to others? Is this done formally or informally?</p> <p>26. If you were to sketch a leadership distribution for your area, what would it look like?</p>
<p>THE SITUATION</p> <p>How does the complex <b>context of continuum schools</b> impact on middle leadership activities? What <b>OTHER situational factors</b> impact on the work of MLs</p>	<p>27. Does the school mission or values influence your work? Do they inhibit your work and influence on your team members? Do they support it?</p> <p>28. Is being a leader here different from in other schools? If so, how has it changed the way you lead others?</p> <p>29. What is the impact of being a three programme school?</p> <p>30. What is the impact of being in this societal culture?</p>
<p>What <b>strategies, tools and routines</b> do MLs design or adopt to enact their leadership?</p>	<p>31. Are there any formalized structures to focus or prioritize you work (committees, strategic plans, annual plans...)? If so, is there a student achievement focus?</p> <p>32. Are IB standards and practices, programme frameworks, authorization standards frequently used in your work? Do these help you lead your team members to focus on improving student achievement? If so, how?</p> <p>33. Are IB provided tools, like common planners or routines like peer review of unit plans, sufficient for your work? Do these influence your team members' focus on student accomplishment? If so, how?</p>

Appendix D. Interview Questions (Teacher groups)

Research Questions	Interview Questions for Teacher groups
<p>What leadership activities do middle leaders engage in? (teaching and learning, capacity building and system/external leadership)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you see as being the role of PCs? How do they influence their Teacher Teams?</li> <li>2. What is the role of subject area coordinators? How do they influence their Teacher Teams?</li> <li>3. Do you take up leadership in any way? If yes, what do you hope to achieve through your leadership?</li> <li>4. Are you involved in setting the strategic direction or annual plan in your area?</li> </ol>
<p>How do middle leaders enact their leadership through interactions with other formal and informal school leaders?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Do you collaborate with PC or SACs? In what way? Do they tend to help focus you towards Student achievement?</li> <li>6. How do you determine who to talk to about instructional issue?</li> </ol>
<p>How does the complex context of continuum schools impact on middle leadership activities?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. What do you see as being the main priorities for this school?</li> <li>8. How are these communicated to you?</li> <li>9. What is your role in addressing these priorities, in particular any beyond classroom teaching? How are you supported in it?</li> </ol>
<p>How do middle leaders further distribute their leadership?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Are you encouraged to take up specific areas of responsibility beyond classroom teaching?</li> <li>11. How are roles and responsibilities distributed?</li> <li>12. What could be done to help PC and SACs support you better? Do they need any resources? Do you believe they help focus Teacher attention towards improving students' achievement?</li> </ol>
<p>What strategies, tools and routines do middle leaders design or adopt to enact their leadership?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Does the school mission or values influence your work? Do PCs and SACs use these to influence your focus on students?</li> <li>14. Is being a leader here different from in other schools? How?</li> <li>15. What is the impact of being a three programme school?</li> <li>16. What is the impact of being in this societal culture?</li> <li>17. Is a teacher focus on student achievement part of this school's culture? Is this displayed in your team's leader?</li> </ol>
<p>What situational factors impact on</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. Are there any formalized structures to focus or prioritize you work (committees, strategic plans, annual plans...)</li> <li>19. Are IB standards and practices, programme frameworks, authorization</li> </ol>

the work of middle leaders	standards frequently used in your work. 20. Are IB provided tools, like common planners or routines like peer review of unit plans, sufficient for your work? 21. How does being in this school help your teacher teams improve student achievement and accomplishment? Do the PCs and SACs influence your thinking and your work? How?
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<b>Leadership activities</b>	<b>Details</b>
Level 1	Leading teaching and learning
Curriculum planning	Curriculum planning to support subject-based teaching; setup team mission; included cross subject curriculum planning and scope and sequences
Extra & co-curricular activities planning	Planning activities and extra-curricular activities to support non-subject-based teaching and learning and social development
Student social development	Development student in term of moral, civic and social responsibility, included emotion education, sex education, career planning, discipline
Quality assurance	Assessment, report, monitor and evaluate the performance of employees; setting up standardize operation system to ensure quality; oversee performance toward team and school mission, Appraisal of teachers and students
Recruitment	Hiring personnel to support the operations in the department, included employing full-time or part-time instructors
Level 2	Leading school capacity building
Community networks	school-parent partnerships, school- union relationship; regional network
Professional development	Provide advice; mentoring; training other employees Staff development programmes or push of PD
Team Building	Build up relationship and teamwork in the team and outside the team; also cross department cooperation
School capacity building	Building capacity beyond their own department, build capacity for the whole school; Involvement in adjustment and change on school's organizational structure
Professional network building	Explore network with community outside school to enhance the professionalism at school or seek professional community (e.g. looking for inter-school partnership, search outside resources)
Level 3	Leading beyond the school

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IB	To work with the IBO. To negotiate and communicate on the IBO's official policies.
Government	To work with and to communicate with government. Advocate values of the school to the governmental body. Respond and reflect to the government policies and legislation (such as the examination bodies, local government)
Community	Work with existing external stakeholders; external connection provided by the school or sponsoring body; maintain relationship with external parties (e.g. sponsoring body, NGO, the surrounding local community)

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AREAS OF LEADERSHIP

	Action	Questions
<p>A. Administrative Leadership</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working with budgets</li> <li>2. Developing schedules</li> <li>3. Booking facilities</li> <li>4. Ordering resources.</li> <li>5. Responding to requests for information.</li> </ol>		
<p>B. Instructional Leadership (Teaching and Learning)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving your practices related to instruction or assessment.</li> <li>2. Developing curriculum.</li> <li>3. Implementing new methods of teaching and learning.</li> <li>4. Implementing new technologies.</li> <li>5. Learning new strategies to support students with Special Educational Needs or language development needs.</li> <li>6. Analyzing data related to student learning.</li> </ol>		
<p>C. School-wide Leadership (Organizational)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding school policies and strategic aims.</li> <li>2. Developing your own or others' professional knowledge and skills.</li> <li>3. Seeking support through activities such as mentoring or coaching.</li> <li>4. Understanding or supporting school-wide initiatives.</li> <li>5. Collaborating with parent groups.</li> <li>6. Developing strategies for school improvement</li> </ol>		
<p>D. External Leadership (System)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing networks with other schools.</li> </ol>		

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Connecting the school to external organizations or agencies (e.g. Education Bureau, International Baccalaureate).</li><li>3. Influencing or implementing new educational policies.</li><li>4. Adapting to social, economic and demographic changes in the community.</li></ol>		
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Notes:

### Time-use Survey

#### Instruction

The purpose of this survey is to understand the demands on Middle Leaders' time and the areas in which they work during a typical week. There is no "correct" response.

Please estimate how much time you spent working in each of the below categories today. Please account for any way that you complete your work. For example, your work might include team meetings, coaching conversations, informal and unplanned conversations, lunch meetings, writing or reading e-mail messages, and communicating through WhatsApp or other social network applications.

#### Personal Information Collection Statement

The information collected from you will be used for the project by Dr. Darren Bryant.

You have the right to request access to and correction of information held by us about you. If you wish to access or correct your personal data, please contact Leo Wong

Privacy Policy Statement (PPS) of EdUHK is accessible at <http://www.eduhk.hk/main/privacy-policy/>

#### Email

Please enter the same email address as filled in the personal information survey

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#### Retype your Email

Please remember this email address and use it as your ID in other surveys of this project

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#### Input Date

Please fill in the date for time-use survey

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Please estimate how much time you spend in each of the following activities

Routine classroom teaching & student-related duties

Examples:

1. Preparing lessons or teaching materials, grading student work.
2. Classroom management and pastoral care.
3. Collecting fees, permission forms, supervising playground or lunchroom

Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Managerial work for department or area of responsibility

##### Examples:

1. Working with budgets, developing schedules, booking facilities, ordering resources.
2. Responding to requests for information

Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Leading teaching, learning and innovation

##### Examples:

1. Improving pedagogy (observing lessons; reviewing student work; discussing or providing feedback to teachers about teaching, lesson planning, or assessment).
2. Developing new strategies to support student learning (implementing new technologies, developing or implementing strategies to support students with Special Educational Needs or language development needs).
3. Analyzing data related to student learning.

Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Leading Professional Development and School Improvement

Examples:

1. Developing or explaining school policies and strategic aims.
2. Supporting teachers' professional knowledge and skills development.
3. Facilitating teachers' collaboration on school-wide matters.
4. Discussing school-wide initiatives with other senior or middle leaders.
5. Collaborating with parent groups.

Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Leading External to the School

Examples:

1. Developing networks with other schools.
2. Connecting the school to external organizations or agencies  
(e.g. Education Bureau, International Baccalaureate, University partners).
3. Connecting community resources, facilities and stakeholders.
4. Influencing or implementing new educational policies.
5. Adapting the school to social, economic and demographic changes in the community.

Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Others (Please indicate the events and time)

6(a). Name of the Events

Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

End of Survey

### Advice Network Survey

This purpose of this survey is to understand how people with different positions in the school influence the work of others. The survey asks you to consider who you most seek advice from in three different categories of work. We provide examples of the sort of work conducted in each category. Please keep in mind that you likely seek advice from an array of colleagues. They may include formal leaders but also teachers or colleagues, even those from outside of your teaching area.

To create the networks accurately, we need to collect your name and the name of those who you seek advice from. During data analysis, we will replace your name and that of the people you identify with a code.

Email

Please enter the same email address as filled in the personal information survey

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Retype your Email

Please remember this email address and use it as your ID in other surveys of this project

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### Part A

A. Please list three people in your school who you have most often sought advice from during this school year about improving teaching and learning.

Examples include

- Improving your practices related to instruction or assessment.
- Developing curriculum.
- Implementing new methods of teaching and learning.
- Implementing new technologies.
- Learning new strategies to support students with Special Needs.
- Analyzing data related to student learning.

A1. The person that you most frequently seek advice from (Surname, First name and Middle Name)

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A2. The person that you second most frequently seek advice from (Surname, First name and Middle Name)

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A3. The person that you third most frequently seek advice from (Surname, First name and Middle Name)

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#### Part B

B. Please list three people in your school who you have most often sought advice from during this school year about professional learning and school improvement.

Examples include

- Understanding school policies and strategic aims.
- Developing your own or others' professional knowledge and skills.
- Seeking support through activities such as mentoring or coaching.
- Understanding or supporting school-wide initiatives.
- Collaborating with parent groups.
- Developing strategies for school improvement.

B1. The person that you most frequently seek advice from (Surname, First name and Middle Name)

---

B2. The person that you second most frequently seek advice from (Surname, First name and Middle Name)

---

B3. The person that you third most frequently seek advice from (Surname, First name and Middle Name)

---

Part C

C. Please list three people in your school who you have most often sought advice from during this school year about the school's external environment.

Examples include

- Developing networks with other schools.
- Connecting the school to external organizations or agencies (e.g. Education Bureau, International Baccalaureate, University partners).
- Influencing or implementing new educational policies.
- Adapting to social, economic and demographic changes in the community.

C1. The person that you most frequently seek advice from (Surname, First name and Middle Name)

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C2. The person that you second most frequently seek advice from (Surname, First name and Middle Name)

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C3. The person that you third most frequently seek advice from (Surname, First name and Middle Name)

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Appendix I. Indegree Centrality in three leadership levels (China School)

Code	Title	Position	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
			Indegree Centrality	Indegree Centrality Ranking	Indegree Centrality	Indegree Centrality Ranking	Indegree Centrality	Indegree Centrality Ranking
3	School Director	SL	0.037	9	0.051	7	0.107	4
6	Early and Primary Principal	SL	0.061	4	0.165	3	0.093	6
10	Early Years & Primary Assistant Principal	SL	0.159	1	0.241	1	0.173	3
19	Principal (Secondary)	SL	0.049	6	0.101	5	0.107	4
34	Student Affairs Coordinator	CSL	0.061	4	0.089	6	0.053	8
74	PYP Coordinator	PC	0.134	2	0.177	2	0.253	1
81	PYP Coordinator	PC	0.134	2	0.152	4	0.2	2

Appendix J. Indegree Centrality in three leadership levels (Hong Kong School)

Code	Title	Position	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
			Indegree Centrality	Indegree Centrality Ranking	Indegree Centrality	Indegree Centrality Ranking	Indegree Centrality	Indegree Centrality Ranking
1	Head of Secondary	SL	0.032	11	0.167	2	0.115	3
80	Vice Principal Secondary - Y7-9	SL	0.032	11	0.15	4	0.019	16
12	Principal	SL			0.05	7	0.077	5
75	Deputy Head of College	SL			0.017	14	0.077	5
3	Vice Principal Secondary - Y10-11/MYP Coordinator	PC	0.097	2	0.2	1	0.25	1
4	Vice Principal Secondary - Y12-13/DP Coordinator	PC	0.097	2	0.167	2	0.231	2
6	Head of Humanities	SAC	0.081	6	0.067	5	0.058	7
17	Teacher - English / ToK Coordinator	SAC	0.097	2	0.033	9	0.058	7

21	Head of Learning Diversity	SAC	0.113	1	0.067	5	0.096	4
26	Teacher - English / Dean - Y11	CSL	0.097	2	0.017	14		

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Appendix K. Indegree Centrality in three leadership levels (Japan School)

Code	Position	Title	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
			Indegree Centrality	Indegree Centrality Ranking	Indegree Centrality	Indegree Centrality Ranking	Indegree Centrality	Indegree Centrality Ranking
1	Head of School	SL	0.109	6	0.089	5	0.313	1
5	Elementary School Principal	SL	0.196	2	0.133	2	0.229	3
6	Secondary School Principal	SL	0.196	2	0.222	1	0.313	1
2	Elementary School Vice Principal / PYP Coordinator	PC	0.239	1	0.122	3	0.208	4
3	MYP Coordinator	PC	0.196	2	0.056	6	0.063	7
4	DP Coordinator	PC	0.196	2	0.111	4	0.146	5