Cultures of Teaching: Mapping the Teacher Professional Development Terrain

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ABSTRACT

Given the relationship between cultures of teaching and teacher professional development, this mixed methods research project documents and depicts a Thai university's teaching cultures and the extent to which cultures of teaching determine teacher professional development. An analysis of data collected demonstrates a lack of teacher collaboration within this particular workplace. The participating teachers rarely have opportunities to share and learn from colleagues. Indeed, teachers' practices of balkanisation, individualism, and contrived collegiality temper collaboration among these teachers. Further, relationship between cultures of teaching and teacher professional development in this workplace is evident. Notwithstanding a lack of collaboration, the participating teachers have abundant opportunities for professional development. Most of these opportunities are, however, administratively mediated. Despite such opportunities, these participating teachers do little to develop themselves.

Keywords: Cultures of teaching, Teacher professional development, Collaboration, Contrived collegiality, Balkanisation, Individualism

INTRODUCTION

Interplay between cultures of teaching and teacher professional development has long been extensively evidenced in literature in the field of teacher education. Literally what scholars and researchers in the field have agreed upon is the way in which teachers' relationship with one another determines not only teachers' instructional practices but also their professional development (Hargreaves, 1995, 1994; Kirkpatrick, 2009; Leonard & Leonard, 2010; Mawhinney, 2010; Musanti & Pence, 2010; Avalos, 2011; Pawan & Ortloff, 2011; Butler & Schnellert,

2012; Shah & Abualrob, 2012; Kuusisaari, 2014; Park & Lee, 2015; Willemse et al., 2015).

Teacher relationship could be categorised into four different types: (1) collaboration, (2) contrived collegiality; (3) balkanisation, and (4) individualism (Hargreaves, 1994). Each type has different effects on teachers' teaching practices and their professional development. For example, under collaboration, teachers spontaneously and voluntarily work together. They exchange assistance and share teaching materials and problems related to teaching. In doing so, teachers learn from one another and help each other develop. Contrived collegiality refers to schools' organised and regulated collaboration. School administrators recognise the significances of teacher collaboration and, in turn, obligate teachers to work together. As a consequence, administrators prepare special budgets, offer rewards, and arrange time and space for teachers to meet. Teacher collaboration here is ephemeral and illusive. It leads to fruitless professional development as teachers are unwilling to work together. Balkanisation represents the division among teachers. Teachers form groups in terms of their personal relationship and identification, fields of disciplines, educational background and gender, among others. This particular type of relationship often fosters and promotes greed and grievance within teachers as benefits and resources (which are, more often than not, limited) are shared only among teachers within their own groups. As teacher collaboration is limited

only within their groups, professional development is marginalised as well restricted. Individualism refers to isolation and insulation among teachers. In most cases, teachers individualise to give themselves a sense of privacy. However, some teachers occasionally practise individualism to shield themselves from criticisms from other colleagues. Overall, individualism shuns teachers from working with other teachers and, in turn, reduces their opportunities to develop themselves.

A relationship between cultures of teaching and teacher professional development is timely and worth documenting, particularly in Thailand, in which such a relationship is underexplored (Hongboontri & Chaokongjakra, 2011; Hongboontri & Keawkhong, 2014). Equipped with Hargreaves' (1994) four patterns of teacher relationship, the researchers of the present study ventured into one faculty in one Thai university (*the Faculty of Liberal Arts*, Mystique *University* [a pseudonym]) to examine the patterns of relationship among foreign language (FL) teachers and the extent to which this relationship determined teacher professional development in such a context. Two research questions helped frame the study. (1) What types of cultures of teaching are practised among FL teachers at *the Faculty of Liberal Arts*, *Mystique University*? (2) To what extent do cultures of teaching determine these teachers' opportunities for teacher professional development?

METHODOLOGY

Data collection and analysis of this research project were framed under the theoretical notions of a mixed-methods paradigm (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Desimore, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010) and triangulation (Mathison, 1988; Merriam, 1988; Metz, 2000). Hence, the present researchers employed three quantitative and qualitative data collection tools (a questionnaire, interviews, and written documents) to gather data. This data set, once analysed, could, at its best, capture the complex and multifaceted aspects of the existence of cultures of teaching as well as the relationship between cultures of teaching and teacher professional development at the research site.

Participants

All foreign language (FL) teachers in *Mystique University* (a pseudonym) were invited to participate in the study. Altogether, 27 teachers volunteered to complete and return a questionnaire. Of these, 23 consented to interviews. (See Table I for further details.)

Table 1
Participants at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mystique University

Name*	Study Degree	Major
Benny	MA	Linguistics
Cindy	MA	Language and Communication
Christine	PhD	Linguistics
Katherine	MA	TEFL
Karen	PhD	Curriculum Development
Lauren	MA	English
Pam	MA	TEFL
Peter	MA	TEFL
Rachel	MA	Translation
Sabrina	MA	Chinese
Samantha	MA	Language and Communication
Sandy	MA	Applied Linguistics
Santana	MA	TEFL
Smith	MA	English
Tess	MA	Applied Linguistics
Timothy	MA	TEFL
Tracy	MA	Education
Uma	MA	Japanese
Vicky	MA	Japanese
Wade	PhD	Instructional Design
Wanda	MA	Applied Linguistics
Wayne	MA	TEFL
Yvette	MA	Education

Note: All names were pseudonyms.

A Questionnaire

The researchers used the five-Likert scale questionnaire adapted from Hongboontri (2003, 2005, 2008), Kleinsasser (1993), and Rosenholtz (1991) to measure the teacher participants' perceptions toward the cultures of teaching within their workplace and the availability of teacher professional development in such the workplace. The five-Likert scale measures the degree of agreement or disagreement ranging from: 5 = "strongly agree," 4 = "agree," 3 = "sometimes agree/sometimes disagree," 2 = "disagree," and 1 = "strongly disagree." The questionnaire had 33 items and 21 items in particular were used to measure

the teacher participants' perceptions of collaboration within their workplace (2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33) and 12 items were employed to quantify the participants' learning opportunities (1, 3, 4, 6, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21). Before its actual use, the questionnaire was piloted on 10 university EFL teachers (who taught English as a foreign language). The completed and returned questionnaires were tallied and calculated with SPSS to measure the questionnaire's alpha coefficient. The questionnaire had alpha coefficient of 0.911. What this meant was the questionnaire had a high level of reliability and hence, could be used to measure the research participants' perceptions of their cultures of teaching and their behavioural practices within their workplace (Bryman & Cramer, 1990).

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to promote an exchange of information between the researchers and the participants (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Such an exchange would offer the researchers better insights into the participants' beliefs (Merriam, 2009, 1988) and actions (Fontana & Frey, 2008). To conduct interviews, the researchers followed the notions of ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979) and developed a list of open-ended questions. Of total, 22 questions were used for the interviews. These questions included, for example, how would you describe your relationship with teachers in the Department? How often do you work with teachers from the same

Department? Other Departments? What do you do together? How do you develop your language teaching skills? If you want to improve your teaching, how do you think the *Faculty* could help? With permission from the research participants, all interviews were audio-recorded for further transcription and analyses.

Written Documents

Written documents, as Punch (2005) argued, provide rich data that could under certain circumstances be difficult to obtain using other research instruments. In essence, they help create contexts as well as establish a solid ground to support a researcher's inquiry of a certain issue (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997; Marshall & Rossman, 1999 Hodder, 2000). Mindful of this, the present researchers collected various pieces of written documents throughout the process of data collection. The written documents collected included, for example, university policies, course syllabi, and language teaching materials, among many others.

Ethical Concerns

Mindful of research ethical requirements, the researchers adapted several precautions to protect the identity and well-being of the research participants. First, the researchers applied for institutional review board (IRB) approval. After approval, the researchers sent a letter to debrief the research project to the *Faculty of Liberal Arts*, *Mystique University* asking for permission to conduct the research. When permission was granted, letters along with informed consent forms

were sent to all FL teachers in the *Faculty of Liberal Arts*, *Mystique University*. Not only did these letters contain brief information of the project and inform the teachers of the project's requirements (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), they also ensured the teachers of confidentiality and privacy and of their right to withdraw from the project at any time (Christians, 2011; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011).

Data Analysis

Responses of the completed and returned questionnaires were tallied, tabulated, and entered into SPSS for calculation. Interview data were transcribed and analysed with Strauss and Corbin's (1990) open and axial coding techniques. Additionally, data from all three different sources were woven in terms of their similarities, differences, and inconsistencies to better depict the cultures of teaching at the *Faculty of Liberal Arts*, *Mystique University* and the relationship between such cultures and teacher professional development.

FINDINGS

Results obtained from the calculation of the completed and returned questionnaires demonstrated little (or almost no) collaboration among the research participants at the *Faculty of Liberal Arts*, *Mystique University*. Overall, statistical data showed the participants' rare collaboration with other teachers in their workplace and little support from both the administrators and colleagues in improving teaching.

For example, the majority of the teacher participants admitted that not only did they rarely receive informal evaluation of their teaching performance from their colleagues ($\bar{x}$ = 1.8077) but they also had little chance of observing the teaching of other good teachers ($\bar{x}$ = 1.3846) and foreign language teachers ($\bar{x}$ = 2.3462). Though the Dean of the *Faculty*, as these teacher participants commonly agreed, did little encouraged the teachers to discuss instructional skills ($\bar{x}$ = 1.4231), responses from these teachers indicated that they every now and then they discussed ideas obtained from attending in-service trainings organised by the Faculty ($\bar{x}$ = 3.0385). They also shared instructional problems with other teachers in the *Faculty* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.000) and helped one another solve the problems ($\bar{x}$ = 2.8846). However, they admitted that the teachers in their *Faculty* seldom worked together to develop appropriate teaching methods and techniques ($\bar{x}$ = 1.6784). These participants agreed that their context (both the Faculty and the University had offered them adequate opportunities to improve their instructional skills ($\bar{x}$ = 2.6154 and 2.5000 respectively). (See Table 2 for further details.) Statistical data indicated the researchers should look further into the qualitative data to better depict the cultures of teaching practised by research participants. What also emerged from the qualitative data set included the participants' opportunities for professional development available within their workplace and the relationship between the cultures of teaching and teacher professional development.

Cultures of Teaching at Mystique University's Faculty of Liberal Arts

Ubiquitously practised by the research participants were three of Hargreaves' (1994) four types of cultures of teaching: (1) balkanisation, (2) individualism, and (3) contrived collegiality.

Balkanisation

The majority of the research participants admitted to the division among the teachers within their workplace into several sub-groups. Such division was mainly generated by the differences in their subject disciplines and their personal relationships.

The two teachers of the Japanese language (*Vicky* and *Uma*) with another Japanese language teacher formed their own group. Within their group, they developed a curriculum, made decisions regarding their teaching, exchanged teaching tips and shared each other's workload. In her own words, *Vicky* explained;

> *We are developing a programme together; we choose course books together. We make a decision by looking at contents and price. These books are good for the beginner level students. We are like sisters. We help one another. For example, if the other teachers are teaching, the one who doesn't have class will get lunch for the other two. We also swap class schedules. I usually would take the afternoon session as Uma needs to leave early to pick up her kids from schools.*

Uma's responses to the interview questions stressed the collaboration among these three Japanese language teachers. She explained how the other two teachers helped her improve her teaching.

> *My class is boring. Students walk in and out of my classroom because of my teaching. I want to improve myself. I ask my colleagues about how they teach. I then try their methods. If it works, I keep it. If it doesn't work, I don't use it. I often ask to borrow their flashcards or pictures and use them in my class.*

Similarly, they both admitted that they had little (or almost no) collaboration with other teachers in the workplace. Their daily interactions with other teachers were minimal and limited to "formal greetings like 'Hi, how are you?,'" said *Vicky*.

This type of culture was also evident among a group of Chinese language teachers. However, unlike the Japanese language teachers, these Chinese language teachers cooperated under certain circumstances. Together, they organised special events related to Chinese cultures, shared problems, and assisted each other and exchanged information. One Chinese language teacher, *Sabrina*, described;

> *We work together at the beginning of the semester and the end of the semester to see if anybody has any problem. We work together for special events like Chinese New Year or Chinese Moon Festival.*

Table 2
Teacher Collaboration and Opportunities for Professional Development: Their Means and Standard Deviation

Items		mean	S.D.
1.	In this *Institute/Faculty*, I have many opportunities to learn things about instruction.	2.8462	1.48842
2.	When I think the Director/the Dean of my *Institute/Faculty* needs some advice or information, I share it with him or her.	2.9231	1.44009
3.	The Director/The Dean of my *Institute/Faculty* provides suggestions or support to help me become the best possible teacher.	2.4231	1.47440
4.	In this *University*, I have many opportunities to learn things about instruction.	2.6538	1.39945
5.	I work with other teachers in my *Institute/Faculty* in designing or evaluating materials, curriculum units, and other teaching activities.	3.0385	1.22142
6.	When teachers in my *Institute/Faculty* are not doing a good job, the Director/the Dean of my *Institute/Faculty* works with them to improve instruction.	2.3846	1.47179
7.	Other teachers in this *Institute/Faculty* seek my advice about professional issues and problems.	3.1923	.98058
8.	Other teachers in my *University* seek my advice about professional issues and problems.	3.0385	.99923
9.	In this *Institute/Faculty*, I **do not** offer advice to others about their teaching unless I am asked.	2.6538	1.32491
10.	If another teacher asks me for advice, it implies that I am more competent than he or she is.	3.3846	.94136
11.	In this *University*, I **do not** offer advice to others about their teaching unless I am asked.	3.0769	1.35420
12.	Other teachers in my *Institute/Faculty* encourage me to try out new teaching ideas.	2.3077	1.34964
13.	The Director/The Dean of my *Institute/Faculty* encourages me to try out new teaching ideas.	2.2308	1.39449
14.	I receive informal evaluation of my teaching performance from other teachers in my *Institute/Faculty*.	1.8077	1.09615
15.	In this *Institute/Faculty*, there are opportunities to increase teachers' instructional skills.	2.6154	1.29852
16.	Other teachers in this *University* encourage me to try out new teaching ideas.	2.6538	1.23101
17.	Ideas presented at in-service are discussed afterwards by teachers in this *Institute/Faculty*.	3.0385	1.24838
18.	In this *University*, there are opportunities to increase teachers' instructional skills.	2.5000	1.50333
19.	The Director/The Dean of my *Institute/Faculty* encourages teachers to talk about instructional skills.	1.4231	.70274
20.	I get a chance to observe other excellent teachers teaching.	1.3846	.69275
21.	I get a chance to observe other excellent foreign language teachers teaching.	2.3462	1.41258
22.	Other teachers at my *Institute/Faculty* come to me for help or advice when they need it.	3.3462	.89184

Table 2 (*continue*)

Items	mean	S.D.
23. I give help and support to other teachers in my *Institute*/*Faculty* when they are having problems in their teaching.	2.7308	1.11562
24. I give help and support to other teachers in my *University* when they are having problems in their teaching.	2.3462	1.29437
25. When I am uncertain about how best to proceed in teaching, I go to other teachers in my *Institute*/*Faculty* for assistance.	3.1840	1.17353
26. Other teachers in this *University* come to me for help or advice when they need it.	2.6154	1.02282
27. Teachers in my *Institute/Faculty* participate in developing appropriate instructional methods and techniques in foreign language teaching.	1.6784	.80298
28. I can get good help or advice from other teachers in my *Institute*/*Faculty* when I have a teaching problem.	3.3077	.97033
29. I can get good help or advice from other teachers in my *University* when I have a teaching problem.	2.8077	1.26552
30. I regularly share teaching problems in my *Institute*/*Faculty* with: (a) four or more teachers, (b) three other teachers, (c) two other teachers, (d) one other teacher, (e) no other teachers.	3.0000	1.60000
31. I regularly share teaching problems in my *University* with: (a) four or more teachers, (b) three other teachers, (c) two other teachers, (d) one other teacher, (e) no other teachers.	2.8846	1.58308
32. I regularly do instructional problem solving in my *Institute*/*Faculty* with: (a) four or more teachers, (b) three other teachers, (c) two other teachers, (d) one other teacher, (e) no other teachers.	2.8846	1.53172
33. I regularly do instructional problem solving in my *University* with: (a) four or more teachers, (b) three other teachers, (c) two other teachers, (d) one other teacher, (e) no other teachers.	2.5769	1.62906

Normally, we try not to interfere with each other's work. We focus on our own task. Unless we have problems, we then work together in order to fix them. We don't have formal meetings; we don't need to set up a formal appointment or anything like that.

The same teacher went on.

We share almost everything. We share what we teach. When we hear about a conference, we encourage each other to attend. If I need something like teaching materials, I just ask my colleagues. They are always ready to help.

Dominant too among the English language teachers was the balkanisation culture. Unlike the Japanese and Chinese language teachers, the group of the English language teachers was further divided into several sub-groups. This division was largely based on years of teaching experiences in this workplace. *Karen* had been teaching English at *Mystique University* for almost three decades; she

admitted to her association only with the English teachers whom she knew since she started working there. *Karen* and these teachers "are like friends. Whenever I run into problems, I go to them to complain." *Karen*'s interactions with the newly-hired English teachers were minimal. She said, "New teachers are just acquaintances. I do not have much personal contact with them except during the departmental meetings or the Faculty social functions in which we talk." Responses from the other four English teachers resonated with *Karen*. *Benny*, a native English speaking teacher, noted:

> *I often share things with my office mate. We both are foreign teachers and we joined the Department at the same time. He has been teaching in Thailand for quite some time and he had more teaching experiences. I have been asking him for advices especially on how to deal with students. He has been very helpful.*

Wanda added:

> *When I have any problem with my teaching or I want any suggestion which may not involve teaching, I always go to a group of three teachers whom I am closed with. We have known each other for quite some time now. We joined the Department at the same time. And this really makes us close to one another. I would say I could really trust them.*

Pam asserted:

> *In the meetings or the Faculty's events, I work with every teacher in the Faculty. But apart from this, I have very little contact with them. Normally, I have my own group of teachers. We have been teaching here for quite some time. I am very close with them. We eat lunch together; we share things; and we always help each other.*

Santana maintained, "There used to be eight teachers in my group. We were sort of recruited at the same time. Now there are only six of us. Two are doing their PhDs abroad. Together, we share teaching materials, problems, and even complaints."

The newly hired and the less experienced English teachers formed their own teacher groups. Within their groups, they cooperated, shared and exchanged teaching materials. Further, they confided their problems to the teachers in the groups and asked each other for advice or solutions. The following excerpts taken from the researchers' interviews with both the newly hired and the less experienced English teachers depicted such a practice.

> *When I have problems with my teaching, I ask three or four teachers in my group. We all are new teachers. I ask for teaching advice or for activities I could use in my teaching to make the lesson much more interesting. (Sandy)*

There are about four or five new teachers here and we often work together. With these teachers, I share everything. We exchange teaching materials. We complain about tests, contents, and students. (Cindy)

With the five new teachers in my group, we are pretty close. This is not only because we are new here. But also we have more or less the same perspectives on things. We share teaching tips, teaching materials, activities, and, of course, problems with both students and other teachers. (Smith)

The teachers here including me are separated into groups. I choose to share my problems with only a couple of teachers in my group. Also I often ask them for advice or assistance. With other senior teachers, I just said 'Hi' whenever I meet them. (Katherine)

There are four or five teachers I usually work with. We have been teaching here for a couple of years. Among us, we share the work. From time to time, we share what we do in our classrooms, exchange ideas, and, of course, comfort one another. (Peter)

Individualism

Another type of culture of teaching found particularly among the English language

teachers at the *Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mystique University* was individualism. Six English language teachers admitted to the researchers during the interview of their practice of individualism. These teachers confessed of their minimal interactions with other teachers in the same Department. They rarely shared information or assisted other English language teachers; their interactions with other English language teachers were meticulously confined to social purposes. Factors influencing individualism were personality, workload, and the growth of the workforce.

Three of these six teachers blamed their personality for their lack of interactions with other teachers. *Rachel* explained, "This is just my personality. I basically am not a big fan of socialisation." Another teacher, *Tess*, noted that being independent minimised her interactions with other English language teachers. "I had no personal contact with any teachers in the Department. I come in; I teach; and I go home." *Yvette* maintained, "Because of my own personality, I socialise very little with any teacher in the Faculty."

In addition, teachers' workload, according to *Wade* and *Samantha*, robbed the teachers of their opportunities to interact with one another. As a result, it accelerated teacher individualism. Bitterly, *Wade* complained:

I usually go out to lunch with a couple of teachers that I am close with. Working with other teachers, I would say very rarely. A couple of years ago, I conducted research with one teacher in the

Department. And that's it. The teachers here seem to be busy all the time. There's no room for any informal interaction that would allow people to share and exchange ideas. If this continues, I don't think we can ever get together as a group.

Samantha explained how workload disbanded the teacher group that she had previously formed with other six English language teachers.

When I first joined the Department, I worked with a group of seven teachers. We were quite close. But now we sort of are on our own as we've become very busy with our work. Several teachers chose to isolate themselves from the group as they needed to spend time to get their job done. We no longer socialise.

One lone native English speaking teacher, *Wayne*, associated the existence of teacher individualism in his Department with the growth of the Department. Such development not only forced *Wayne* to isolate himself from the teachers whom he had known and worked with but also fostered and encouraged solitude in him. *Wayne* lamented:

When I first joined the Department, the office space was small and we saw each other frequently. Back then, I knew everybody in the Department, some of them

well, some of them not so well. And I worked pretty much with everybody. Now the Department is bigger. Some of the teachers I know are on the ground floor. I go for weeks without seeing them. I come up here; they go down there. Even people I know, I see them less often than in the past years.

Contrived Collegiality

The researchers' analysis of data documented another type of culture of teaching existed in the *Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mystique University*, i.e., contrived collegiality. Responses from the majority of the research participants similarly pointed towards Faculty's administration as the main accelerator of contrived collegiality. Though the teachers here were divided into groups or individuals, written documents indicated that they sometimes worked together under the mandate of the Faculty's administration cooptation. For example, the Faculty usually assigned its teachers different tasks and duties for the projects the Faculty organised. Under such circumstances, the teachers were obligated to work together. The following quotations excerpted from the interviews with the research participants demonstrated the ubiquity of contrived collegiality within this particular workplace.

There are events of Faculty's activities that require involvement from teachers from different departments. The administration would assign teachers to be

responsible for specific tasks. (Karen)

The only time that I work with other teachers in the Faculty is when I am being appointed to do so. This might happen once or twice a year. The Faculty might initiate some projects which require involvement from every teacher. Then each teacher would be assigned different tasks and duties. (Peter)

Last year I organised the Chinese New Year activity and the Faculty assigned teachers from other departments to help me out. We had meetings to plan this activity together. When the project ended, our working together sort of finished. (Sabrina)

Last year I was appointed to be on the committee for the Faculty's annual meeting. A few teachers including me were assigned to organise this meeting. Among us, we had several meetings to plan this annual meeting. That was the only time I worked with these teachers from several departments. (Sandy)

I am on the Faculty's Board of Academic Affairs. Teachers from several departments also serve on this Board. We have meeting every month. And that's the only time I see them. (Timothy)

The existence of the three types of cultures of teaching here prompted the researchers to further investigate the extent to which teacher professional development was available to the teachers in this particular workplace and in what form.

Teacher Professional Development at Mystique University's Faculty of Liberal Arts

The researchers' analysis of the written documents (e.g., the Faculty's policies and minutes of the Faculty's meetings) indicated that the teachers in this particular workplace had abundant opportunities to attain professional development. These opportunities were available in various forms such as research grants, financial supports to attend conferences, PhD scholarships, and in-house trainings/workshops, among many others. Responses from the majority of the research participants affirmed such opportunities. *Pam* described at length what opportunities the Faculty's administration had offered to the teachers in the Faculty.

The Faculty wants all its teachers to have a PhD so it encourages those with just an MA to go abroad to further their studies. Not only that, it urges the teachers to improve themselves by attending workshops and conferences. For the workshops, the Faculty, from time to time, invites people with different expertise to give lectures on different topics relating to either research, language teaching, or programme evaluation. If the teachers want to go abroad to present their papers,

the Faculty also encourages this. The teachers could apply for some grants that the Faculty sets asides. These grants basically cover the registration fees, accommodation, travelling expenses, and some personal expenses.

Wade's responses reiterated this, noting; "*The Faculty* recognises the need for teachers to conduct research to improve themselves and has set aside some sort of research funding to support this. Those interested in conducting research could apply for this funding." Similarly, *Timothy* insisted; "*The Faculty* strongly supports research. It provides research funding; it tries to create an environment for research." Not only did *the* Faculty offer financial support, it also organised several in-house trainings and workshops on research for its teachers. *Uma* explained:

The Faculty offers some financial assistance to the teachers for conducting research. However, for those who are not good in research like me, for example, the Faculty invites some experts to come in to give us lectures on various topics relating to research. They include, for example, how to conduct research, how to select a topic, or how to write an academic article.

These in-house trainings and workshops also focused on other topics that *the Faculty* deemed important. During their interviews,

Sabrina and *Katherine* shared with the researchers one of the in-house trainings and workshops that they both had attended. *Sabrina* noted; "*The Faculty* has organised several in-house trainings and workshops on issues that *the Faculty* thinks important. Last month, for example, there was a series of trainings and workshops on language assessment and evaluation. It was quite useful. I listened to some new ideas on assessment and evaluation." Satisfied with the same training and workshop, *Katherine* added; "It was a five-day workshop. *The Faculty* invited a couple of experts to teach us some techniques on how to design and to write a test. The workshop is quite interesting. I learned about new concepts and new techniques on testing and evaluation from the workshop."

In addition, *the Faculty* encouraged its teachers to attend conferences and workshops both inside and outside of Thailand. Hence, *the Faculty* often promotes conferences and workshops to its teachers. In addition, it offers financial supports to the teachers attending conferences and workshops. *Samantha*'s responses revealed her satisfaction of such opportunities.

The Faculty very much encourages us to attend both conferences and workshops to improve ourselves. They circulate information related to these conferences and workshops through our emails. If we want to attend, the Faculty will give us some financial support. We could also take a day off to attend conferences and workshops.

Similarly, *Wanda* uttered; "*The Faculty* usually lets us know about conferences and workshops. We could choose to attend any conferences and workshops and the *Faculty* will pay for our registration and also accommodation and transportation if the conferences and workshops are not in Bangkok." *Sabrina* added; "Information about conferences and workshops is usually circulated. We all know about these. *The Faculty* will also pay for us to attend these conferences and workshops." Concurring with both teachers, *Smith* added, "Finance is not a problem here. We could go to conferences and workshops either to present our research papers or just to attend."

Despite such abundant opportunities, several participants were sceptical of the practicality of these opportunities. Four research participants criticised the inconsistencies between *the Faculty*'s research policies and teachers' workload. These teachers acknowledged the availability of research grants. However, due to the heavy workload within the *Faculty*, the majority of the teachers were unable to apply for these research grants. Hypocritically, *Karen* asked; "Where else do they expect me to find time for research? How many projects am I working on now? Take some classes from me. I then could conduct research." *Timothy* complained; "I don't have time for research. I am teaching sixteen hours a week and in different campuses too. I don't have time to go to the library to sit down and read for information to develop a proposal." *Christine* also had heavy workload. She taught sixteen hours a

week; she was as well assigned other tasks. This heavy workload, hence, did not allow her to apply for *the Faculty*'s research grant.

> *University teachers need to conduct research. Research obviously helps teachers boost their teaching. However, with the amount of workload being assigned to me, I simply have no time to write a research proposal and apply for a research grant. I am teaching sixteen hours. I am running the Faculty's Language Learning Center and there are a couple of more things that I am also involved with. I basically have no time.*

Wade added further.

> *Teachers need to conduct research. It is one of our main responsibilities. Also it is a career movement. The Faculty also recognises this and sets up research grants for all the teachers. All the teachers could apply for these research grants. Even though it is not a big one compared to other types of grants. It is, however, enough to help the teachers get started. But the problem is time. We need time to go to the library to search for books. We need time to sit and chat with one another to exchange ideas. But we all have heavy teaching schedules oftentimes conflict with one another. Hardly could we find time to sit and talk about research.*

In analysing the interview data focusing on teacher professional development in this particular context, responses from three research participants (*Katherine*, *Sandy*, and *Santana*) showed they doubted the benefits of *the Faculty*'s in-house trainings and workshops. Similarly, they found that many of these trainings and workshops were uninteresting as their topics repetitively focused on a few issues that *the Faculty*'s administrators considered important. *Katherine* said:

> *Most trainings and workshops here do focus on a couple of topics such as testing, teaching methodologies, and technologies in a language classroom. The first one, all the teachers did go. But when the same topics were repeated, only few, usually the administrators, did show up.*

Santana opined; "The topics for the in-house trainings and workshops were repeated over and over again. Last year, for example, there were five workshops on how to write a test alone. These workshops and trainings are such a waste." *Sandy* confessed that she hardly attended any of *the Faculty*'s in-house trainings and workshops. "I wouldn't normally attend any of *the Faculty*'s in-house trainings and workshops unless I am compelled to. The topics of these trainings and workshops are not interesting and they are usually repeated."

DISCUSSION

Adhering to Wolcott (1990, 2001, 2002), the researcher summarised the findings to answer the two research questions posted and to help construct queries for future research. In Wolcott's own words, a conclusion and discussion succinctly described, "what has been attempted, what has been learned, and what new questions have been raised" (1990, p. 56).

What Types of Cultures of Teaching are Practised among FL Teachers at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mystique University?

At *the Faculty of Liberal Arts*, *Mystique University*, three types of Hargreaves' (1994) cultures of teaching were found; i.e., balkanisation, individualism, and contrived collegiality.

The FL teachers in this particular workplace were balkanised into groups. These teachers were divided into three groups in terms of their subject disciplines: Japanese, Chinese, and English. In addition, there was a further division among the teachers of the English language into smaller sub-groups on the basis of personal relationships and identification and years of teaching experiences within *the Faculty*. These groups of teachers were strongly insulated from each other. Assistance and sharing and exchanging of ideas regarding teaching and teaching materials occurred restrictively within their own groups. In other words, it was within their groups that the teachers developed their relationships with one another, attitudes toward their

colleagues and teaching, and norms of teaching practices. In the educational context where balkanisation flourishes, such a context is hence "poorly equipped to harness the human resources necessary to create flexible learning for students, continuous professional growth for staff and responsiveness to changing client needs in the community" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 235). (See also Nias et al., 1989; Johnson, 1990; Lee et al., 1993; McLaughlin, 1993; Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995; Hargreaves & MacMillan, 1995; Siskin, 1997; Kelchtermans, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012)

Data also showed the existence of individualism. Three factors underlying the research participants' practices of individualism were found: personality, workload, and the workplace's physical setting. These factors were compatible with Hargreaves' (1994) three determinants of individualism; i.e., (1) elective individualism, (2) strategic individualism, and (3) constrained individualism. Under elective individualism, teachers personally favour working alone. In contrast, strategic individualism refers to a unique situation which obligates teachers to create individualistic patterns of working to respond to such a situation. Constrained individualism happens under certain circumstances in which schools' physical environments are created as a tool to ensure the practice of individuality thrives.

The culture of contrived collegiality was dominant in this particular workplace. Despite their being divided into groups or individually isolated, these research participants, under *the Faculty*'s cooptation, occasionally worked together. At the surface level, contrived collegiality could offer teachers, administrators, and onlookers delusive illusion of teachers working together. Conscientious scrutiny, however, would reveal otherwise. Contrived collegiality is in fact, as Fielding (1999) coined, a tool for "managerialism" (p. 8). This is because it "reconstitutes teacher relations in the administrators' own image – regulating and reconstructing teachers' lives so that they support the predictable implementation of administrative plans and purposes, rather than creating the predictable development of teachers' own" (Hargreaves, 1992, p. 24). Further, Levine and Marcus (2010) remarked:

> *Professional and school reform organizations call for collaboration in the abstract, and some schools are creating time for teachers to collaborate without specifying structures and aims. When it comes to professional community and collaboration, this mode of operating may reflect the unstated belief that "if you build it, they will learn." (p. 397)*

Moreover, several researchers have gone thus far to predict the shortcomings of contrived collegiality. Similarly, they agreed that contrived collegiality could jeopardise the creation of collaborative culture within a school. As a consequence, they recommend less administrative imposition but more teacher involvement

in creating collaborative culture. (See, for example, Lam, Yim, & Lam, 2002; Leonard & Leonard, 2010; Beatty, 2011; Datnow, 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012for more details.) In their own words, Leonard and Leonard (2010) opined:

> *Scheduled meetings and specified groupings are both desirable and necessary for school functioning, but they are not the only means of effective collaboration. In the enthusiasm to proceed with reinventing how one views school progress, one might do well to leave sufficient room and opportunity for teachers to demonstrate professionalism and commitment as they perceive it and not as it is necessarily perceived by those further removed from the classroom and the school. (p. 241)*

To What Extent do Cultures of Teaching Determine Teacher Opportunities for Professional Development in the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mystique University?

Literature in the field of teacher professional development has documented extensively the correlation between cultures of teaching, collaboration in particular, and successful teacher professional development. Harwell (2003), for example, argued that "[*p*]rofessional development can succeed only in settings, or contexts that support it" (p. 2). Necessarily, such settings or contexts, as Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) further observed, can promote collaboration and collegiality among teachers. (See also Smylie & Perry, 1998; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Garet et al., 2001; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Imants, 2002; Webb et al., 2005; Little, 2006; Kleinsasser & Sato. 2007; Dufour et al., 2008; Sturko & Gregson, 2009; Waldron & Mcleskey, 2011; Voot et al., 2015)

At *the Faculty of Liberal Arts*, *Mystique University*, data affirmed the association between cultures of teaching and teachers' opportunities for professional development. Startlingly, notwithstanding meager collaboration and collegiality among the teachers, the teachers here had countless opportunities for professional development. With attempts to develop and improve its teachers, *the Faculty*'s administrators drew policies (e.g., research grants and grants for attending conferences and workshops) and planned and organised several in-house trainings and workshops. Surprisingly, these administratively orchestrated policies and plans did little to trigger teacher professional development within this particular workplace as they had anticipated. This was because many of these policies and plans collided with either teachers' job responsibilities or their interests. Shortcomings of schools' organised plans for teacher professional development has been extensive in the literature. For example, Grossman, Winebug, and Woolworth (2001) warned that schools' endorsement of their policies and plans for teacher professional development could, at its worst, annihilate teachers' desires for professional development. In their own words,

The most common form of school-based teacher learning – the district inservice day – does not help the situation much (cf. Miller & Lord, 1995). The episodic and piecemeal nature of typical professional development dooms any attempt to sustain intellectual community. By their very structure, scattered inservice days are confined to technical and immediate issues such as learning new assessment schemes, translating test results into lesson plans, implementing new curriculum or textbook series, and so on. (p. 948)

Grossman et al. (2001) went further to criticise schools' traditional practice of enrolling their teachers in teacher professional development courses organised by an outsider. Such a practice had more than a few drawbacks. For example, teachers could misconceive teacher professional development as a short-lived process. Ideas that might seem promising during conferences, trainings, or workshops could be of little use to teachers in their classrooms. Despite its length, Grossman et al.'s quote is worth mentioning here.

Efforts to build intellectual community have historically taken place outside school walls, thus removing teacher learning from the temporal and spatial milieu of the workplace. Teachers leave the school building to travel to an "institute," often far away, to work and learn with others. While these institutes can be collegial experiences, teachers do not learn with the people they rub shoulders within the workplace. And although summer learning experiences can be rewarding to those who participate, they pose problems as well. On a structural level, they suggest that learning is a "summer activity" accomplished during teachers' free time rather than an ongoing part of professional life. On a practical level, these learning opportunities are often viewed as optional (it is the rare school that requires teachers to attend an NEH institute), and they attract a particular kind of volunteer; individuals passionate about their own learning who can afford the time and tuition. Most important, the voluntary nature of such institutes means that there is already a match between the programs offered and those who volunteer – a fact that raises questions about teachers who choose not to participate. In many cases, the teachers most in need of such an intellectual broadening are the least likely to volunteer. (p. 948)

In addition, Fang (2013) doubted the quality of the trainings and workshops in particular those organised by publishers or so-called experts. Neither of these trainings nor workshops are of great significance

to teachers as they are organised either to serve publishers' commercial purposes or to publicise oftentimes the self-proclaimed experts, rather than to help teachers improve themselves.

> *Professional development for teachers, if any, is often done haphazardly through training workshops conducted by publishers whose primary interest is in promoting their commercial programs or by "experts" who claim to help schools improve student scores in high stake tests. These workshops often do not provide the kind of professional knowledge and support that teachers need to initiate and sustain qualitative changes in teaching practices. (p. 249)*

CONCLUSION

Teaching is hard work (Fang, 2013) and complicated (Little, 1999). No teaching programmes could fully prepare teachers for what happens in the classroom. Hence, continuous support for professional development are undoubtedly essential to help teachers better face (unanticipated) challenges they would encounter during their teaching practices. Such support, as myriad researchers have argued, could happen within a teacher community in which teachers work (Little, 1987, 2002, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 1999; de Lima, 2001; Grossman et al., 2001; McCotter,

2001; Wenger et al., 2002; Erickson et al., 2005; Broad & Evans, 2006; Halverson, 2007; Dooner et al., 2008; Vescio et al., 2008; Stanley, 2011). Through working together, teachers could help each other improve. At their best, Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2001) emphasised the relationship between a teacher community and teacher professional development.

> *Communities are microcosms of larger social collectives in that they pivot on the tension between the rights and the responsibilities of membership. For a community to be sustained, members must believe in their right to express themselves honestly without fear of censure or ridicule. But genuine also make demands on their members – membership comes tied to responsibilities. In a professional community of teachers, a core responsibility is to the learning of other teachers. This responsibility might entail contributing to group discussions, pressing others to clarify their thoughts, engaging in intellectual midwifery for the ideas of others, and providing resources for others' learning. If a feature of pseudo community is withdrawal from the public space when conflict erupts, then a feature of a mature community is the willingness to engage in critique in order to further collective understanding. (p. 980)*

Reciprocity between teacher collaboration and teacher professional development is well documented in literature. Given this and the researchers' current findings of a dearth of teacher collaboration and ineffective workplace policies and plans for teacher professional development, future queries regarding teacher professional development have been raised. How do teachers conceptualise teacher collaboration? What perceptions do teachers hold about working together? In what way could school administrators promote teacher collaboration? How could teacher collaboration be promoted and maintained? What is the relationship between teacher collaboration and teacher professional development? In what way could teacher collaboration accelerate teacher professional development and vice versa? Answers to these questions could possibly unearth the complexities of teacher collaboration and teacher professional development. Additionally, they could also help situate a better understanding of a relationship between cultures of teaching and teacher professional development. More importantly, they could initiate new practices of teacher professional development particularly in Southeast Asia where teacher professional development is limited but urgently needed (Hare & Thomas, 2002; Hu, 2002; Ishida, 2002; Lee, 2002; Mann, 2005).

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