

Reflection after the 2021 ESR Exercise: Teacher Leadership Matters Most

By Principal Chow

In April 2021, we successfully completed the External School Review (ESR) exercise where the external reviewers from the Quality Assurance Sections of the EDB reported to us that the performance of our school in comparison to the 2015 ESR exercise has greatly improved. In the oral feedback session on 29th April, the EDB colleagues showed their greatest appreciation to the efforts our school has made in response to the comments raised in the last report, e.g. using the principle of data-driven and evidence-based approach in the PIEP cycle and making great improvement in management and organisation, school ethos and student support as well as the learning and teaching domains.

With reference to the key literature about school improvement and leadership, the teacher effect, among the key players in a school improvement journey, has a more direct impact on student learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2009; Harris, 2009; Leithwood, et al., 2009). When a school is turned into a professional learning community where leadership for learning at all levels is in place and teacher leadership is fully developed, sustained school improvement focusing on student learning outcomes is more likely to be achieved (Harris, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2006).

Apart from creating the conditions to support change and building a shared vision among its members, the development of teacher leadership at all levels is particularly crucial for sustained school improvement. Among different sources of leadership, teacher leadership for learning, or an integration of transformational and instructional leadership, distributed at different levels of the school in a collective effort, can form a strong capacity to promote and lead changes for school betterment.

Teacher Leadership, as an instrument for “Professional Development” and a pre-requisite for the establishment of a “Professional Learning Community”, is about a redistribution of power and a re-alignment of authority within an organisation (Muijs & Harris, 2006). In general, there are five dimensions of teacher leadership as a form of professional initiative and learning (pp. 964-5):

1. Shared decision making - where teachers are given responsibility to make decisions on important development work;
2. Collaboration - in which teachers operate collegiality for the purpose of securing outcomes linked to improving teaching and learning;
3. Active participation - where teachers are actively involved in core developmental tasks and being participants in the school improvement process;
4. Professional learning - in which teachers are learning both individually and collectively;
5. Leadership as activism - where teachers are engaged with issues directly affecting future changes and continuous school development.

With reference to the experience we have earned in this ESR exercise, no one is the sole hero and neither one of us has been working alone. We have built a team of professional teacher leaders who are capable and keen to learn from scratch, who are willing to change for personal as well as organisational advancement, and who have shared vision and good will to carry on a long-term school improvement journey for the betterment of W F Joseph Lee Primary School (WFJLPS).

Hence, any teacher can be a teacher leader or a change agent who can exercise one’s leadership capacity and share it among the community. As Muijs & Harris (2006) tell us, if teacher leadership is developed and practised effectively, sustained school improvement outcomes can be assured and sustained. Let’s celebrate our joy of having built up a new model of leadership capacity at WFJLPS. Congratulations to all of you!



References:

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Full Class Resumption with Best Preparation

After months of class suspension, our school fully resumed half-day face-to-face classes on 25th March. Principal Chow and all teachers couldn’t wait to see every student’s smiling face again! We firmly believe that no matter how well the online classes are arranged, face-to-face learning and interactions always play an indispensable role in facilitating students’ studies.

Full class resumption would not have been possible without the cooperation from all staff, who undergo comprehensive and regular virus testing. Our janitors also maintain good hygienic standard of the school premises through thorough cleaning and disinfection daily. Hats off to you all!

It’s everyone’s responsibility to take action against COVID-19. With teachers, office staff, students, parents and all other school members working together, we must be able to beat the virus through strong anti-epidemic measures!

► We arrange regular and frequent campus cleaning to ensure a safe learning and teaching environment.



▲ We are thrilled to see you all again on campus!

▲ Always remember to wear our masks and keep our hands clean to protect ourselves as well as others!

P.5 Service Learning: Virtual Visits to Nursing Homes

Service learning has long been a platform for our students to serve the school and others in the community. While the activity had been suspended for over a year due to the pandemic, we made a brand new attempt in late March by arranging our P.5 students to pay virtual visits to nursing homes on campus. Having capitalised on technology (Zoom), we co-organised this pilot run with The Education University of Hong Kong to provide students with extra opportunities to promote intergenerational harmony in the community.

To better prepare each class for the service learning activity, we held briefing sessions on the needs of the senior citizens and equipped students with relevant communication skills. When the big days – 25th March to 31st March – came, all students were thrilled to bits! Some of them hosted the event and introduced their class and activities; some of them led the elderly to dance and draw; some of them helped create a happy and warm atmosphere. Everyone tried their best to engage the elderly and spared no effort in preparing cards and gifts for them. With our series of activities, the senior citizens had broad smiles on their faces!



▲ Students dance with the elderly via Zoom.



▲ Students are teaching the elderly how to draw.



▲ Students write cards to show their love.

Celebrating Christmas Online

Due to class suspension, we celebrated Christmas with students through an online Christmas party. We specially invited Pastor Yau and her team from Mongkok Baptist Church Tin Yan Chapel to be our guests, teaching our teachers how to dance and telling students the story of Jesus Christ. Some teachers even put on a wonderful performance by singing Christmas songs! At the online party, class teachers also played "Guess Who I Am" with the students. Although we could not meet each other physically, the online Christmas party was still an enjoyable and unforgettable one for all of us.



▲ Mongkok Baptist Church Tin Yan Chapel share a Christmas story with us.



▲ Our teachers sing and dance.

One Person One Flower

Our school is committed to developing students' environmental awareness by organising various activities, and "One Person One Flower" has been one of the key events. While it had to be postponed to April because of COVID-19, students still did their best to keep the plants records and take good care of their flowers. They even designed exquisite flowerpots through reusing and recycling! Teachers appreciated their hard work and perseverance. After conducting reviews, we presented awards to the winners of plant growing and flowerpot design competitions. We sincerely hope that by taking small steps, our students will be able to reach the big goal of expressing gratitude to our Mother Nature.



▲ Students and their plant records



▲ Parents and students see the stunning beauty of flowers.



▲ Teachers choose excellent works.



▲ Winners of the flowerpot design competition



▲ Winners of the plant growing competition

Elites of Chinese Culture Shine

The founding of the new school team "Elites of Chinese Culture" is to encourage students to read more Chinese literature, arouse their interests in Chinese language, Chinese culture and Chinese history, as well as promote Chinese learning. This year, the team participated in the "Poetry in Mind" Hong Kong Inter-Primary Schools Chinese Language and Culture Competition (2020-2021) organised by Master Insight. Determined to achieve an outstanding result, the 14 team members had a two-hour intensive training lesson after school every day from Monday to Thursday, lasting from January to February. On 30th March, Chen Zheng Hao (4C), Tai Xi Wen (6C) and Ho Sin Tung Vicky (6E) represented the school to take part in the preliminary round. They successfully beat the other two competitors, namely Hon Wah College (Primary Section) and Xaingang Putonghua Yanxishe Primary School of Science and Creativity! The team even entered the quarter-final with 530 points – the highest mark on that competition day.



▲ Students, teachers and parents are confident.



▲ We have complete confidence in achieving a good result.



▲ We enter the second round with the highest mark on that day!

Love is All Around



▲ Teachers pack the Christmas gifts.



▲ Teacher writes Christmas cards to students.

The school has been eager to stand by each child under the COVID-19 situation. As we could not meet up on campus during class suspension period, we organised "Love is All Around" against all odds! It was a Christmas event in which both teaching and non-teaching staff prepared their handwritten Christmas cards, packed presents with parent representatives, and delivered the Christmas gift bags to students' doorsteps by courier! Through filling everyone's heart with joy and love, the school encouraged students to take the initiative to care about their friends, family and the community.



▲ All staff members share LOVE proactively!

FAMtastic CNY - School Online Celebration

Due to the pandemic, we adopted a virtual mode for Chinese New Year celebration in early February. "FAMtastic CNY – School Online Celebration" had a wide range of activities: watching a traditional shadow puppet show to know more about Chinese culture; learning how to write spring couplets with Principal Chow and School Consultants; making Chinese dumplings with parents of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA); playing Lantern Riddles games through Zoom; as well as making origami lucky bag. Although teachers and students could only meet each other through Zoom, tender care and sincere blessings did not cease. Of course, a loving heart always connects every Wofoo family member together!



▲ Principal Chow and our School Consultant, Principal Tang, teach us how to write spring couplets.



▲ We put on a traditional shadow puppet show.



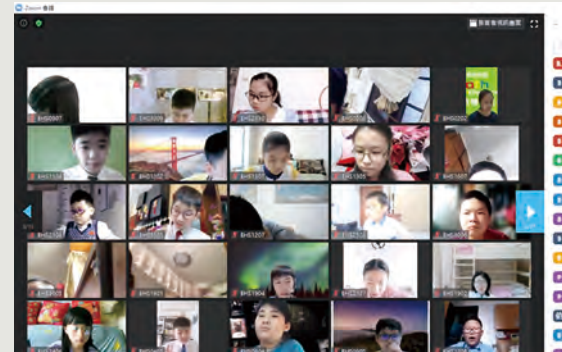
▲ PTA members teach students how to make Chinese dumplings.

The 12th Bethel Cup Primary Schools Mathematics Multi-Challenge

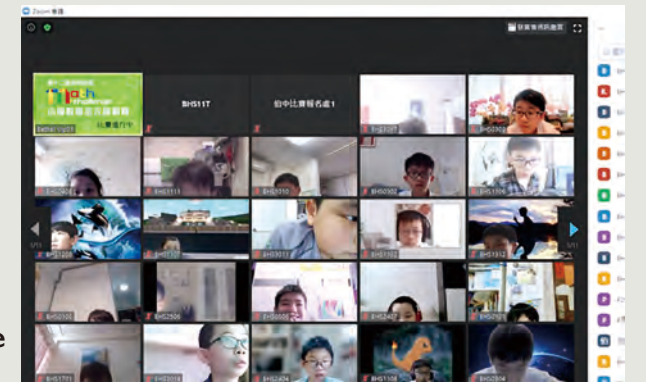
Nine members of the Mathematical Olympiad school team participated in the 12th Bethel Cup Primary Schools Mathematics Multi-Challenge. It is a Mathematics competition organised by Bethel High School for all primary schools in Yuen Long District, focusing on calculation, estimation, logical reasoning, analysis and problem solving. The competition was held on 20th March and our school achieved excellent results – we were the team champion and Zin Hui Hong from 5E was the second runner-up for "Master in Problem Solving"!

| Group Award | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 5A Hui Wang Nok | First Prize |
| 5A Lok Sheung Lam | |
| 5E Zin Hui Hong | |
| 6E Fung Yin Hei | |

| Individual Award | |
|---|---|
| 5E Zin Hui Hong | Second runner-up in 'Master in problem solving' |
| 5A Hui Wang Nok 5A Lok Sheung Lam 5E Zin Hui Hong 6E Cheung Hei Long | First Prize |
| 5B Miu King To 5C Fung Lap Wai 5A Kan Tsz Yiu | Second Prize |
| 6A Cheng Ho Fung 6E Fung Yin Hei | Third Prize |



▲ Students competed with each other through Zoom.



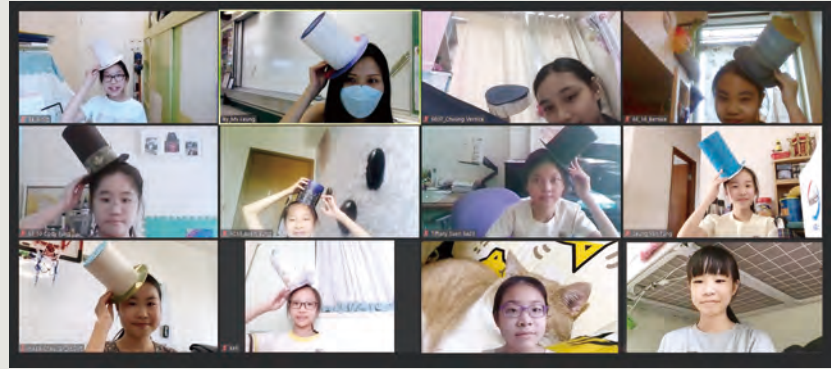
▶ This is the first time that our Mathematical Olympiad school team participated in a competition using the virtual mode.



▲ Prize presentation

Unprecedented Online Training for School Teams

In view of social distancing and limited school hours, it was our first time arranging Zoom training for the academic, sports and performing arts team members. We will continue to enrich students' learning experiences so that their talents can be developed to the fullest extent.



▲ Artaholic Team



▲ Grasshoppers

Language Arts Reflections



▶ The world has enough for everyone's needs, but not everyone's greed. In Language Arts students have been learning about the value of perseverance. In this particular task, our P.6 students had the opportunity to become mentors of our P.1 newcomers and taught them not to be greedy. This poster was a wonderful idea by Chan Yee Ching Kris (6D03) on which she illustrated how bad greediness is.

▶ In order to receive love, you need give some first. In Language Arts, students have been exploring the importance of care. In this particular task, students showed appreciation and recognised the efforts put in by their loved ones. She Zi Tong (2B21) reflected upon how we can show gratitude by doing small acts of kindness.



GO Play Olympics!



▲ Coach Johnnie shows a series of tricks.

In order to strengthen students' sports development and help them form regular exercise habits, we have joined the "Sports Legacy - GO Play Olympics!" Sports Programme organised by the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong. P.E. teachers and coaches from Sports Legacy, who are current and retired athlete representatives of Hong Kong, arranged physical fitness and sports experiential activities for our students.



▲ SKATEBOARDING IS FUN! Let's be COOL.



▲ Students are very interested in the Olympic events.

▶ Apart from physical coordination, jianzi is also very much about teamwork.



▶ The riding skills of our students are excellent.



◀ Do you know why the cycling jerseys of the Hong Kong Olympic Team are grey? According to psychologists, grey is not as easy to arouse opponents' confrontational psychology as red – just like a cow will be nervous when seeing red.

Art Connects All

Our Artaholic members have created some comics according to the school theme this year "Connectedness", as well as our six core values – Care, Respect, Integrity, Responsibility, Commitment and Perseverance. Good job, everyone!



▲ 5B Ng Pak Ching

▶ 5E Chu Pak Nin



▲ 5D Pang Ka Yiu Bethany



▲ 5E Tsang Tsz Ching Reenie

We are the Most Active School in Promoting Reading!

Under the Reading Programme for Children and Youth launched by the Hong Kong Public Libraries, our school has won the Most Active School in Promoting Reading award for the seventh consecutive year. The COVID-19 pandemic can never reduce our passion for reading! Since public library services had been affected for a long time, our Teacher Librarian advocated the use of apps, such as HyRead, Funpark and HuRead 3, to cultivate in students a positive reading attitude. This enabled students to enjoy ebooks and other materials anytime and anywhere during class suspension. Indeed, extensive reading is an important life-long learning skill for all!



▶ We are overjoyed to receive the reading awards. (From left to right) 1st row: Chu Hoi Ching (6D08), Chu Pak Nin (5E04), Chu Hoi Kiu (3E07) 2nd row: Wong Bella Hiu Ching (5E24), Hua Chi Yuen Jonas (6C06), Tang Hei Lam (6C25), Miss Chan Sze Wai



「兒童及青少年閱讀計劃」培養閱讀習慣，得獎及分享中樂與得看

「閱讀新風采 (高小組)」得獎生 羅賢心 (6歲)

「閱讀新風采 (高小組)」得獎生 羅賢心 (12歲)

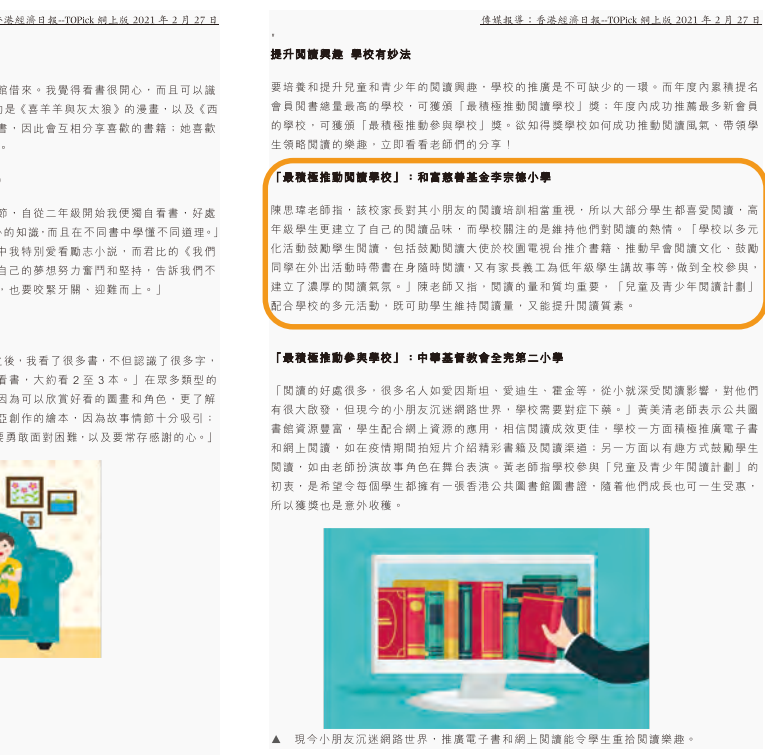
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WFJLPS Parent-Teacher Association at a Glance

Our Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) has been working effectively to enhance home-school cooperation. Due to the pandemic, many of the scheduled activities had to be cancelled, and some parents thus missed the chance to join our fantastic events. To deepen everyone's understanding of the PTA, we are now going to introduce the nature of parent volunteers and our annual activities:

We recruit parent volunteers as/for:

- Lunch Helpers: take care of P.1 and P.2 students during lunch
- Library Helpers: wrap, stamp, categorise and repair books
- Story Mums/Dads: tell stories in Cantonese, Putonghua and English
- Sports Day volunteers
- Tutors for parents
- Campus decoration
- Data input
- Photo taking
- Video recording

Annual events held by the PTA include:

- Parents-Also-Appreciate-Teachers – “Teacher Buffet”
- Mid-Autumn Festival Celebration
- Parents Christmas Party
- Lunar New Year “Poon Choi” Feast
- PTA Picnic
- Joint School Parent Workshops

We truly hope that the pandemic will be over soon so we can all enjoy the above activities for stronger connection!



▲ Let's celebrate!



▲ Take a group photo first.



▲ Library Helpers shelve books.



▲ Story Mum is telling students an interesting story.



▲ We are professional!



▲ Let's make the campus festive!



▲ Parents, thank you for preparing the delicious food!



▲ It is a wonderful night!



▲ What a joyful night!

**Ms. Lee Ching Man
(Parent of 3A Lam Benson)**
In the journey of parenting, my husband and I strongly believe in the importance of character building. We think that good character is fundamental to a positive person, no matter whether he or she is a child or an adult.

Academic achievement is a commonly used measurement of students' success in our highly competitive society. Hence, whether a school provides "good" education is also measured by this quantifiable outcome. Less emphasis is placed on care, courtesy, honesty and perseverance of individuals.

We are thankful that WFJLPS values the character building of students. For instance, Character Building lessons fall under the school's formal curriculum. Different programmes have been implemented as well.

Besides, our school organises a variety of activities every year. It is my honour to join the Parent-Teacher Association to support these activities, cultivating in students positive character attributes such as care, responsibility and commitment. When I was taking part in the events, I had the opportunity to communicate with senior students, and I saw many of their positive character traits. This is self-explanatory that our school's character building efforts are successful.

Fluid Art Workshop



▲ Beautifully unexpected things can happen when your plan goes off course.

Since last year, it has been stressful for teachers to adjust to the "new normal" while maintaining high-quality teaching. Thus, we lay great emphasis on their well-being because this exerts certain effects on students' mental health as well. In late January, Wofoo Community Hub held a Fluid Art Workshop, inviting Ms. Peggy Chan – an expressive arts therapist – to lead staff members to enjoy a relaxing morning of art creation. We even invited kindergarten teachers in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai to join the workshop.

We hope we can spread the joy to our students, sowing the seeds of love across every campus!



▲ This workshop is not only about art but also about meditation and self-reflection.



▲ Principal Chow enjoys the Fluid Art Workshop with kindergarten teachers in the district.



▲ Many teachers experience fluid art for the first time.



▲ Thanks Ms. Peggy Chan for bringing us an artistic morning!

Big Applause for All Non-Teaching Staff

Our school Facebook series "People Behind the Effort" continues to recognise services of non-teaching staff. In the past several months, we featured the Maintenance Technician, Library Assistant, Janitors, Student Service Team, as well as our Community Relations Team.

It has been more than a year since the COVID-19 outbreak. From class suspension to class resumption, every member of our school does their best to provide an ideal study environment for each student. For instance, our Maintenance Technician designed and made space dividers; the janitors work from dawn till dusk to clean the classrooms, toilets, playgrounds and other facilities; our Library Assistant uses the UV book steriliser to clean the returned items one by one.

Our Student Service team and Community Relations team play an essential role in improving home-school communication, especially during class suspension. The Student Service team is always on the frontline of clearing up parents' doubts over online classes, hygienic measures, leave application, and so on. The Community Relations team connects with students, parents and community members by managing the online platforms, assisting in the production of school publications, as well as holding various events for the community.

Can you think of any other special roles in our school? Keep following our Facebook Page for more heroes and show them our appreciation together!



▲ Our janitors clean all classrooms thoroughly.

► Our Library Assistant cleans books with UV steriliser to safeguard students' health.



▲ Our Community Relations team enhances both internal and external connections. Together we share love and embrace the community!

All Students, "RAP" come Back!

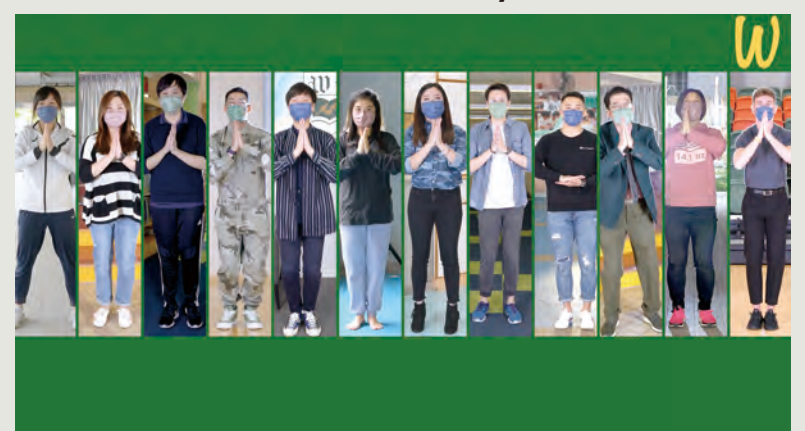
To mark the significance of full class resumption in late March, we prepared all students a surprise before the first day of school – "Fight the Virus Tongue Twister"! Having inspired by the classic tongue twister challenge of a local fast food chain, Principal Chow and 11 teachers became rappers and danced to the rhythm, welcoming every child back to campus! Let's rap the tongue twister, dance with the teaching staff, and fight the virus together!



▲ Students, see you soon!



▲ Principal Chow and 11 teachers practise hard under the guidance of Mr. Pear from Tin Yan Chapel.



▲ Thank you all for the impressive performance!