NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

“Teachers’ Attitudes towards Implementation of the Upgraded Curriculum in a Secondary School”

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Outline

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Introduction

- In 2010 the SPED for 2011-2020 was adopted as organizational basis for the national educational policy stating that by 2015 the Kazakhstani educational system would correspond to the models of developed countries through transition to new reforms
- However, providing quality education remains a challenge (PISA, 2009 results, OECD studies) due to ineffective curriculum inherited from Soviet Union (Fimyar, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi & Silova, 2008; Yakavets, 2014).
- To address the issue Kazakhstani policymakers launched new reform of upgraded curriculum in primary and secondary schools.

Phased implementation of the upgraded curriculum:

2016-2017 – grade 1

2017-2018 – grades 2, 5, 7

2018-2019 – grades 3, 6, 8

2019-2020 – grades 4, 9, 10, 11

Modified areas:

- *Renewed content of the curriculum*
- *Criterion-based assessment*
- *Student-centered approach*
- *Trilingual education*

Problem statement

- Teachers play the vital role in curriculum implementation as they are considered to be the main "agents of change" (Pristley, 2010, p.2). However, some studies revealed (Guskey, 1989; Ayubayeva, 2018) that not always teachers are ready to accept the role of changemakers due to their beliefs and attitudes.
- Henson states, that first of all, teachers must change their behavior in order to accept the changes in the curriculum.
- Hinde concluded that teachers' attitudes and beliefs in the efficacy of change may contribute to successful implementation of educational reform (as cited in Ungar, 2016).
- Therefore, it is highly important to identify teachers' perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards upgraded curriculum and find out the factors that affect the changes in their attitudes

Research Purpose

- The purpose of this mixed methods study is to explore teachers' perceptions of implementing the upgraded curriculum in one of the mainstream schools in Aktau; to identify the level of satisfaction of teachers with new practices; and to analyze the factors influencing on teachers' perceptions of the upgraded curriculum

Research Questions

1. How and to what extent teachers are satisfied with new practices related to the upgraded curriculum?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of implementing the upgraded curriculum?
3. What factors influence on teachers' attitudes towards the upgraded curriculum?

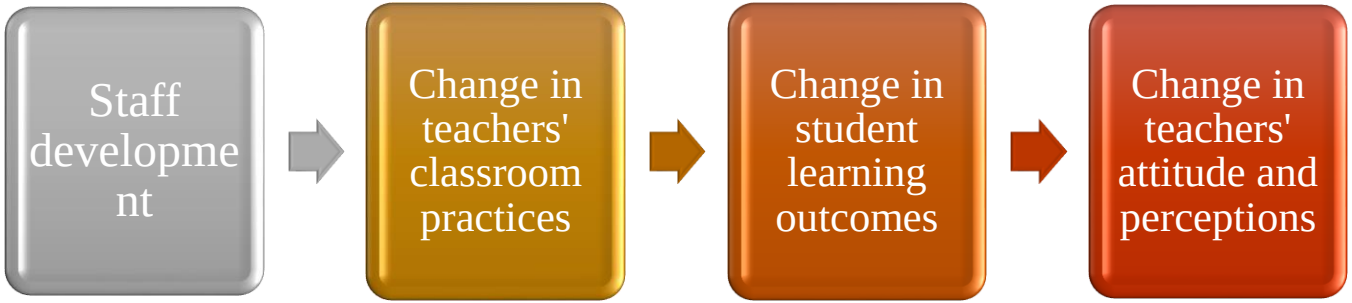
Literature review

According to Fullan (Fullan, 2007; Sparks, as cited in Lynch, 2014) successful implementation of the curriculum include changes in:

- **content of learning materials and resources**
- **teaching strategies**
- **teachers' perceptions of curriculum change**

Change in teachers' attitudes

Change in teachers attitude and beliefs is fundamental ingredient for effective implementation of any reform (Iskandar, 2015; Makenzie & Lawler, 1948; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018) and the most challenging component to modify (Fullan, 2007; Sparks as cited in Lynch, 2014).



Guskey's model of change in teachers' attitude (Guskey, 1989)

Methodology

- Research design: Explanatory sequential mixed methods study

  that "involves a two phase project in which the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase, analyzes the results, and uses the results to plan or build on to the second qualitative phase" (Creswell, 2014, p.224)

- Research site: one of the secondary schools in Aktau, city of Mangystau province, Kazakhstan

Methodology

Quantitative

- **Sampling:** total population sampling
  - Examines the entire population that have a particular set of characteristics (Rai& Tapha, n.d.)
- **Participants:** 42 teachers out of 64 teaching according to upgraded curriculum from 5th to 8th grades
- **Data collection methods:** online survey developed in Qualtrics (January, 2019):
  - General questions about the background of information;
  - Statements on the upgraded curriculum with a rating scale from 1 to 5 (1 means "strongly disagree", 5 means "strongly agree")
  - Some open-ended questions
- **Data analysis:** descriptive analysis

Qualitative

- **Sampling:** maximum variation sampling
  - Criteria: teachers representing different attitudes (based on survey results), subjects, and years of teaching experiences
- **Participants:** 8 teachers (4 teachers with positive attitude, 4 teachers with negative attitude)
- **Data collection method:** 8 semi-structured interviews (1 interview with each teacher) (February, March, 2019)
- **Data analysis:** Hand coding
  - First cycle of coding: generating descriptive and in Vivo codes
  - Second cycle of coding: thematic coding

Teachers attitudes towards content of the curriculum

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
Cross-curricular topics help to support the achievement of learning objectives.	2.4	14.3	19.0	59.5	4.8	**3.50**	.890
New curriculum enhances student skills and competencies.	11.9	4.8	19.0	59.5	4.8	**3.40**	1.083
The curriculum helps to form student attitudes and values.	9.5	11.9	14.3	59.5	4.8	**3.38**	1.081
The provided textbooks correspond to the subject program and the assessment system	7.1	16.7	11.9	59.5	4.8	**3.38**	1.058
The content of subjects corresponds to learning objectives	14.3	11.9	11.9	57.1	4.8	**3.26**	1.191
New curriculum develops more skills than old curriculum	16.7	14.3	11.9	52.4	4.8	**3.14**	1.241
The level of educational material corresponds to the age of students.	11.9	19.0	14.3	52.4	2.4	**3.14**	1.138
The content of the new curriculum is of interest to many students.	16.7	16.7	9.5	54.8	2.4	**3.10**	1.226
The number of hours is suitable for achieving the goals and objectives of the curriculum	11.9	31.0	4.8	52.4	0	**2.98**	1.158

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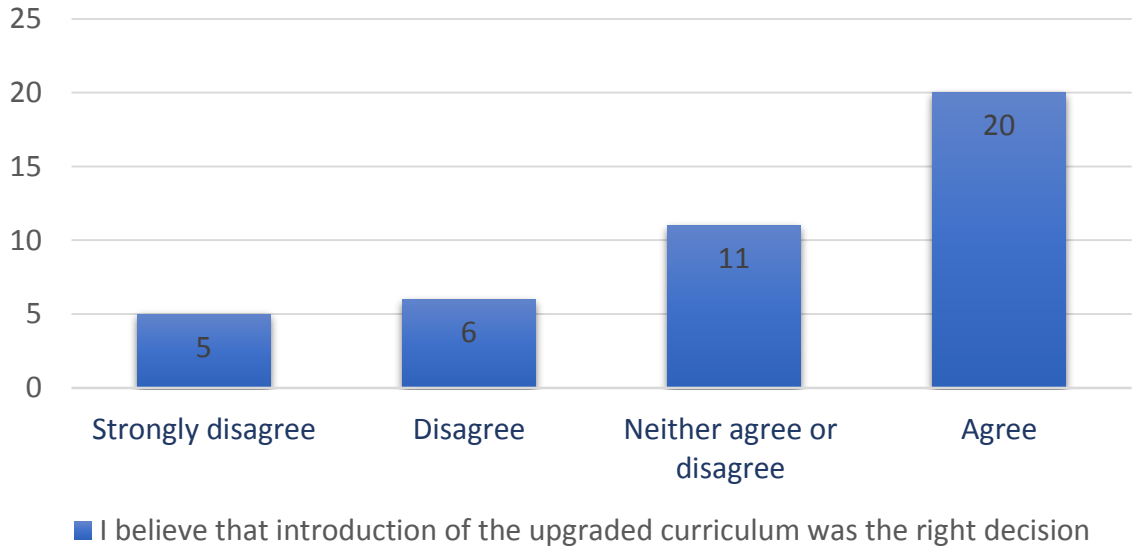
Teachers' attitudes towards assessment

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
I feel confident in the application of criterial-based assessment	7.1	0	31.0	59.5	2.4	**3.50**	.862
I can give effective feedback to each student.	11.9	4.8	23.8	54.8	4.8	**3.36**	1.078
Assessment guidelines are useful for my practice.	4.8	21.4	9.5	64.3	0	**3.33**	.979
Feedback is a very effective tool for improving student achievement.	4.8	9.5	16.7	66.7	2.4	**3.23**	.890
All students understand the learning objectives and work towards their achievement.	7.1	16.7	26.2	50	0	**3.19**	.969
The results of the summative assessment for the term reflect the real knowledge of the students.	7.1	28.6	19.0	42.9	2.4	**3.05**	1.058
The results of the summative assessment for the unit reflect the real knowledge of the students.	7.1	35.7	9.5	42.9	4.8	**3.02**	1.137
Criteria-based assessment shows students' real knowledge	11.9	35.7	11.9	40.5	0	**2.81**	1.110
I have enough time to give effective feedback to the students.	7.1	42.9	11.9	38.1	0	**2.81**	1.042
It is easy to track student performance without evaluating them according to the traditional grading system.	11.9	42.9	14.3	31	0	**2.64**	1.055

I believe that introduction of the upgraded curriculum was the right decision



M=3.10

SD=1.055

Research findings

Teachers perceptions of implementing the upgraded curriculum

Curriculum component	Positive attitudes	Negative attitudes
Changes in the content	• Focused more on development of higher-order thinking skills; • Less theory and more practical exercises (less experienced teachers); • Cross-curricular links	• Students do not pay attention on learning objectives; • Insufficient amount of information on new topic (more experienced teachers) • Less attention is given to grammar;
Changes in the assessment	• Teachers are pleased with summative assessment as it is evaluated based on the score; • Results of SAU and SAT reflect the valid knowledge of students if the tasks are developed according to the topics covered during the unit or term	• Absence of grades complicated daily tracking of students' performance; • Students stopped to prepare for the lessons; • Students as well as their parents do not understand the purpose of formative assessment
Changes in the teaching approach	• Student-centered approach increased students' participation and engagement on the lessons (less experienced teachers); • Teachers-facilitators are not required to explain everything only give directions (less experienced teachers)	• New topic must be delivered by teacher (more experienced teachers) • New teaching methods are applicable in the context of NIS, lyceums or gymnasiums, but not in public schools; • New teaching methods cause problems in classroom management
Teaching in English	• Opportunity for professional growth • Learners can improve their language competence as well	• Difficulties of teaching in English due to lack of speaking skills • Students as well as teachers are not ready • Transition to trilingual education should be implemented gradually

Research Findings

Factors affecting the implementation of the upgraded curriculum

Supportive factors

- Professional development courses and seminars
- Teachers' collaboration within the school: workshops, mentorship, joint lesson planning
- Practicum in pre-service education
- Methodical support (online resources like ***smk*** and ***bilimland***)

Impeding factors

- Poor educational resources (outdated classroom equipment, lack of ICT, absence of labs, no internet connection, complexity of textbooks)
- Diversity and number of students (28-30 students in one class, students with different abilities and social backgrounds, different level of English proficiency)
- Poor parental involvement
- Lack of time and increased workload due to lack of learning resources
- Pressure from the top
- Nostalgia of old curriculum

Discussion

According to Guskey (1989):

1) Teachers should enhance their pedagogical practices through professional development;
2) Apply new practices within their classrooms;
3) Positive changes in students' outcomes;
4) Change in teachers' attitudes

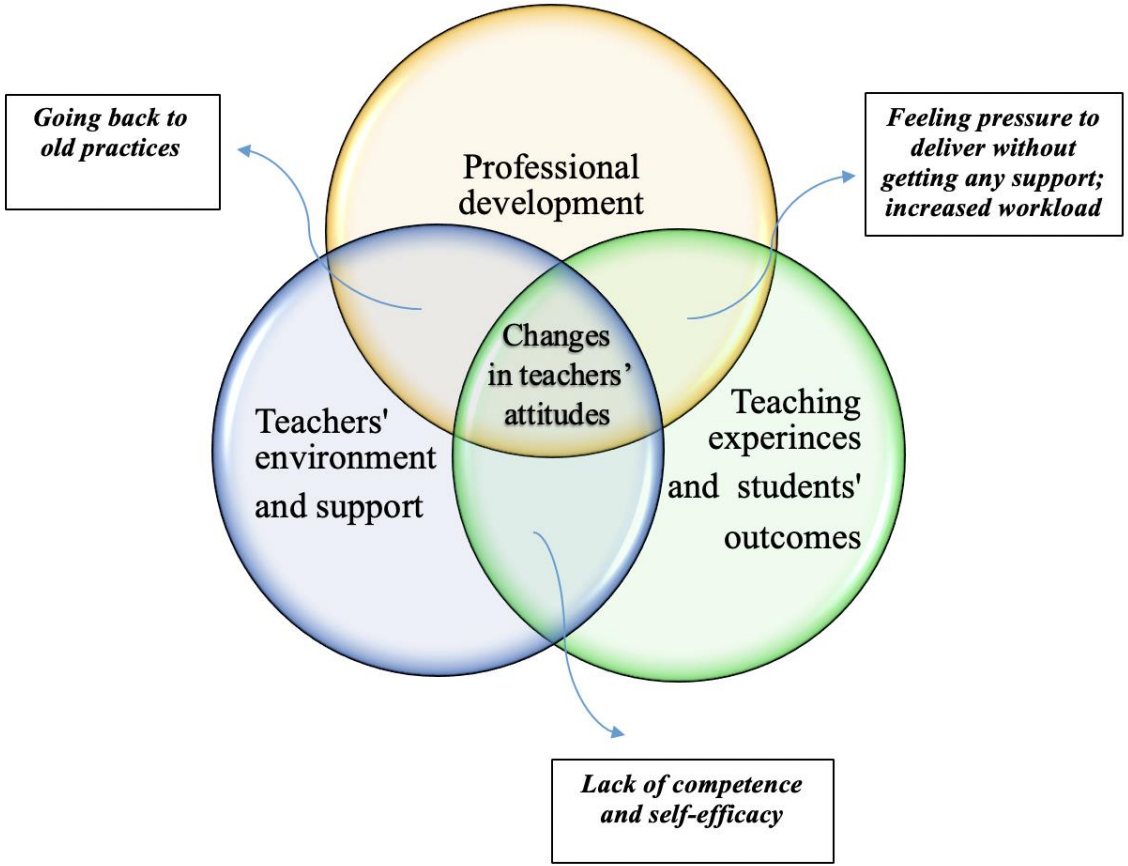
Linear, sequence of outcomes, non-reflective, non-cyclic, challenging factors are not taken into account

According to findings:

- There are teachers who still have not been trained, but despite this have positive perceptions;
- Try to apply new teaching methods;
- Meet challenges in implementing the upgraded curriculum;
- Positive and negative students' outcomes
- Changes in teachers' attitudes

No sequence, all dimensions can interact with each other.

Discussion
What factors influence the change in teachers' attitude towards the upgraded curriculum?



Conclusion

Limitations

- Small-scaled research
- The study was conducted in one mainstream school
- The study considered only teachers' perspectives
- The findings mostly present the perceptions of science teachers

Implications

- Gradual implementation of trilingual education
- To ensure the provision of educational resources
- To promote parent-school relationship
- A larger-scale research would further inform its successful deployment country-wide.

Any questions?
Thank you for your attention!

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