Teachers' Perceptions of a Reporting System for Learning and Development in an "Inviting School" in Hong Kong

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This study was conducted in a Hong Kong secondary school and investigated teachers' views of a nontraditional reporting system referred to as "the narrative student report." The report facilitates delivery of descriptive feedback to students to encourage their development as self-regulated learners. A single location case-study was used with ethnographic components (long-term observation in natural setting, interviews, discussion). Information was collected mainly from observations and individual interviews with 15 teachers. The school is an "inviting school" that has adopted the Invitational Education model as a way of energizing students to realize their full potential. The findings here confirmed data from a previous study that examined students' views of the same system. The students identified four crucial influences that affect the success of the system. To this list, teachers here have added three more influences — teachers' shared beliefs, various learning opportunities, and teachers' professional development. The

findings are interpreted from the perspective of invitational education.

Keywords: feedback; inviting school; reporting system for learning and development

It has long been acknowledged in the field of education that assessment of students' learning is a key component in the overall process of effective teaching (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Lipnevich & Smith, 2008; Walvoord, 2010). An essential accompaniment to assessment is an effective method for reporting the results of such assessments (feedback) to those who need to know. While much has been written about assessment methods, much less attention has been devoted to the efficacy of the *reporting* aspect, and how it can affect students' learning and development (Azwell & Schmar, 1995; Guskey & Bailey, 2001, 2010).

A reporting system is a major method of providing feedback to students, and can have a positive effect on their motivation, self-esteem, and future development (Guskey & Bailey, 2010). It provides a holistic view of students' learning and development that no simple grading system can replace. Whether or not this occurs depends entirely on the ways in which feedback is delivered and the form it takes. A reporting system in a school may comprise a wide range of reporting practices, both formal (e.g., report cards; test results; data provided to education authorities) and less formal (e.g., teacher's written comments on students' work; oral feedback to students; quiz results) (Brookhart, 2004).

A reporting system that provides descriptive and constructive feedback to students is one way in which a school can actively support students' learning and development (Chung & Yuen, 2011; Guskey &

Bailey, 2010). The process of reporting can facilitate genuine dialogue among teachers, students and parents by looking positively at a student's current abilities, achievements and future needs. From this starting point, it becomes easier to give appropriate guidance and support for students' further development. Positive discussions with students about their learning can help enhance their self-efficacy and strengthen their optimism in relation to their learning (Sagor, 2002). Discussions based on assessment data can also provide incentives for students to set themselves relevant goals and to work hard to achieve them. Shea, Murray, and Harlin (2005) have referred to such interactions between teachers and students as "collaborative assessment reporting and instructional planning."

The Role of Feedback in Promoting Learning

It is widely acknowledged that effective feedback plays a significant role in promoting student learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), but it is also clear that not all types of feedback are equally effective (Lipnevich & Smith, 2008). Some forms — for example, merely using grades or marks — can actually damage the self-esteem of low achievers and undermine their motivation (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003). Unfortunately, this tends to be exactly the reporting practice that is traditionally used in many schools (Guskey & Bailey, 2010), particularly in Asia, with students' learning being summarized at the end of each term in some purely quantitative form. This may satisfy the purpose of accountability, but does nothing to inform students of how to improve. A far more effective and encouraging system provides an effective feedback loop between teachers and students. It informs students of what needs to be done to strengthen their learning, and encourages them to take control of their own improvement. In other words, effective feedback provided within a reporting system can positively influence students' development of

self-regulation and autonomy as learners (Butler & Winne, 1995; McCaslin & Hickey, 2001; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Zimmerman, 2000).

The extent to which this does occur depends, of course, on additional factors in the school, such as a supportive environment and a culture that believes in and values all learners (Gysbers & Lapan, 2009; Lapan, Kardash, & Turner, 2002). Such support is a characteristic of schools that are now described as "inviting." An inviting school is one that intentionally creates a culture and opportunities that build students' confidence and autonomy as learners, and that values students' self-regulation.

Invitational Education

A movement in schools that has gained momentum in recent years has intentionally put much emphasis on creating a school environment that are favorable for fostering students' optimum learning and development. This movement has been referred to as "Invitational Education" (IE) (Purkey, 1978). The theoretical underpinnings and practices of IE offer a framework for school staff to refer to when seeking to enrich the physical and psychological conditions of a school (Purkey, 1992). IE regards the school, students, parents, teachers and the community together as an interdependent system (Schmidt, 1997), with everything within that system serving to create an environment in which all learners feel valued and motivated (Purkey & Schmidt, 1996). One of the positive influences within the context of the case school is the reporting system — the subject of investigation in this article.

The five value-based assumptions of IE framework are referred to as *respect*, *trust*, *optimism*, *intentionality*, and *care* (Shaw & Siegel, 2010). These values are conveyed, explicitly and implicitly, through the ways in which *people* interact, the way the environment of the classroom and

school (*place*) is arranged, the *policies* that are enacted, the *programs* that the school offers, and the *processes* involved in engaging with the curriculum and in extracurricular activities. These carriers of the "invitational" message are commonly referred to as the 5Ps — people, places, policies, programs, processes.

Invitational acts and messages in IE schools have proved to serve as powerful sources to promote students' self-efficacy and self-regulation (Usher & Pajares, 2006). In this context, one productive aspect of invitational policies is that they open up the opportunity for IE schools to adopt a reporting system that reflects genuine interest in students' learning and development through an inviting atmosphere. Previous studies on IE have suggested that when it is implemented and sustained well in school, it can increase students' motivation and connectedness to school (Ng, 2013).

Reporting System in an Inviting School

Any reporting system is just one of many sources of feedback given to students. Many other sources of feedback are embedded naturally within the learning environment (e.g., comments made by teachers during lessons; remarks from peers; feelings of personal satisfaction and accomplishment when good outcomes are achieved). These all serve to reinforce the more formal feedback provided in schools to promote better learning. While some of these informal sources of feedback have been investigated in previous research, no studies have so far attempted to investigate ways in which informal feedback can be supplemented by more formalized descriptive feedback in the form of a written narrative report to each student. Within the literature on IE, Maaka (1999) has been one of the few scholars to highlight how assessment and feedback conducted in an inviting environment can facilitate students in reaching their full potential.

Hong Kong is one place where there has been official backing from the Education Bureau for any schools that wish to move toward the IE model. Some schools have taken this opportunity, but have then encountered obstacles, due in large part to the heavily competitive and examination-oriented culture which only stresses results. This culture permeates almost all schools in the region (Berry, 2011; Chiu, 2012), and this has made it difficult to implement a totally different style of reporting students' progress for future needs. Despite the obstacles, the case school has created a system ("the narrative student report") designed to benefit students' learning and whole-person development. The system has been implemented since the school's foundation, more than ten years ago. The school had adopted IE as its policy in the second year after its foundation. The system was reported by the mass media as being one of the promising innovations among the schools in Hong Kong. The system is tied closely with Invitational theory, as manifested in the 5Ps, with "processes" permeating the other four Ps (Table 1).

Understanding the Reporting System From Teachers' Views

Teachers are in the front line in implementing reporting practices, so the way they understand the relationship between the reporting system and the tenets of IE has significant implications for students' learning and development. The aim of the study reported here was to explore how teachers in this school perceive the reporting system — in particular, the effect of contextual aspects on implementing the system. The study hoped to identify factors that potentially facilitate the effectiveness of the feedback system. A previous study had investigated students' own perceptions of the system in this school (Chung & Yuen, 2012). This study focused on teachers' views. The main research question was: From teachers' perspective, what contextual aspects of an inviting school help the reporting system facilitate students' learning and development?

Table 1. Influence of the 5Ps on the Reporting System in the Case School

People:
- Providing constructive comments
- Taking care of students' diverse needs
- Assessing whole-person development
- Creating various learning opportunities to discover and develop potential
- Fostering inviting relationships (teacher-student; student-student; student-parent-teacher)

Places:
- Creating inviting culture and atmosphere
- Publicly displaying exemplary student work
- Seating arrangements in classroom for more collaboration
- Establishing safe environment
- Protecting privacy

Programs:
- Organizing interactive teacher-parent conferences (or student-led conferences)
- Explicit teaching of learning strategies
- Supporting student leadership programs

Policies:
- Creating less competitive environment
- Applying small-class teaching
- Promoting assessment for learning
- Using criterion-referenced assessment
- Using the "Inviting School Survey-Revised (ISS-R)" for school self-evaluation

Processes:
- Promoting communication
- Promoting collaboration
- Encouraging students' involvement
- Promoting higher-order thinking
- Encouraging students' autonomy
- Sharing goals to be achieved with students and parents

Method

This qualitative exploratory study used a single-case design with ethnographic approach (Yin, 2003). In this approach, observations are made of naturally occurring events; and questions are asked, and opinions solicited, from relevant persons. The researcher does not intervene or seek to impose his views upon the normal workings of the establishment (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

The case school is located in a district of Hong Kong where many families of low socioeconomic status (SES) reside. It is a Christian school, accommodating about 1,000 students, and supported by government funding. It shares many characteristics with other schools in Hong Kong, but is acknowledged by the Education Bureau and the community as having high value with respect to its academic performance, and for its many innovative programs. The school was the recipient of the Inviting School Award and the Fidelity Award from the International Alliance for Invitational Education.

Informants

Teachers' perceptions were the focus in this study. The principal researcher was allowed to make contact with all teachers, subject to their individual consents. The teachers in the school had been approached through formal and informal dialogues during school activities, such as open days, staff meetings, teachers' fellowship, professional development programs, and parents' conference days. Special attention was devoted to (i) teachers who are the class tutors of the student informants in the previous study (Chung & Yuen, 2012), and (ii) teachers who are in charge of the reporting system or programs relevant to IE. Fifteen teachers, including the Principal and Vice Principal, were invited to participate in one-to-one individual interviews (see Table 2). In the discussions and comments below, each teacher is identified by the code in parentheses.

Table 2. Teacher Informants in Individual Interviews

Teacher	Gender	Experience in the school (Years)	Class tutor of the student informants	Major duties	Interview date (yy-mm-dd)
T1	M	10		Maths / General affairs	10-04-22 10-07-13
T2	F	9		PE / Co-curricular activities	09-11-11
T3	F	9		Liberal Studies / Guidance	09-12-09
T4	F	9		Liberal Studies / Vice Principal	11-07-15
T5	F	9		Liberal Studies / Educational and career guidance	10-09-09
T6	F	8		English language / Invitational education	10-07-13
T7*	M	8	Yes	Arts / Invitational education	11-06-14
T8	F	8	Yes	Maths / Guidance	11-05-18
T9	M	6		PE / Liberal Studies / Co-curricular activities	09-11-06 09-11-11
T10	M	5		Maths / Guidance	10-03-05
T11	F	5	Yes	Chinese language / Home-school association	11-06-15
T12	M	4		Chinese Language / Special educational need	11-07-05
T13	F	3		Principal	09-10-21[#] 10-06-17
T14	M	2	Yes	English language / General affairs	11-06-16
T15	M	2	Yes	Biology	11-05-24

* The audio recording file was damaged.

[#] Paper record only.

Data Collection

The data collected in this study came mainly from interviews with the target teachers, but was reinforced by observations made over

a period of two years in the school. Data were collected during 62 school visits over two school years (2009–2011). Informal discussions, together with sit-in observations during the parents' conference days, were also sources of information. Table 3 indicates the questions and issues discussed during interviews. Each interview lasted between thirty minutes to one hour. Interview data were first stored in an MP3 recorder and then transcribed verbatim in Chinese.

Table 3. Focus and the Key Questions in Interviews

Focus and key questions
A. Background information on the school (policies, programs, and practices)
B. Perceptions of the school context
1. What do you think helps to establish a positive relationship between teachers and students? Why does it happen?
2. Are there any cultural impacts on school policies and practices?
3. What are the most factors determining students' learning and development? In what way are they influential?
C. Information of the reporting system and its related components
1. Why did the school choose to adopt this reporting system?
2. What are the major features of the system? How do they work?
3. How is the daily reflection session operated?
4. How does the school arrange the parents' conference days? Why are the days organized in that way?
D. Perceptions of the reporting system and its related components
1. What is your opinion of the reporting system at your school?
2. How does the system help to improve students' learning and development?
3. What are the facilitating / distracting factors that affect the implementation of the system? In what ways do they facilitate or distract?
4. Do you see any relationship between the system and the guidance / IE work at the school?
5. How do the students perceive the reporting system and its related components?

Data Analysis

By adopting the continuous approach typical of ethnographic study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), data analysis and data collection were intertwined throughout the process. Using the interview transcripts and observation notes, analysis was conducted to identify main contextual aspects emerging from teachers' comments. During the first-round classification of responses from teachers, preliminary coding labels were used to identify and categorize words, phrases and sentences that formed meaningful units. After reading the transcripts several times, the codes were refined to reflect higher-order attributes at the category level. A second coding was conducted to validate the codes and categories that had been identified in the first stage (see Table 4).

An experienced teacher helped to review the transcripts and check the codes and categories. The inter-coder reliability was 93.3%. Finally, relevant phrases and sentences emerging from the coding process were then translated into English and stored.

To enhance the internal validity of this study, strategies suggested by Merriam (1998) were applied. For example, multiple sources of data were used to triangulate the emerging findings; an interim report was prepared for the school, and findings were shared with the school staff; data were collected through long-term observations; critical friends from inside and outside the school were invited for examination on the emerging findings.

Findings

Based on teachers' expressed views, the student reporting system in this inviting school was found to be positively connected to the whole-school policy for learning and teaching. The system has set up a triadic bond for effective communication among teachers, parents,

Table 4.   Coding Table and Categorization

Highlights in the transcripts	Code (Level 1)	Code (Level 2)	Aspects
1. Information of the school	Sch		
• School beliefs	_B		
• Policies and programs	_P/P		
- Decision making		_DM	Shared beliefs
- No demerits and conduct marks		_ND	
- Discipline and guidance works		_DG	
- No elite classes		_NE	Relationships
- 3 years with same class		_3	
- Artifacts display		_AD	Opportunities
- Co-curricular activities		_CCA	
- School evaluation practices		_SE	Reflection practice
- Staff professional development		_PD	Professional development
• School culture	_C		Shared beliefs
2. Perceptions of the school	P(Sch)		
• Shared beliefs	_B		Shared beliefs
- Student uniqueness		_U	
- Process rather than product		_P	
- Success for all		_Su	
• Relationships	_Rela		Relationships
- Teachers and teachers		_T/T	
- Teachers and students		_T/S	
- Students and students		_S/S	
• Opportunities	_Opp		Opportunities
• Collaborative culture	_Co		Shared beliefs
3. Information in the reporting system and its related components	Rep		
• Report booklet	_Bk		Constructive comments
• Parents' conference days	_PCD		
• Daily reflection practice	_Refl		Reflection practice
• Staff professional development	_PD		Professional development
4. Perceptions of the reporting system and its related components	P(Rep)		
• Shared beliefs	_B		Shared beliefs
• Learning and development	_LD		
- Constructive comments		_Com	Constructive comments
- Staff professional development		_PD	Professional development
- Opportunities		_Opp	Opportunities
- Teachers and students relationship		_Rela_T/S	Relationships
- Reflection practice		_Refl	Reflection practice

and students. Most importantly, the system provides a feedback chain for students' self-evaluation and improvement. The major components of the system are the students' report booklet, parents' conference days, daily reflection sessions for students, and staff professional development.

The Report Booklet

By using a criterion-referenced method, the narrative report booklet not only summarizes students' grades in examinations, but also separately informs readers of each student's learning attitude, current performance, strengths, weaknesses and future needs. Every subject teacher writes relevant descriptions of these aspects in each student's report booklet, and these become the basis of individual counseling, discussion and goal setting with student, parents and other teachers. The comments place major focus on the learning process and areas for improvement. When compared with most traditional reporting practices used in local aided schools in Hong Kong, this is distinct and uncommon.

Parents' Conference Days

Parents' conference days provide regular opportunities for teachers, parents and students to meet together to discuss all aspects of a student's learning and developmental progress. On that day, students and their parents can communicate with their class teachers and all other subject teachers, so that they have full understanding of how well the students had performed in school and what improvements can be made. The report booklet serves as a focal point for dialogues on that day.

Daily Reflection Sessions for Students

Time is set aside each day for students to reflect upon their own progress in learning, and to identify aspects of study or behavior that they need to work on. These reflection sessions are designed to help

students take full responsibility for their learning, and are part of the drive of IE to encourage student autonomy.

Staff Professional Development

The school has placed an emphasis on supporting teachers through professional development. The strategies used include meetings, mentorship, and professional workshops. These strategies foster a collaborative culture, and teachers are required to attend meetings to discuss important issues in the school that have impact upon the maintenance of the "inviting culture." This helps refresh and reinforce the original belief and practices underpinning the reporting system within the context of an inviting school. The teachers tend to treat these meetings as learning opportunities, because often they go away equipped with some new insights. In the meetings, the skills and the rationale behind every inviting practice can be shared and discussed.

In answer to the research question, the six main contextual aspects that emerged from the teachers' responses during individual interviews are summarized below. These aspects are the factors that help the reporting system facilitate students' learning and development.

Teachers' Shared Beliefs

While students perceive one of the contributing factors to the reporting system is teachers' caring attitude (Chung & Yuen, 2012), teachers perceive their shared beliefs as being the most important factor. According to the Vice Principal (T4), this reporting system was established because the staff believed sincerely that every student could be helped to improve and to reach their potential. During the interview with the Vice Principal, she cited the slogan displayed at the school gate: "Every student has dignity. Every student is able to learn. Every student is able to succeed." In the interviews, many teachers expressed

the view that the reporting system was indeed in line with the beliefs of IE. Below are the beliefs that they highlighted.

Holistic view of personal development

Teachers saw a relationship between the reporting practices and the concept of "whole person" development. One teacher (T11) commented: "I think the reporting system is related most closely to the aspect of whole-person education and holistic assessment. This is because we cover a wide range of aspects [of students' performance] and describe them in the report." Another teacher (T1) emphasized: "We should not see a student just from one perspective."

Learning is a process rather than a product

The Principal (T13) remarked: "We value the process rather than the product in our beliefs about education. To me, the traditional report is just an example of 'product.' The grade is too vague, and not helpful … It is important to tell students that this is not the end of learning. They are still engaged in the learning process." One teacher (T8) also thought that the report booklet itself was indeed a "process" because it showed the students how well they are performing at regular intervals.

Success for all

The philosophy of IE (and of the reporting system) is that all students can be helped to be successful. A teacher (T5) shared how she encouraged her students, even with poor grades, by praising other aspects of their performance in the report.

One guidance teacher (T8) remarked: "This report booklet is a means of recognition." It gave students a sense of achievement, and this turns into a drive for improvement. Another teacher (T10) commented: "In many situations, if students do not gain any success in academic

study, they will look for it in other areas … but once their sense of achievement is strengthened, they have greater satisfaction yet with fewer problems."

Competition between students (for example, trying to beat others by getting the highest grade) does not sit well in the culture of an inviting school. To create a noncompetitive learning environment, the school chose not to set up any elite class. A teacher (T14) used the strategy of peer tutoring and claimed: "All students in the class are able to succeed."

Students' uniqueness

The teachers all expressed the belief that every student is unique. One guidance mistress (T3) commented that, even though two students might have obtained the same mark, their understanding of the subject might not be the same. By using this reporting system, the teacher can highlight the unique strengths and specific needs of each student. Another teacher (T10) observed that they might use different strategies to deal with similar cases: "We are concerned with the uniqueness of every student." One teacher (T8) affirmed the need to *personalize* comments: "Every student is unique. Students have their own face. It does not make any sense to simply enter bland, all-purpose comments from a pre-set pool to fit them in."

Teacher-Student Relationships

One teacher (T11) explained that a good relationship between teachers and students is a prerequisite for ensuring the success of the reporting system. It was also a key to maintaining a positive and supportive school climate. The school intended to create an environment that fostered these good relationships. One way to achieve this was the school policy that required all students, class tutors, and major subject

teachers to remain together as a class for three consecutive years. One teacher (T15) pointed out: "Teachers have to follow the students for three years after they arrive in S1 [Grade 7]." This policy helped to build trust between students and teachers throughout the years, and enabled the teachers to discover in depth the motivation and learning characteristics of each student. This fostered mutual communication important in building a good relationship that embodies the five value-based assumptions of IE.

Various Learning Opportunities

As the school believed that every student was able to succeed in some aspects other than academics, they provided the students with a wide range of opportunities. The school offered a variety of activities in six categories spreading over three terms. Students were required to engage in all categories throughout their school life. Students' participation in community services and extracurricular activities are recorded in their report booklet. Performance criteria are listed in ten categories for students' self-evaluation. For low achievers in academics, more opportunities in other domains mean more chances of success.

A guidance mistress (T3) addressed the importance of recognition: "Every student will know they can achieve something in some area, even though they may be weaker in certain subjects … They feel that some success is possible, and the chance of overall improvement will hence be increased." One teacher (T12) remarked that success in nonacademic activities might someday transfer to other areas such as academics. Another (T14) believed that different learning opportunities could particularly help those students who were less confident.

Constructive Comments

The teachers in the school shared the same view with students in

this aspect. Constructive comments usually embody practical advice for achieving improvement and building confidence by highlighting strengths. The Principal (T13) suggested that a "constructive comment" was more than simply praising or appreciation: "The aim of the reporting booklet is to enhance the performance at the next step, so the comments should be practical." A teacher of physical education (T2) believed that the comments could help students improve. Some of them would take appropriate actions because they felt the teachers really cared about them. She shared a story that a student actually improved his physical fitness after reading the comments in his booklet.

The positive messages conveyed through constructive comments helped students feel more confident; and this indirectly pushed them to strive for better performance. An English teacher (T14) believed that constructive comments were important in recognition of the effort the students had made. The teacher also perceived that the oral comments on parents' conference days, and written comments in the reporting booklet, are complementary in addressing the students' strengths.

The teachers observed that most of the students were eager to read the comments written by their teachers. One teacher (T2) reported that: "They [students] like this sort of reporting booklet because it shows them the good deeds they have done." Students improve in learning and development because there was a drive to earn good comments from teachers.

Comments that state explicit expectations can give students hope and indicate ways to do better. A guidance teacher (T10) emphasized: "It [The report booklet] gives students chances to try again…. This is what we teachers look for." He added: "Our suggestions are positive. If they follow the advice, success is expected to come."

Another guidance teacher (T3) shared the same view: "In general, students are willing to make improvements if we build their hopes. No matter how poor their foundations are, they will then try to improve. Once they feel there is hope, they will try to work with you."

Self-reflection Practice

The reporting system was linked closely with the students' self-reflection practice. The Vice Principal (T4) explained why the school requested the students to reflect daily: "We try to nurture the students' capacity for self-reflection so that they can become the masters of their learning." The students were, therefore, encouraged to reflect on their learning after every class, every day and every week. They were also required to complete a "reflection form" after reading their report booklets.

Although the teachers agreed to the effect of the practice, some teachers felt that the self-reflection practice is not equally helpful to every student, and that it was not a panacea. Two teachers (T11 & T8) shared the view that the effect depended on students' attitude; it was only helpful to those who were diligent and sincere. One believed that the positive outcomes depended on the students' self-discipline and self-management skills. Another (T12) commented that the reflection exercises might be too difficult for students who had learning difficulties or special educational needs.

Teachers' Professional Development

The school has placed an emphasis on professional development to support teachers. An experienced teacher (T6) affirmed that collaboration was the key to sustaining the IE belief; and that teacher development had prioritized "working together" and "sharing a common purpose." A

new teacher (T14) recalled his first impression of the school: "The most attractive feature is the quality of the colleagues one works with. Last year, when I joined the school, I got a lot of support and encouragement from my colleagues."

One teacher (T12) explained: "The skills and the rationale behind every practice can be shared and discussed." Another teacher (T2) stated: "Although there are many meetings in the school, I don't think they increase my workload. They actually help consolidate my work." Another colleague (T9) emphasized that: "The meetings are very helpful and should not be omitted. We don't want to labor alone, in particular the new teachers." The Vice Principal (T4) explained that they made use of every meeting to facilitate communication so that teachers' mindset could be adjusted from time to time.

Two years previously, the school set up a new "three-person mentorship scheme" to replace a traditional scheme. This involves three teachers with different lengths of experience offering mutual support. A teacher (T9), who had experienced this scheme, emphasized that it did promote continuity of philosophy and purpose: "This was what my mentor taught me and that I accepted. In turn, I will pass this belief to new teachers. This is a manner of heritance."

Workshops were the most common channel for delivering updated practical skills to teachers. One teacher (T8) explained: "Before writing comments [in report booklets] there are workshops for new teachers." A teacher (T6) stressed: "We will review the rationale behind the practice, and colleagues will analyze some samples provided." The Vice Principal (T4) elaborated: "We start the training at the very beginning. New teachers will immediately know something about the report booklet through the orientation activities."

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the associations between IE principles and the feedback system, as perceived by the teachers who operate the system. The findings from the teachers' perspective in many respects validated the findings of a previous study that explored students' perspectives (Chung & Yuen, 2012). In addition to the four aspects emerging from students' views (*constructive comments*, *teachers' attitudes*, *relationships*, and *self-reflection*), three more aspects emerge from teachers' views. As described above, these can be summarized as *teachers' shared beliefs*, *various learning opportunities*, and *teachers' professional development*. Analyzing students' and teachers' perceptions together, it can be seen that the aspects found in the study are clearly all associated with the five values-based assumptions of IE (respect, trust, optimism, care, and intentionality). The study shows that the formative reporting system and the inviting school atmosphere are complementary. The effectiveness of the reporting system is mediated by a number of context-specific aspects perceived important by students and teachers.

The students had perceived that teachers' attitudes are important; and these attitudes are, of course, closely influenced by teachers' shared beliefs. The shared beliefs are rooted in the five IE basic assumptions. People's beliefs do affect the way they receive and process feedback (Butler & Winne, 1995), but the literature on feedback seldom mentions that teachers' beliefs contribute to the nature of feedback they provide. An inviting school always faces the challenge of how best to develop and uphold teachers' beliefs about IE. Staff development must continue to be a very strong commitment, in which beliefs and practices of experienced teachers are reinforced and shared constantly, while new teachers are inducted into IE philosophy. This explains why, in the case school, a great deal of effort is given to teachers' professional development.

The teachers in the case school are trained to give constructive comments on students' learning in all aspects. Descriptive and constructive feedback provided in the report informs students of how in future they could tackle specific learning tasks, and how best to meet the criteria prescribed. In this respect, the system is one important way of helping each student advance through their zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1962). Undoubtedly, constructive feedback provided within the individual's ZPD can facilitate development of greater self-regulation (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

In the context of an inviting school, this process is supported through inviting relationships (Purkey & Schmidt, 1987) between teachers and their students, and through students feeling trusted and valued as learners with potential. Because of the optimistic belief in human's potential, the school provides a wide range of learning opportunities for the students. This opens up the greater possibility of success among students.

Conclusion

In this study, the inviting culture of the case school provided a social context favorable to students' learning and development. The reporting system, as implemented, is entirely in keeping with the school's IE philosophy, and is mediated by a number of aspects that are perceived to be important by both students and teachers.

The findings here strengthen the view that the inviting environment is closely connected to the efficacy of the reporting system for students' learning and development. The implications are twofold. First, the study has enriched the IE theory in relation to the reporting system. An invitational approach to reporting system can maximize the level of functioning of students in an educational setting (Schmidt, 1997).

Second, the study potentially extends the educational function of the reporting system by transforming it also into a guidance tool. A specific system of feedback provides direction and support that makes more practical the self-regulated learning model proposed by Lapan et al. (2002). In doing so, the reporting system contributes to the overall goal of invitational education, namely to foster confident and autonomous learners. It can also enhance and make viable the guidance role of all teachers for supporting their students' whole-person development.

While it is obvious that all schools could benefit from moving toward a reporting system that provides constructive feedback to students, it is less obvious whether these benefits would be as easily achieved in schools where the climate is less inviting and more competitive in the academic domain. It is also doubtful if the same measure of success could be achieved in schools that devote less time to supporting teachers in their ongoing professional development. Findings here suggest that schools in Hong Kong should respond more widely to the Education Bureau's encouragement to adopt invitational education philosophy and practices. One effective practice that they could then implement would be a student-centered reporting system such as that described in this article.

Future studies to evaluate personalized reporting systems should be undertaken in other inviting schools, particularly those that perhaps do not have a policy of keeping teachers and students together for three years. It is important to discover to what extent a reporting system would have the same positive impact on students who move from teacher to teacher each year? Similarly, would students and teachers in schools with different organizational structures view the reporting system in the same positive way?

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在香港一所啟發潛能學校內為了促進學習與成長的成績報告系統：教師的觀感

本研究在一所香港中學進行，旨在探討教師對一個新穎的成績報告系統（亦稱作「敘事式學生成績報告」）的看法。該成績報告向學生提供描述式的回饋，藉此鼓勵他們發展成為自主學習者。研究採用了定點單案例的方法，配合人類誌的部分策略（包括長時間在一個真實情境中觀察，訪談及討論）來進行，資料主要來自觀察，以及與校內十五位教師的個別訪談。研究在一所「啟發潛能學校」內進行，該校一直採用啟發潛能教育模式來推動學生發揮他們的潛能。是次研究結果肯定了之前探討學生對同一系統的看法。學生曾指出對該系統成功的四個主要影響因素，在此之上，教師在本研究中再多加三個因素，分別是教師的共同信念、不同類型的學習機會，以及教師的專業發展。本文會以啟發潛能教育的角度分析和討論這些發現。

關鍵詞： 回饋；啟發潛能學校；促進學習與成長的成績報告系統