

Paper Title:

How Chinese School Teachers Understand the Relationship Between Teaching Research and Teacher Research: A Discourse Analysis of Teachers' Discourse on Teaching Research and Teacher Research

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Abstract

Research on teacher professional development through professional learning has long been a concern in educational research. In the field of basic education, two developments have shaped teachers' professional growth. On one hand, the teacher research movement, which emerged in the United States in the 1980s, advocated a shift in teachers' roles from knowledge transmitters to knowledge creators and agents of educational change. Influenced by this movement, China's New Curriculum Reform, launched in 2001, has required teachers to undertake research projects and transform themselves into "research-oriented teachers." On the other hand, the strong performance of Shanghai students in the early 2000s PISA assessments drew international attention. The teaching research group (*jiaoyanzu*), a locally developed professional learning practice in China, is considered a key factor in explaining the success of Shanghai's education.

As two ways of teachers' professional development, increasing attention has been

paid to teaching research and teacher research. However, a question that is often overlooked is how teachers, as the principal agents of these activities, understand the relationship between them. This study seeks to explore how teachers understand the relationship between teaching research and teacher research, which is of great significance for understanding the complexity of teachers' professional development and education reform today.

This study conducted participant observation of school teachers' teaching research and teacher research activities, and carried out in-depth interviews with teachers. Based on discourse analysis on teaching and teacher research, the study explores teachers' understandings of the relationship between teaching research and teacher research.

The results are presented as follows. First, metaphor analysis shows that teachers use metaphors to understand teaching research, teacher research, and the relationship between them. Teacher research is constructed through a "technology enterprise" metaphorical set as an enterprise-like practice that is goal-oriented, efficiency-driven, and results-focused. Teaching research is constructed through a "rural landscape" metaphorical set as a relational, situated, and continuous form of "cultivation" in life. Teachers employ differentiated metaphorical sets to highlight the differences between the two, while also drawing on the "martial arts" metaphorical set to frame their relationship. This metaphor not only provides a framework for understanding the relationship between teaching research and teacher research, but also describes teachers' professional development as a growth narrative from novice teacher to master teacher, revealing teachers' efforts to integrate teaching research and teacher research into a single framework of professional development.

Second, structuralist analysis of the discourse shows that teaching research and teacher research are embedded in an integrated categorizing system. Teachers introduce teaching research and teacher research as mediators in proper order into his or her mental structure, gradually reconciling the discontinuity between practice and theory and balancing their mental structure. Through the two mediating effects of teaching research and teacher research, teachers ultimately reconnect the initial opposite terms and establish a continuous mind structure of "practice—teaching—teaching research—

teacher research—academic research—theory.”

Third, analysis of how the discourse on teaching research and teacher research interacts with social discourse shows that teachers extensively cite and rework social discourse to create discourse on teaching research and teacher research. In the context of educational reform, teachers need to respond to reform demands and institutional pressures while also making sense of their practices of teaching research and teacher research. They therefore cite political slogans, quotations from John Dewey, commercial advertisements, and financial jargon, and rework these social discourses to create discourse on teaching research and teacher research. This process of citation, rewriting, and discursive production is a form of textual poaching through which teachers position teaching research and teacher research as activities that lead and promote educational development, and construct their professional identity as leaders of educational reform.

According to the results, this paper argues that first, under the multiple demands and institutional conditions of educational reform, teachers' professional identity needs to be negotiated through the contestation of multiple identities. Second, teachers engage in epistemological work in teaching research and teacher research. Their meta-understanding of professional activities constitutes an epistemological structure, which represents an implicit dimension of teachers' professional development. Third, the world in which schools and educational reform operate is manifestly complex, uncertain, paradoxical and chaotic. The production of everyday discourse represents teachers' tactical responses to educational reform. Fourth, methodologically, the discourse analysis in this study attends not only to textual interpretation and explanation, but also to textual selection, and suggests that marginalized texts provide an effective entry point into teachers' worlds of meaning.

Keywords: China; teaching research; professional learning community; jiaoyan; teacher research; discourse analysis