

**Linkage between Innovative Management and
Student-Centred Approach:**

Platform Theory for Effective Learning

Yin Cheong CHENG

Centre for Research and International Collaboration
Hong Kong Institute of Education

Invited Plenary Speech

**At the Second International Forum on Education Reform:
Key Factors in Effective Implementation**

Held by

The Office of the National Education Commission

2-5th September 2002

Bangkok, Thailand

Linkage between Innovative Management and Student-Centred Approach: Platform Theory for Effective Learning

Yin Cheong CHENG
Hong Kong Institute of Education

In current educational reforms in different parts of the world, how to ensure the relevance of school reforms to students' effective learning is a major concern in implementation. In particular, when school-based management is a major movement giving schools more autonomy and flexibility to procure and use resources in management and conduct educational activities at the site level, people are concerned with how education decentralization can be managed with a clear structure and direction for facilitating student-centred approach of teaching and effective learning of students. The international failing experiences of school reforms in the past decade alarm educators and reform leaders to pay serious attention to the linkages of education reforms with students' effective learning (Cheng & Cheung, in press; Caldwell and Spinks, 1998).

This presentation aims to show how to build up a strong linkage between innovative management and student-centred approach through the application of the paradigm shift in learning, the platform theory and the insights of implementation of school-based management in the past years.

Implications from Paradigm Shift in Learning

As highlighted by Cheng (2000, 2001), there is paradigm shift in learning from the traditional site-bounded learning to the new triplization learning in the century (see Table 1). In the new paradigm, learning should be individualized, localized, and globalized with aims to create unlimited opportunities for students' life long learning and for development of their contextualized multiple intelligence (CMI). Student is the centre of education. Students' learning should be facilitated to meet their needs and personal characteristics, and develop their potentials particularly CMI in an optimal way. Students can be self-motivated and self-learning with appropriate guidance and facilitation, and learning is a self-actualizing, discovering, experiencing, and reflecting process.

Therefore, teaching and schooling should be conducted in a student-centred approach.

Table 1: Paradigm Shifts in Learning

<u>New Triplization Paradigm</u>	<u>Traditional Site-Bounded Paradigm</u>
<p><u>Individualized Learning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is the centre of education • Individualized Programs • Self-Learning • Self-Actualizing Process • Focus on How to Learn • Self Rewarding 	<p><u>Reproduced Learning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is the follower of teacher • Standard Programs • Absorbing Knowledge • Receiving Process • Focus on How to Gain • External Rewarding
<p><u>Localized and Globalized Learning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Sources of Learning • Networked Learning • Life-long and Everywhere • Unlimited Opportunities • World-Class Learning • Local and International Outlook 	<p><u>Institution-Bounded Learning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-Based Learning • Separated Learning • Fixed Period and Within Institution • Limited Opportunities • Site-Bounded Learning • Mainly Institution-based Experiences

Innovative School Management Aiming at Effective Learning. From the above paradigm shift in learning, some implications can be drawn for innovative school management aiming at promoting student-centred approach and effective learning in the new century, as shown in Table 2.

Innovative Management for Individualized Schooling. School should be managed as a facilitating place for students’ learning. School itself is developed as contextualized multiple intelligence environment for supporting students to develop their multiple intelligences. Each school has its own strengths, potential, and characteristics. Based on their strengths, different schools can manage schooling in different styles to maximize their own contributions to students’ learning. The focus of schooling is to arouse curiosity and motivation of both students and teachers to think, act, and learn in a multiple intelligence way. The schooling is managed as an open process to initiate, facilitate, and sustain self-learning and self-actualization of students and teachers. It provides opportunities to share the joy of learning and teaching among teachers and students. To face up the challenges in the new century and pursue contextualized multiple intelligences, school is a continuously learning and developing organization, involving institutional continuous discovery, experimenting, actualization, reflection, and development.

Innovative Management for Localized and Globalized Schooling: Schools and their schooling should be managed in such a way such that all types of transfer, adaptation, and development of related values, knowledge, technology, and norms can bring in local and global resources, supports, and networks to maximize the opportunities for their developments and their contributions to students’ learning and teachers’ teaching. There are multiple local and global sources of teaching and

learning – self-learning programs and packages, web-based learning, outside experts, community experiential programs, etc. - inside and outside the school, locally and globally. Parents and communities, including social services, business, and industry, are actively involved in schooling. The partnership with them is necessary to support effective networked schooling and multiple sources of learning. Locally and globally networked schooling can provide a wide spectrum of learning experiences and maximize opportunities for teachers and students to benefit from various settings and cultures. With the help of globalized schooling, students can learn the world-class experiences from different parts of the world. Schools can maximize the opportunities for teachers and students to enhance the quality of teaching and learning from local and global networking and exposure. Schools in the new century paradigm are conceptualized as world-class and networked schools.

Table 2: Innovative School Management for New Learning

<u>Innovative School Management</u>	<u>Traditional School Management</u>
<p><u>Individualized Schooling</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School As the Facilitating Place for Students' Learning • School as a Multiple Intelligence Environment • Individualized Schooling Style • Place for Curiosity • Open Process • Sharing Joy of Actualization • As a Learning Organization 	<p><u>Reproduced Schooling</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School As the Central Place of Education • School as Source of Knowledge and Qualifications • Standard Schooling Style • Place for Transfer • Qualifying Process • Achieving Standard • As a Bureaucracy
<p><u>Localized and Globalized Schooling:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Coupled with Multiple Local and Global Sources for Learning • Community and Parental Involvement • Networked Schooling • World-Class Schooling • Unlimited Opportunities for learning 	<p><u>Site-Bounded Schooling:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Isolated from the outside world • Weak Community Linkage • Separated Schooling • Site-Bounded Schooling • Limited Opportunities for learning

Implications from High Value-Added Competencies in the New Century

In facing the challenges from a new era of globalization and knowledge-based economy, students need to be equipped with a new set of quality and competencies to be surviving and excelling in the future in such a fast changing environment. According to Levin (1997), there are 12 personal competencies for high value-added industries in the new century, including initiative, cooperation, working in groups, peer training, evaluation, reasoning, problem-solving, decision-making, obtaining and using information, planning, learning skills and multicultural skills. In order to facilitate students to achieve these high value-added competencies for their future,

teaching approach, educational practices, and school management should be changed from the traditional mode of education that emphasizes on achievements in examination, repeated exercises and practices, memory of knowledge delivered by teachers. The key implications for innovative management of learning and teaching activities are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3:
High Value-Added Competencies and Implications for Educational Practices and Innovative Management

High Value-Added Competencies	Implications for Educational Practices & Innovative Management
1. Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater school focus on independent endeavors for students
2. Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased emphasis on cooperative learning where rewards are provided for cooperative process and its outcomes
3. Working in Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize learning tasks into group endeavors rather than the extreme emphasis on individualism and individual competition
4. Peer Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise students' experience in peer tutoring in the schools.
5. Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is given more experience in developing and applying evaluative criteria and in grading and evaluating their own work and that of student colleagues.
6. Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require the development, application, and sharpening of reasoning skills of students in classrooms and schools.
7. Problem-Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise students' experience in solving problems that are situated in realistic situations
8. Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for students to have continued practice in problem-solving for choosing among alternatives.
9. Obtaining & Using Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise students' experience in seeking and selecting the types of information that are needed for problem-solving and decision-making, obtaining it, and using it properly.
10. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise students' experience in choosing activities and objectives and in setting out activities to meet those goals over a specific time horizon.
11. Learning Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require an orientation on how to embrace new learning situations as well as the inculcation of styles of learning that work effectively for mastering new skills and knowledge.
12. Multicultural Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the study of foreign languages and cultures as well as experiences in human relations activities among different groups.

Adapted from Levin (1997)

As a whole, the implications are quite consistent with those above from the paradigm shift in learning, with strong emphasis on student-centred approach and clear linkage of innovative management and practice to each type of value-added competencies. For example, “self initiative” refers to students’ drive and creative ability to think and perform independently in learning. According to Levin (1997), the implication from this value-added competence for innovative practice is to put greater school focus on independent endeavors for students in learning activities in comparison with the present emphasis on school and teacher-directed activity.

“Working in groups” refers to the competence on social interaction in group work, that can direct towards both achieving the assigned task and developing the group relationship. The implication for innovative management of educational practice is to organize learning tasks into group endeavors rather than the extreme emphasis on individualism and individual competition in traditional practices of school management.

Similarly, the implications from all these 12 high value-added competencies can provide clear and concrete linkages of innovative management of educational practices to facilitate students’ active and effective learning and develop such competencies that are important to their future.

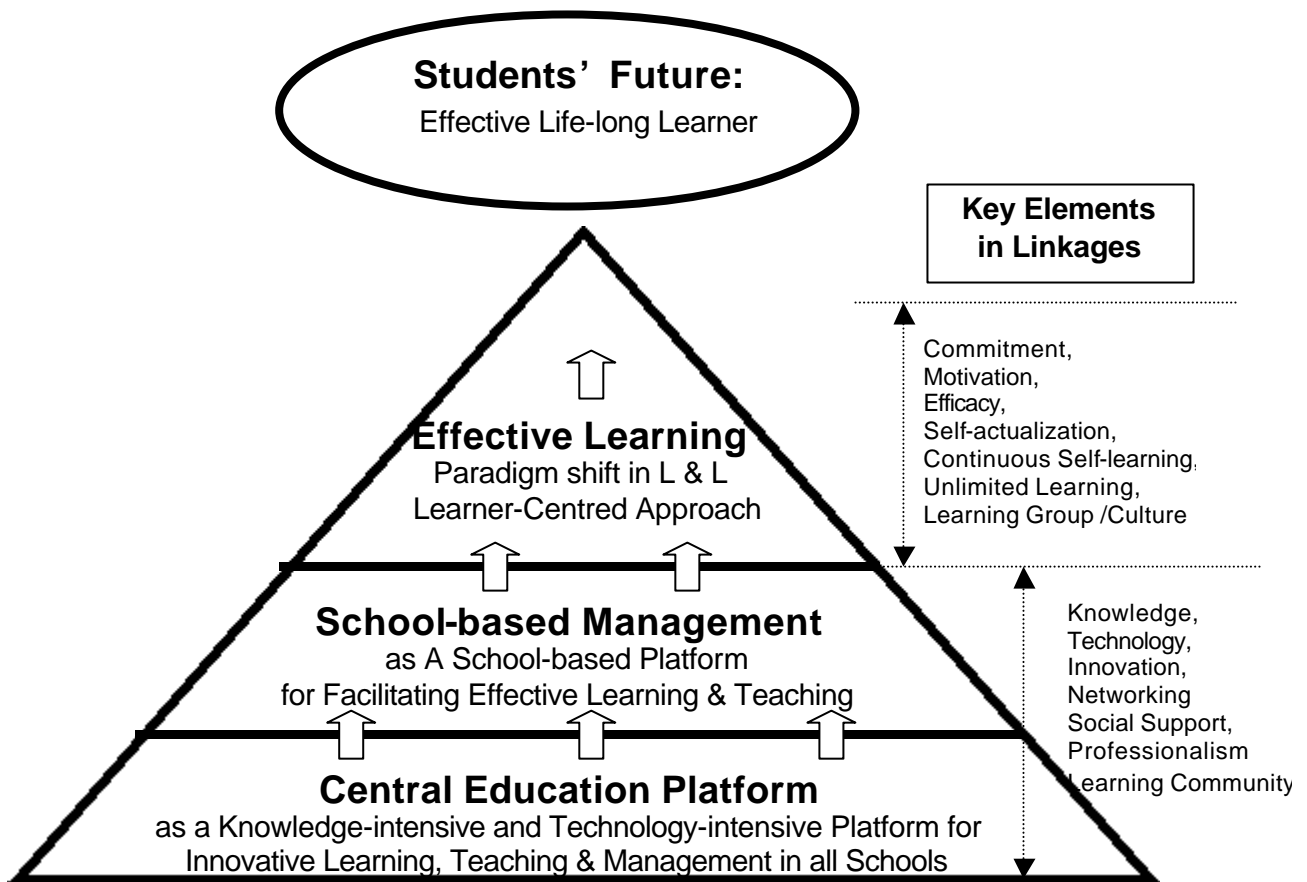
Platform Theory: Building Up Linkages for Effective Learning

The platform theory proposed by Cheng (2001b, c) can provide a comprehensive theoretical framework to review and conceptualize the linkage of innovative management with effective learning, teaching and schooling as shown in Figure 1.

Platform is a new powerful concept in conceptualizing and organizing various types of existing resources, technology, knowledge, and even social and cultural capital to form an intelligence-intensive and technology-intensive platform or supporting environment, that can enable and facilitate people to work and perform in a smart and optimal way. Unlike the traditional concept of organizational structure with focus on control and coordination, platform is mainly for supporting people with the necessary knowledge, technology and social environment such that they can have the maximum opportunity to develop themselves and perform at their highest potential in their work.

School-based management or educational decentralization should aim at developing as a ***school-based platform*** that can accumulate, organize and apply the necessary knowledge and technology, useful experiences, networks, various types of internal and external resources, and social support to support educational practice and innovation for effective teaching and learning, facilitate organizational learning, and develop a culture of professionalism within a school. For the detail of how school-based management can be developed such a platform or mechanism for continuous development and effectiveness, please refer to Cheng (1996).

Figure 1:
Platform Theory for Effective Learning, Teaching and Schooling



At the system or regional level, a *central education platform* should be formed with the support of information technology and various types of local and global networking. This central platform aims to pool up the most powerful and relevant knowledge, expertise and resources from local and global sources to create a more knowledge-intensive, technology-intensive and intelligence-intensive central base for supporting the development of all types of school-based platform and related initiatives. On this central platform, schools, teachers, and students can work on a higher level of knowledge to develop their school-based initiatives and avoid unnecessary wastage of time, resources and efforts due to repeated “re-inventing a wheel” or “start from scratch”. This central platform is also a huge network or learning community for sharing the advanced knowledge, best practices and experiences of success and failure among schools, educators and experts (Mok & Cheng, 2001).

The key elements of the school-based platform and central education platform are accumulation, dissemination, and application of knowledge and technology to promote various types of innovation, networking and social support and develop a culture of professionalism and learning community in education, that can support

paradigm shift in education and effective learning, teaching and schooling.

With the linkage and support of the school-based platform as well as the central platform, the key elements in effective learning and teaching are students and teachers' commitment, motivation and efficacy to promote and achieve learning as continuous self-actualization and self-learning and create unlimited opportunity for learning, developing learning groups, and evolving learning culture among students and teachers (Cheng, 2001b,c; Mok & Cheng, 2001).

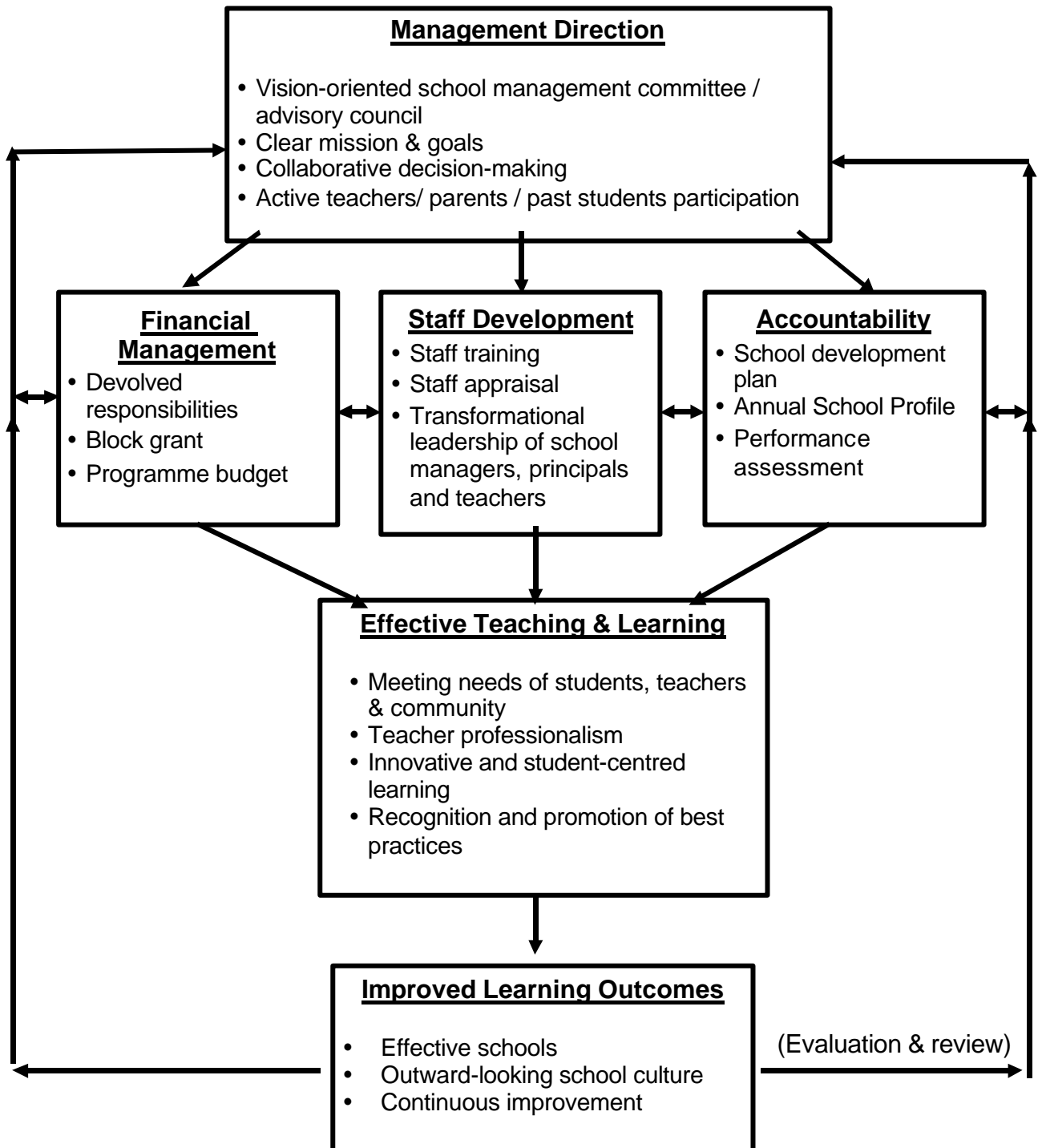
Example of Linkage between School-Based Management and Student-Centred Approach in Hong Kong

Hong Kong started the school reform towards school-based management in 1992. After a few years in successful implementation in over hundreds schools, all one thousand and two hundred public schools had to implement school-based management in 2000 (Education Commission, 1997). After reviewing the rationale, progress and experiences in December 1995, the Advisory Committee understood the importance to explicitly spell out and establish the linkage of school-based management to facilitating effective learning in the framework of school-based management. As shown in Figure 2, this framework sets closer linkages of management direction, financial management, staff development, and accountability converging to effective teaching and learning and improved learning outcomes (SMI Advisory Committee, 1995).

In order to ensure the effectiveness of educational decentralization to learning, a task group was established to evaluate the impacts of school-based management on educational practices since 1993. In 1997, the task group reported that the findings of the study of good practices and noticeable effects of school-based management implementation in some schools have summarized some important observations, as shown in Figure 3 (Task Group on Evaluation of SMI, 1997).

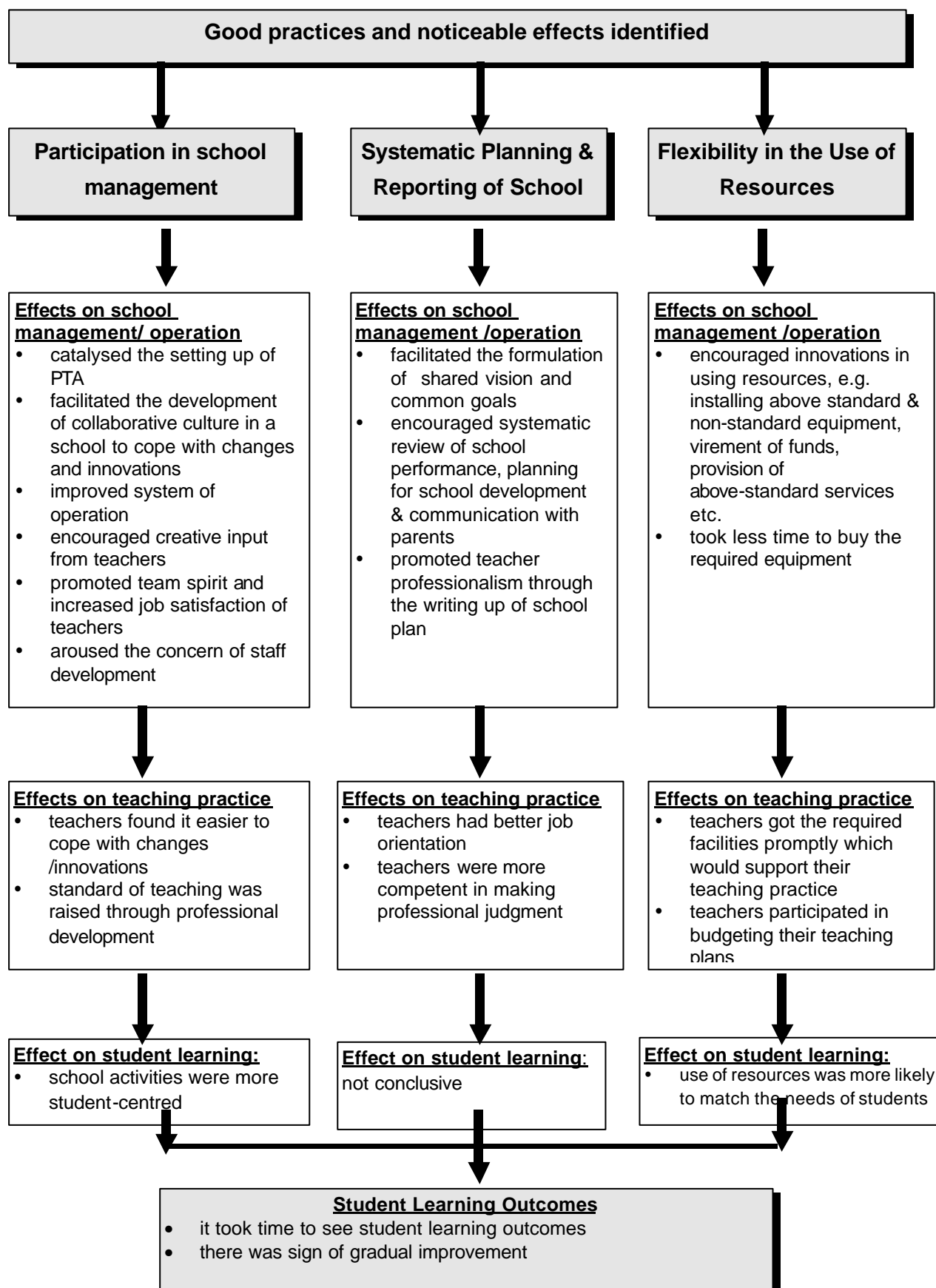
The findings indicate that the major components of school-based management -- including participation of teachers and parents in school management, systematic planning and reporting of school activities, and flexibility in the use of resources -- can make a contribution to school management and operation, staff's teaching practice, and students' learning activities and outcomes. It is also clear that SBM provides better opportunities and school conditions for facilitating human initiative in such a way that key school actors are more motivated to develop their own effective practices in activities of managing, teaching, and learning to serve their school-based needs (Cheng & Cheung, 1999).

Figure 3:
The Linkage between School-based Management and Effective Learning



(Adapted From SMI Advisory Committee, 1995)

Figure 3: Summary of Findings of Practices and Effects
 (from: Task Group on Evaluation of SMI, 1997)



Concluding Remarks

The ongoing education reforms should aim at facilitating paradigm shift in learning and teaching and strengthening the linkage of innovative management or school-based management with student-centred approach for effective learning. The implications from the paradigm shift in education and pursuit of high value-added competencies ask for serious reconsideration and re-engineering of the process of learning, teaching and schooling. With the application of the platform theory, the school-based platform and the central education platform should be developed and built up to provide the intelligence-intensive, knowledge-intensive and technology-intensive platform and network for students and teachers to maximize their potential and create unlimited opportunity in achieving effective learning and teaching for students' future as life-long learners in the new century.

As an example, Hong Kong experience in school-based management may give some insights on building up the linkage between innovative management and student-centred approach in school education.

It is hoped that the implications from this paper will benefit those educators and leaders who are committed to building up a new education for their students to meet the challenges and pursue excellence in the future.

References:

- Abu-Duhou, I. (1999). *School-based management*. UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Caldwell, B. J. & Spinks, J. M. (1998). *Beyond the self-managing school*. London: Falmer Press.
- Cheng, Y.C. (1996). School effectiveness and school-based management: A mechanism for development. London: Falmer Press.
- Cheng, Y.C. (2000). A CMI-triplization paradigm for reforming education in the new millennium. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 14(4), 156-174.
- Cheng, Y.C. (2001). New education and new teacher education: A paradigm shift for the future. In Cheng, Y.C., Chow, K.W., & Tsui, K.T. (eds.). *New Teacher Education for the Future: International Perspectives*, (pp. 33-88). Hong Kong & The Netherlands: Hong Kong Institute of Education & Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Cheng, Y.C. (2001b). *The strengths and future of Hong Kong education*. Invited keynote speech at the Conference of the Leadership Development Network on "Facing up Educational Reforms: Leading Schools for Quality Education", organized by the Asia-Pacific Centre for Education Leadership and School Quality, 20 October 2001.
- Cheng, Y.C. (2001c). *Three waves of education reform: Paradigm shifts for the future in Hong Kong*. Paper presented at the 11th World Congress of Comparative Education held in 2-6 July, 2001 in Chungbuk, Korea.
- Cheng, Y.C. & Chan, M.T. (2000). Implementation of school-based management: A multi-perspective analysis of Hong Kong case. *International Review of*

- Education*, 46(3-4), 205-232.
- Cheng, Y.C. & Cheung, W.M. (1999). Towards school-Based management: Uncertainty, meaning, opportunity and development. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 8(1), 25-36.
- Cheng, Y.C. & Cheung, W.M. (in press). Profiles of multi-level self management in schools, *International Journal of Educational Management*, 17(1).
- Education Commission (1997). *Education Commission Report No. 7: Quality school education*, Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Levin, H. M. (1997). *Accelerated education for an accelerating economy*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research, the Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Mok, M.M.C. & Cheng, Y.C. (2001). A theory of self Learning in a human and technological environment: Implications for education reforms. *International Journal of Education Management*. 15(4), 172-186.
- Task Group of Evaluation of the SMI Scheme (1997). *The Study of good practices and noticeable effects of the SMI implementation in some schools*. Hong Kong: The SMI Advisory Committee.
- Weaver, T.R. (1970). *Unity and diversity in education*. London: Department of Education and Science.