

Designing for scale: How relationships shape curriculum change

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Designing for Scale: How relationships shape curriculum change

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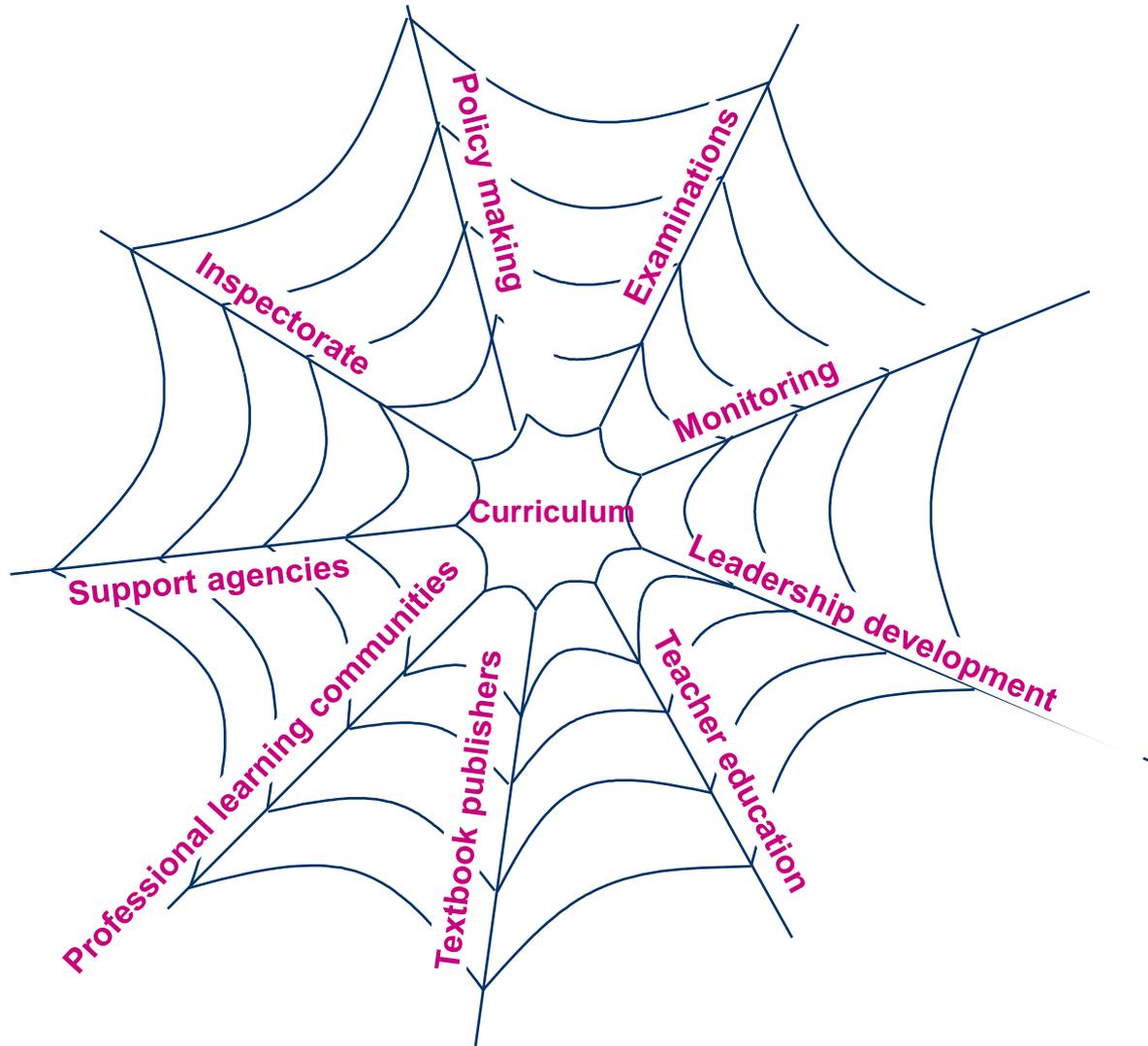
Purpose: Informing large-scale *design*

- Currently:
 - Large-scale curriculum reform in resurgence
 - Scholarship exists on scale innovation/change, especially on implementation
 - Scholarship exists on curriculum design, especially at micro level
 - Research and literature lacking to guide the *design* of large-scale curriculum reform
- Ultimate aim:
 - Inform the *design* of large-scale curriculum reform through
 - Development of a framework for understanding large-scale design
 - Start by understanding relationships among key players

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Theoretical foundations: Coordination and cooperation among system actors is crucial

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Probing relationships between actors: Research approach

- Retrospective analysis of 8 prominent curriculum innovations
- Three types identified:
 - National reform (top-down approaches to change, macro)
 - Research and development projects (intermediaries' approaches to change, meso)
 - School-based response to national reform (bottom-up approaches to change, micro)
- Research questions:
 - Which relationships were particularly salient and why?
 - How were these relationships initiated and sustained?

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Cases studied

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Project Name	Country	Type of initiative	Educational Level	Subject Area
<i>River City</i>	USA	R&D project	Secondary education	Science
<i>SimCalc</i>	USA	R&D project	Secondary education	Mathematics
<i>Twenty First Century Science</i>	United Kingdom	National reform	Secondary education	Science
<i>Assessment is for Learning</i>	Scotland	National reform	Primary and secondary education	Cross curricular
<i>Nature, Life and Science</i>	The Netherlands	School-based responses to national reform	Secondary Education	Science
<i>Gifted Students</i>	The Netherlands	School-based responses to national reform	Primary Education	Cross curricular
<i>Mother tongue and Math</i>	The Netherlands	School-based responses to national reform	Primary and secondary education	Mother tongue and Mathematics
<i>Subject renewal in science and math</i>	The Netherlands	School-based responses to national reform	Secondary Education	Science and Mathematics



Data sources & analysis

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- Document analysis
 - Scientific reports (e.g. journal articles)
 - Evaluation reports
 - Related media (websites, materials, etc.)
- Semi-structured interviews (+/- 75 min)
 - Identification of most salient relationships (RQ1)
 - Strategies and/or activities to initiate and sustain those relationships (RQ2)
- Themes in data:
 - Summarized according to interview question
 - Emerged across cases



Findings: Salient relationships (RQ1)

- Proactively establishing strategic partnerships with local/national organizations
 - Enable spread
 - Give local presence and legitimacy
 - Demonstrate shared commitment to change
- Identifying individuals within partner organizations who act as:
 - linking pins
 - program champions
- Teacher involvement in innovation design
 - Proactively (e.g. co-design)
 - Reactively (e.g. feedback during pilot)

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Findings: Strategies for initiating and sustaining relationships (RQ2)

- Visible presence
 - Being active and visible nurtures and strengthens relationships even when no clear need or plan for cooperation has been identified
- Alignment of project goals with stakeholder goals
 - Some win-win situations naturally exist, others were created
- Trust and sustained communication
 - Working through conflict, sensitive to the (intra)personal nature of cooperative professional relationships

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Conclusions & discussion

- Conclusions
 - Attending to relationships is both crucial and complex
 - Personal/political approaches needed, not just functional/task-related ones
 - Themes in the findings identify specific areas for attention
- Discussion
 - Failure to attend to these issues are known to contribute to failure in implementation; it would seem this may also be true in design.
 - Can we educate large-scale designers? How?
- Moving forward
 - Toward developing a framework for understanding large-scale design, what other elements warrant attention?

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We welcome comments

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