

Lesson Study for Learning Community: School Reform against colonisation

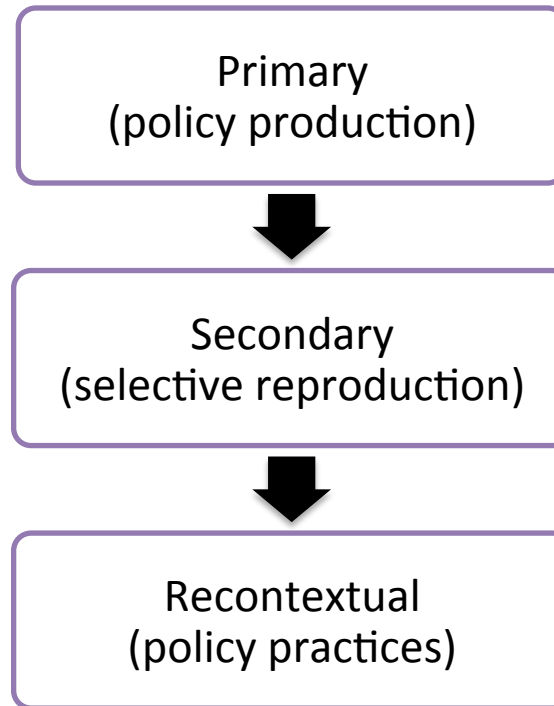
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National Institute of Education, Singapore
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An Institute of

1. Introduction

Background

- School education system: **hierarchical** (Bernstein, 1990)



- Contemporary education system: marketised
→ **more emphasis on ranking, competition**

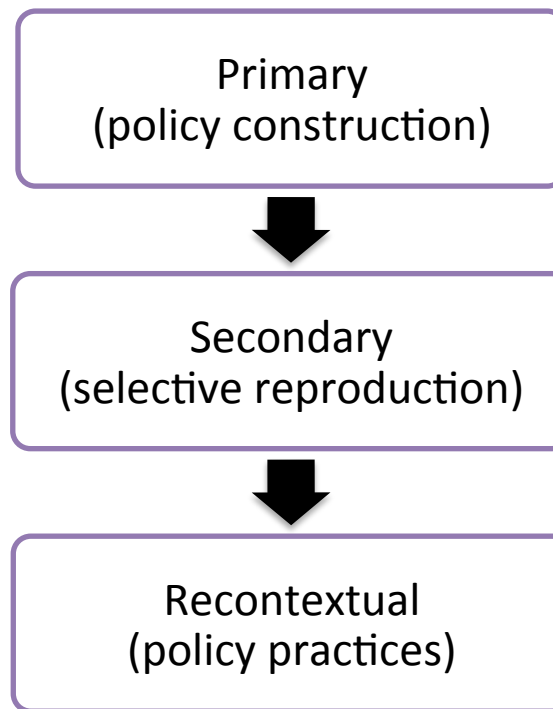
(Apple, 2004; Ball, 2000; Ball, 2003; Keddie et al., 2011; Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004)

Previous Research into Teachers' Responses to Policies

- **Buy-in:**
ownership (Fullan, 2001; Turnbull, 2002)
- **Cognition:**
the level of understanding (Spillane et al., 2002)
- **Emotion:**
reluctance, hesitance & etc. (Hargreaves, 2005; Lee & Yin, 2008)
- **Identity:**
changes in role perception (Bjork, 2005)

Policy and Teachers

- Policies:
unilateral representations set by policy makers



- Teachers:
necessary to strategically decide the degree
to accept representations (policies)

Teacher as Colony

- Dearth in the previous literature:
The idea to impose representation on teachers
- Colony:
Subjugation of one people by another (Young, 2001)
- Colonisation:
 - Imposition of one-sided representation on others
 - Corresponding acceptance of such representations
- Teachers & authorities
 - One-sided enforcement of policies in hierarchy
 - Similar to the relation bet. 'colonisers' & 'colonised'

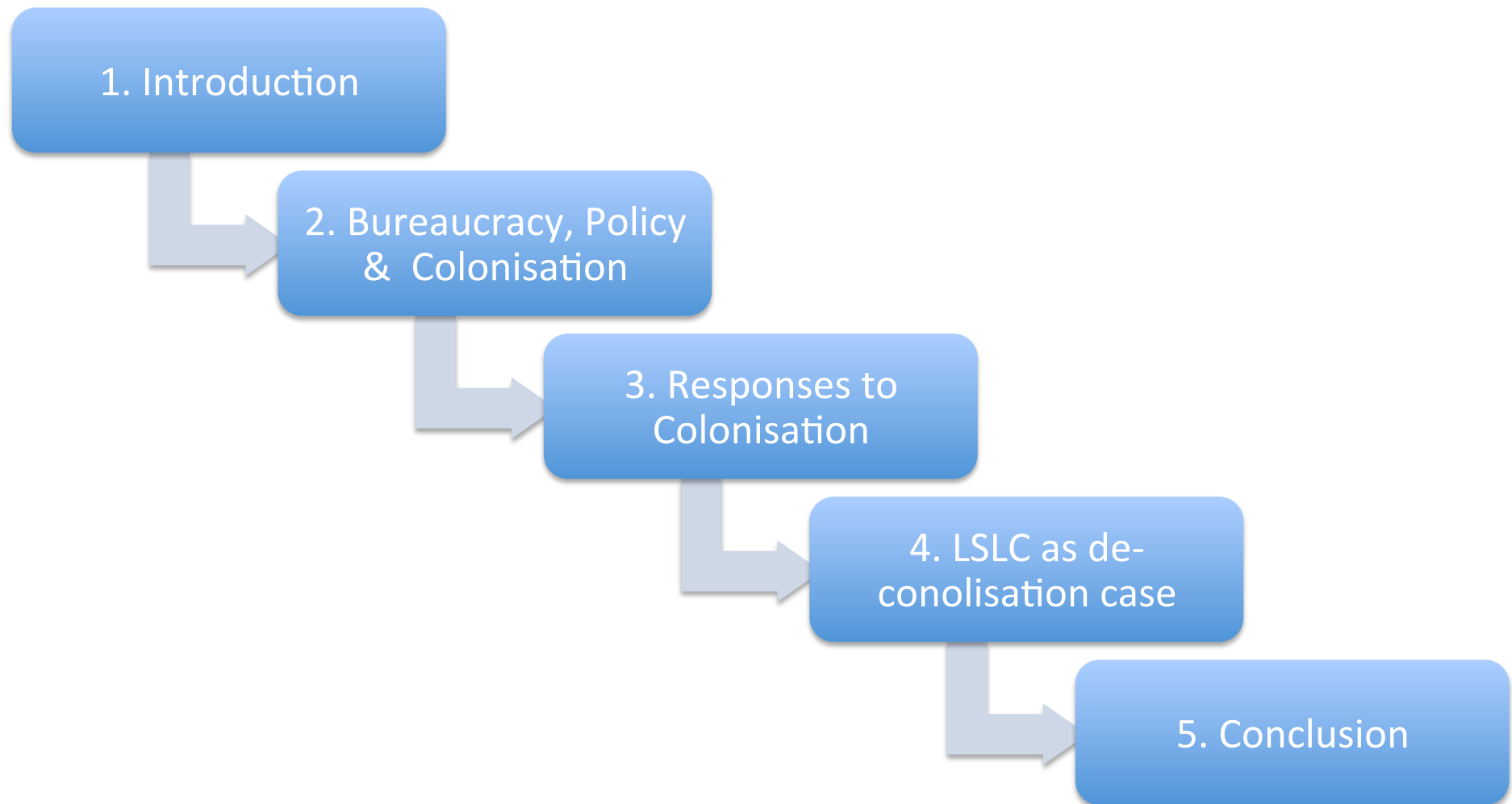
The purpose of this presentation

- To discuss teachers as colony
pertaining to policies, particularly
in neo-liberal reforms
- To discuss the teachers' responses
to policies, namely:
pro-, anti- & de-colonisation
- To discuss lesson study for learning community
(LSLC) as school reform
in the form of de-colonisation

Methods

- This presentation: **conceptual work**
- Based on the experiences in:
 - Indonesia (2003-2008)
 - Vietnam (2006-present)
 - Singapore (2008-present)

The Structure of Presentation





2. Bureaucracy, Policy & Colonisation

Bureaucracy to Promote Colonisation

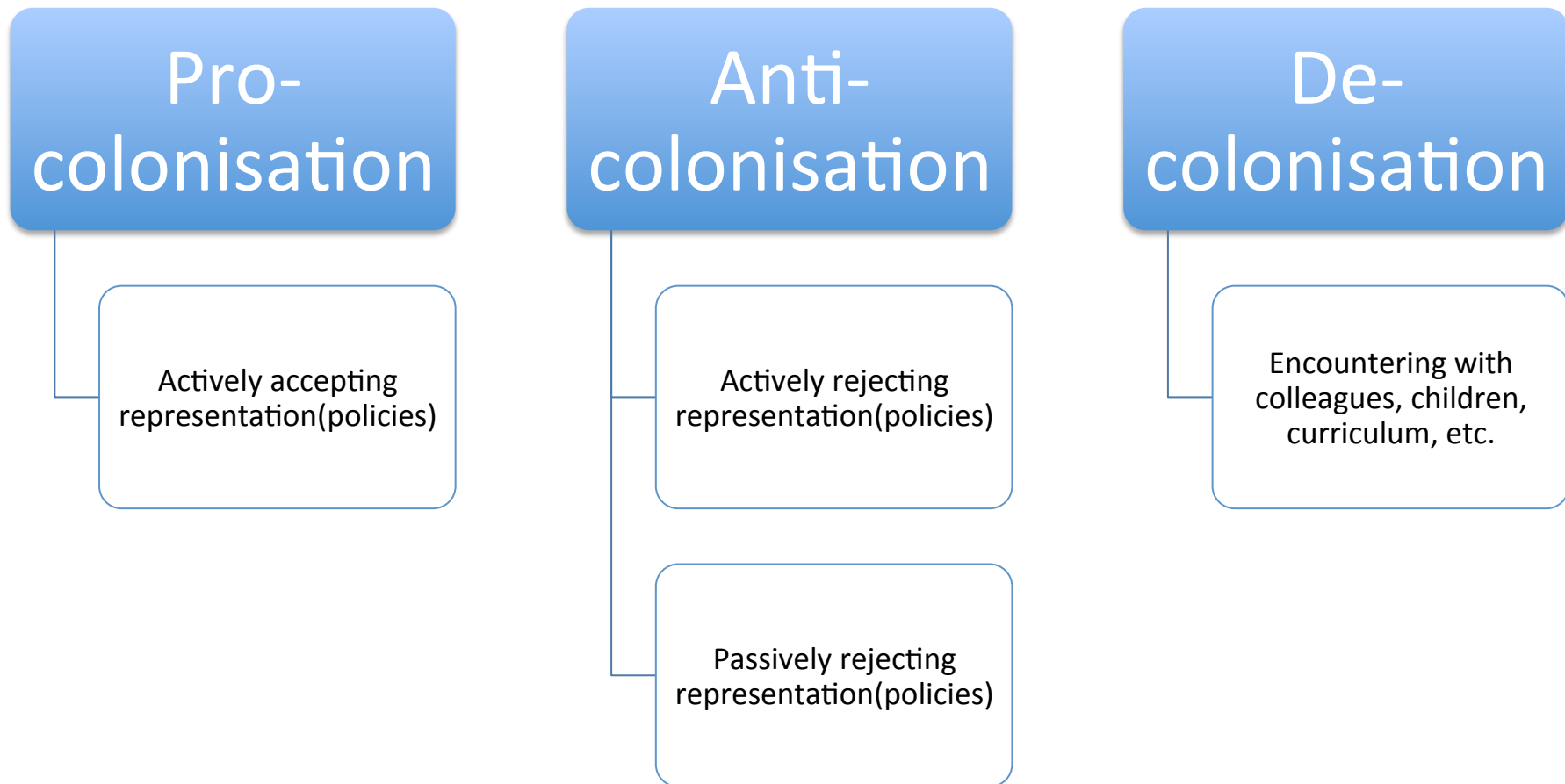
- Bureaucracy:
Hierarchical, impersonal and disciplinary (weber,1914)
- Schools:
generally under the control of authorities
as 'low-level bureaucracy'
Even in decentralised systems,
→ Pressure of competition & ranking
(Apple, 2004; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; McInerny, 2007)
- Asia: having strong sense of hierarchy
(Bjork, 2005, Saito et al., 2008; Saito & Murase, 2011)
Strengthened hierarchical control in the West
(Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Lowe, 2007; McInerny, 2007; Tyack & Cuban, 1995)

Teachers in Bureaucratic Hierarchy

- Teachers: similar to schools,
likely to be positioned as ‘low-level bureaucrats’
(Bernstein, 1990; Bjork, 2005; Kirk & MacDonald, 2001; Saito et al., 2008)
 - Lessons: interpreted as ‘satisfying the standards’
→ finishing curriculum
(Lim and Pyvis, 2012; Saito et al., 2007; Saito et al., 2008)
 - Appraisal and ranking on teachers performance
(Ball 2000; Liew, 2012)
- Making it difficult for teachers
to question policies
& to see their students as individuals
with personalities

3. Responses to Colonisation

3 types of responses to policies



Pro-colonisation

- Actively taking up the requirements
- No questioning about their assignments
- Striving for own promotions to higher positions
 - practices: aimed to make lesson smooth
to show 'class management'
 - Teachers: 'demonstrating capacities to the public'
rather than learning
 - School leaders: interest in the schools' status
 - **Fabrication** (Ball, 2000):
to manipulate images in competitive systems

Anti-colonisation

- Recognising policies or intervention as problematic
- Rather, doubting their legitimacy
- Two possible forms of resistance
 - Active: unionism
(ABC, 2012; Sawchuk, 2012)
 - Passive: disengagement
(Bjork, 2005; Nathan, 2001; Saito & Atencio, 2013; Saito et al., 2008; Starr, 2011)



Problems of Pro- & Anti-colonisation

- Where are children?
 - Pro-colonisation: only for teachers' interest
 - Anti-colonisation: not helping children learn
- Where are colleagues?
 - Pro-colonisation: as competitors/contestants
 - Anti-colonisation: jointly defending their interest
yet really growing professionally together?
 - No sense of professional & learning communities

De-colonisation

- Deconstructing strong bureaucratic structure
- Foregrounding the essential mission: learning
 - Tactically choosing teaching children & learning for themselves but not falling into the imposing policies

(Stickney, 2012)

- Neo-liberal policies: popular in many countries
 - pushing ranking/competition as ‘universal standards’
- Need of guarding ‘local uniqueness’
 - to appreciate, recognise and care for everyone

4. LSLC as De-Colonisation Case

Vision of LSLC

- To provide the best opportunities for:
 - Children to learn with high quality
 - Teachers to grow as professionals
 - As many parents/local people as possible to participate in learning

Emphasis in LSLC

- Daily pedagogical changes & reforms
 - not satisfying the goals set by the authorities
 - but maximising children's learning
- Frequent mutual observation & reflection
 - not for teachers' appraisal on their teaching
 - but for teachers learning from realities
- Enabling teachers to take learning perspective
 - not finishing curriculum as low-level bureaucrats for competition or ranking
 - But learning how to support children to learn as autonomous experts from collegial learning

December 2012



March 2014



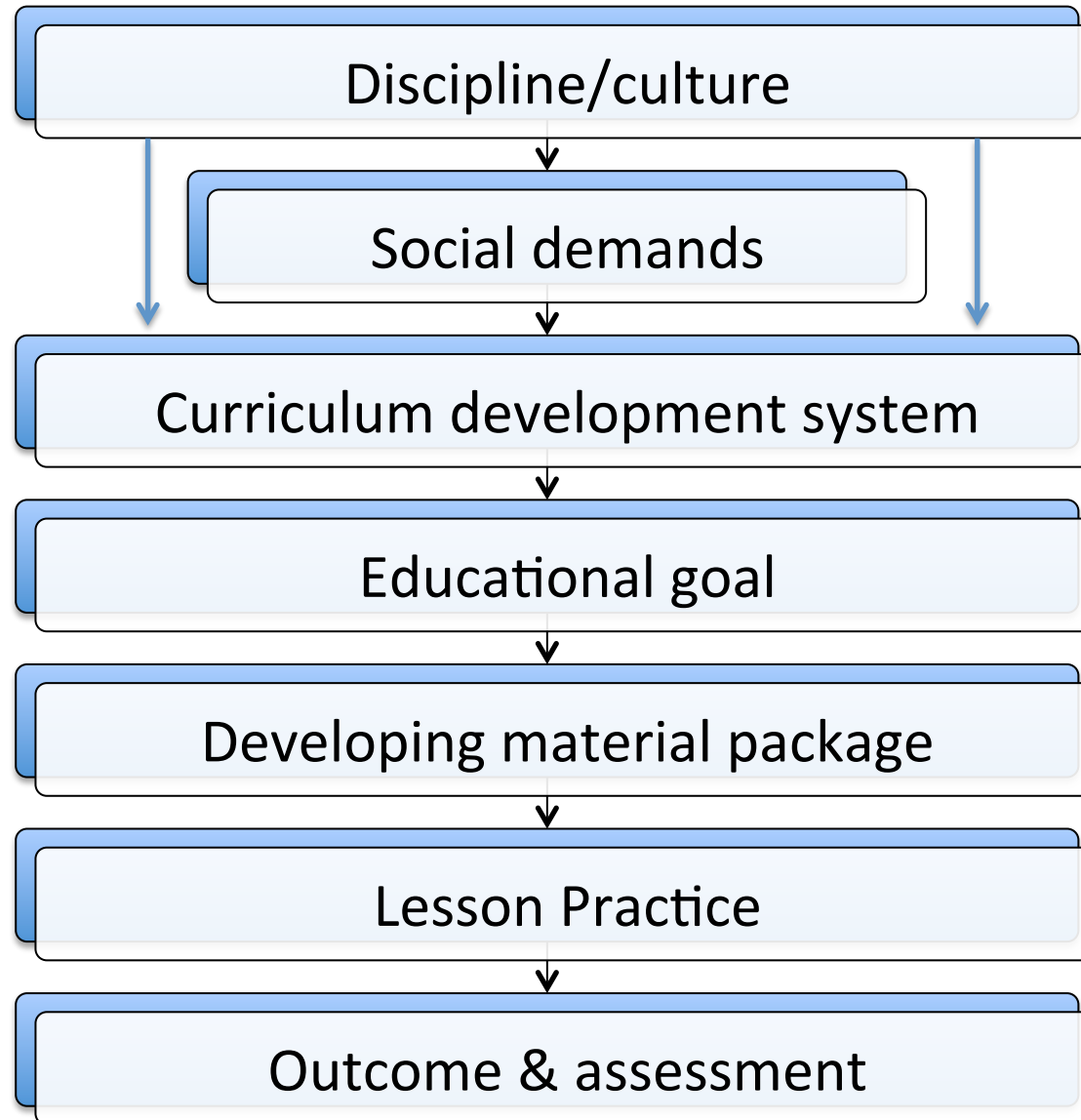
Principal's work



Children, Teachers & Schools in LSLC

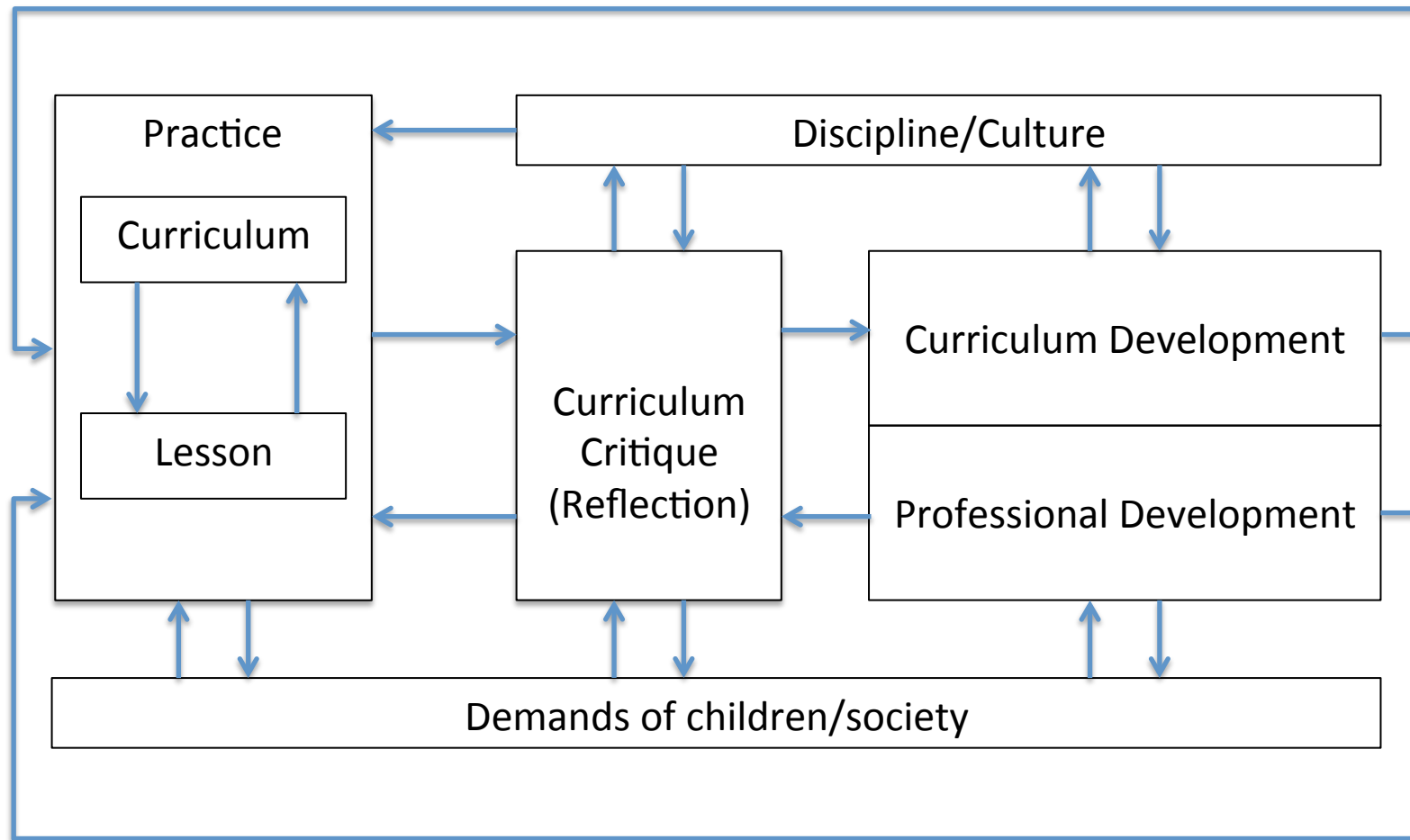
- Collaborative learning
 - Liberating children from isolation & alienation
 - For children to stop & make lessons for themselves
- Collaborative reflection
 - Liberating teachers from isolation & alienation
 - For teachers to respect & learn from each other
- Collaborative building of school policy
 - Liberating schools from being mere 'implementers'
 - For schools to be 'protagonists' for their own

Hierarchical Views on Teaching



Source: Sato (1996)

Rhizome Views on Teaching under LSLC



Source: Sato (1996)

5. Conclusion

Conclusion

- Policies as possible risks of 'colonisation'
as imposition of representation on teachers
→ risks to 'miss' children & colleagues
- 'Finding' Children, Noticing Colleagues
 - Sensitivity: difficult to acquire
 - Need to grow through joint reflection
 - learning from & with colleagues
 - a need of experts

(Kitada, 2007; Senge, 2006)

Conclusion

- Bureaucracy/colonisation:
 - Expectation of uniformed way of living
 - Yet 'divide & rule': schism in a school
- De-colonisation:
 - Associated ways of living
 - Yet going as a whole community
- School policy:
 - To push school for associated ways of living
 - From uniformity to diversity

Issues for us to consider

- If LSLC conducted appropriately,
 - children: maximising their learning
 - success: a possible fear factor

‘How about the next school?’

- Needs of regional/local engagement
 - yet putting LSLC on local agenda,
LSLC: possible risk to be
a representation for another imposition

→What should be done?



Thank You So Much