

# *Changing Practice in University English Language Teaching: The Influence of the Chronotope on Teachers' Action*

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## Abstract

This study aims to investigate how time is coordinated with the professional space of the universities in western China. It examines how the situatedness of English language teachers in institutional spaces influences their understandings of and the value attributed to time and how these impact on how they make changes to their practice following participation in a professional development workshop. Using a combination of observations and interviews, this study identified a preference for adopting teaching techniques that were implemented in less integrated ways and teachers' discussion of change frequently invoked time pressures as a limiting factor in developing their teaching. The study draws on Bakhtin's idea of the chronotope to examine how time is constructed within the space of the university and the ways that such constructions give value to time and how it works as a constraint on teachers changing their practice. It argues that culturally constructed understandings of the status of time in academic work limit what teachers feel able to do in changing their practice and constrain possibilities for change.

**Key-words:** Chinese higher education; chronotope; English language teaching; teaching innovation

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## INTRODUCTION

Changing teaching practice is ultimately a process of selection from among a range of alternatives. In seeking to redesign their practice, teachers identify ways of working that they believe will be useful or effective in their current context: that is, their personal, social, professional, and institutional realities, and implement changes that they believe fit their context and circumstances. In making decisions about changing practice, teachers thus exercise agency. Such agency cannot however be understood as total freedom of action in which teachers can do whatever they choose; agency is inevitably subject to the constraints of structure (Liddicoat, 2019). Agency is thus a mediated capacity to act and Ahearn (2001, p. 112) argues this mediation is accomplished socially and culturally within the contexts in which agents act. It is thus important in understanding how teachers engage with changes to practice to consider the ways that their agency to enact a particular change is mediated by elements of the context in which they act (Liddicoat, Scarino, & Kohler, 2018). That is, changing teachers' work needs to be seen as an interaction between agency opening possibilities for action on the one hand and structure constraining possibilities on the other. One element of structure that needs to be taken into consideration in understanding educational change is the cultural context in which the change occurs (e.g. Deal & Peterson, 2016; Nevalainen, Kimonen, & Alsbury, 2017; Seashore Louis & Lee, 2016). Fullan (2016, p. 19) observes all instances of educational change occur within a "familiar, reliable construction of reality" that has cultural, social, and organisational dimensions that both structure reality for those engaged in educational change and give form and meaning to the practices of educators, and construct systems of value in which their actions are evaluated and understood. This construction of reality is at base an ideological enterprise as the actions involved in educational change are interpretable and interpreted within a framework of beliefs (Voloshinov, 1929) about the nature of education, of practices, of educational goals, and of valid and appropriate action in context. Thus, ideology shapes the circumstances in which actions occur and gives meaning to choices made by teachers in changing their practice.

In this study of English language teachers in China, we investigate how teachers introduced changes in their practice within the professional space of the university. In particular, we examine the issue of time and the ways that time was experienced and understood by teachers and how this shaped the ways they understood and evaluated the place of change in their teaching (Roy, 2019, p. 2). Such an

examination of time is central to understanding how choices made in developing practice were influenced by their context and the ways that context shaped ideas of what is useful. This article will examine the practices and reflections of teachers involved in a process of changing practice to examine how the question of time impacted on their decision making about implementing change. It aims to show that their experiences of time are embedded in larger discursive and ideological constructs by drawing on Bakhtin's (1975, 1981) idea of the chronotope. After reviewing the chronotope as a theoretical construct, this article will examine how chronotopes play out in understandings of the nature of academic work, the value attached to aspects of academic work, and institutional cultures.

## **TIME, SPACE, AND THE CHRONOTOPE**

Time is often invoked as a constraint on developing new teaching practices and teachers may cite lack of time as a main reason for not carrying through with a planned change (e.g. Boice, 1987; Bruno, 2000; Cutler & Ruopp, 1993; McKenney, 2019; Woodilla, Boscardin, & Dodds, 1997). Such a view of time sees time as a resource that is organised in terms of chronology, as regulated, finite moments of measurable passing of time (Lingard & Thompson, 2017). Chronological time is viewed as a "linear, objective process that exists outside the experience of the individual within time" (Lingard & Thompson, 2017, p. 1). However, time is not simply a chronological flow; it is also meaningful (Bloome & Katz, 1997). It is interpreted and given meanings within particular contexts and these meanings shape how time is perceived within an institution. It is therefore fruitful to move from analysing time as chronology to considering it as an element of meaning that shapes contexts and is shaped by them. In understanding time as meaningful, Bakhtin's (1975, 1981) idea of the chronotope provides a way to consider time and its social and cultural construction in particular spaces. The chronotope represents actions as embedded both temporally and spatially and this embedding is consequential for the ways in which action can be accomplished (Leander, 2002; Lempert & Perrino, 2007; Prior, 1998).

The chronotope was developed by Bakhtin to examine time-space patterns in literary genres. Bakhtin, drawing on Einstein's idea of the time-space continuum, viewed time and space in the novel are inseparable. Time and space are not simply the settings of plots and actions but are central to the construction of literary genres and the representation and trajectory of plots, characters, and actions within literary works. The ways that particular literary genres construct and organise

time and space permit different character identities and possibilities for the continuity or development of identity. Bakhtin argued that not only are time and space inseparable, but they are always coloured by emotions and values. That is, time and space in the novel are not simply features of physical worlds but have meanings for characters and readers that are ultimately ideological. Identity configurations in space and time are, in Bakhtin's view, sustained by prevailing ideologies, for example ideas about the relationships between human action and social and personal change, or about the weight of personal and social worlds, about the role of beliefs, values, and ideals in society.

Bakhtin (1975, 1981) recognised that the chronotope was not specific to literature and saw it as relevant to other, unspecified, areas of culture – в других сферах культуры (1975, p. 235). In fact, the use of chronotopes in literature needs to be understood as a special case of the chronotype (Agha, 2007; Lempert & Perrino, 2007; Silverstein, 2005), as in literature the chronotope is consciously controlled by the author and thus less affected by the variability, plurality, and conflictuality found in chronotopes in everyday life (Blommaert, 2015). The chronotope has proved useful in understanding time–space relationships in many areas of social life, including education (e.g. Bloome, Beierle, Grigorenko, & Goldman, 2009; Bloome & Katz, 1997; Prior & Shipka, 2003; Renshaw, 2013; Ritella, Ligorio, & Hakkarainen, 2016; White, 2013). The chronotope represents space and time as socially constructed understandings. These understandings are negotiated dialogically by participants interacting in the social world as they express, receive, re-express, assent to, or challenge chronotopic representations (Agha, 2007). Its analytic focus involves the potential interdependency between space and time in social contexts and the ways that they influence each other in the conceptualisation of action, and particularly of relevant action, giving shape to the temporal and spatial situatedness of human actions.

For Bakhtin (1975, 1981), the relationship between time and space is not simply a background against which activities occur but rather the chronotope is both produced by and productive of action. As Morson and Emerson (1990, p. 367) argue

Bakhtin's crucial point is that time and space vary in qualities; different social activities and representations of those activities presume different kinds of time and space. Time and space are therefore not just 'mathematical abstractions' but also categories through which human beings perceive and structure the world in which they live and act, and therefore they are an integral way of understanding experience, and a ground for visualizing and representing human life. (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 375)

They are thus not abstract but, as Bakhtin argues, forms of reality itself – “формы самой реальной действительности” (Bakhtin, 1975, p. 235). Time is not just chronology but also culture, and action takes places within cultural ideologies of time–space (Lempert & Perrino, 2007; Parmentier, 2007). As cultural constructs, chronotopes give meanings to the world and to relations between people and their world (Leander, 2004). Time–space relationships are not simply experienced, but are structured, organised, and represented to give them meanings and social significance (Bloome et al., 2009). They are then experienced both by individuals and by groups in terms of the meanings and social significance that have been given to them.

Bakhtin’s literary analyses largely dealt with single chronotopes constructed by authors, but real-world chronotopes do not exist in isolation from each other (De Fina & Perrino, 2020). In any situation, chronotopes influencing social action may not be clearly separated and different times and spaces may overlap (Perrino, 2011; Silverstein, 2005). The multiple chronotopes may be competing or in conflict in the same situations or in different aspects of a situation (Bloome & Katz, 1997), as each chronotope will have its own ideological configurations and ways of shaping the meaning of actions in context (Blommaert, 2015). Prior (1998; Prior & Shipka, 2003) calls the simultaneous layering of multiple chronotopes, *chronotopic lamination*, and argues that in any situation some chronotopes may be foregrounded and others backgrounded but that all remain nonetheless present and able to influence the course of, and understanding of, the actions being performed. Participants are able to invoke diverse chronotopes as interpretative resources for understanding a situation and ways of acting within it (Leander, 2004).

The chronotopes that are co-present in any moment may not be of the same order and social actors may draw on different time–space configurations and bring these into the present moment (Lempert & Perrino, 2007). In this way, chronotopes are related to scales, that is one time–space that is spatiotemporally separated from another (Blommaert, 2010, 2015). Scales exist at different levels – space may be small or large, proximate or distant, time may be present or past, short term or long term. Different scales may be relevant for understanding action within a particular context, for example, chronologies relating to an individual’s life course may be relevant for understanding a particular instances within it (Lemke, 2000). As Agha argues

Chronotopic representations enlarge the ‘historical present’ of their audiences by creating chronotopic displacements and cross-chronotope alignments between persons here-and-now and persons altogether elsewhere, transposing selves across discrete zones of cultural spacetime

through communicative practices that have immediate consequences for how social actors in the public sphere are mobilized to think, feel and act. (Agha, 2007, p. 324)

An individual's position within a situation is not simply a position in time-space but one across times and spaces which constitute resources for the production of meaning when they are brought into alignment.

In much discussion of change in educational practice, time is raised as an issue for or constraint on the possibilities for change. However, it is important to understand time as it is produced and reproduced by the discourses that participants draw on as they talk about time as it plays out in context. The chronotope is given meaning through discourse and the ways of speaking about time, space, and their relationship in particular contexts (Ritella et al., 2016). Time and space, and their interrelationships, are constituted in social activity and discourse as an important resource for constituting time-space relationships and their relevance in context (Leander, 2004). Bakhtin conceptualised chronotopes not just in terms of time-space relationships but also as relationships between actors and actions within time-space. As Agha (2007, p. 321) argues they are "representation[s] of time and place peopled by certain social types." It is the peopling of chronotopes that gives them their significance for understanding the social world, as time-space relationships only take on meaning in the context of human action (Prior & Shipka, 2003). Social actors have specific possibilities for identity and action within specific chronotopes and these possibilities are shaped by the chronotopes and their affordances for participation in social action (De Fina & Perrino, 2020). They therefore influence how social actors are seen and see themselves and how value is attributed to actions (Leander, 2004).

Blommaert and De Fina (2017) argue that chronotopes are thus relevant for understanding how social actors exercise agency. Specific chronotopes enable, allow, or constrain specific modes of behaviour and so social actors understand their and others' actions as appropriate or inappropriate within a particular chronotopic frame (Blommaert & De Fina, 2017). This means that chronotopes work to condition ways of enacting particular identities in context (Blommaert & De Fina, 2017). The enactments of a good teacher, for example, will be those that fit the expectations about social actors and their actions in the chronotope. Such expectations may be held in different ways. Bloome et al. (2009) distinguish between individually held, shared, and publicly held chronotopes. Individual and shared chronotopes are forms of cognition about the world. Individuals may hold particular representations and understandings of time and space and so different individuals may have different understandings and interpretations of

time and space and what they mean for possible action. Similar representations and understandings may be shared among individuals in a particular context and represent an assumed intersubjectivity. Publicly held chronotopes are inferable from the conduct of events, and constitute a publicly available framework of legitimate actions to which individual actors may be held accountable (Bloome et al., 2009). Chronotopes do not gain their power to shape and evaluate actions simply from being held by individuals but from being known publicly to be present and relevant and this being available to be invoked to affect action (Blommaert, 2015).

The invocation of a chronotope triggers attributions that define possible actions, legitimate actors and subject positions, and norms for conduct. Participants evaluate actions within the frameworks provided by relevant chronotopes and identify behaviours and identities as either deviant or normal using known and invokable chronotopes as a basis for moral judgements (Blommaert, 2018; De Fina & Perrino, 2020). Deviation from expectations leads to a potential for attribution of identities with negative connotations (Blommaert & De Fina, 2017). Those actions which fit the publicly held chronotopes play a significant role in understanding social actors. Moving from one chronotope to another may trigger shifts in roles, discourses, conduct, and criteria for judgment, and what is seen as legitimate or appropriate in one chronotopic frame may appear to be less legitimate or appropriate in another. This has consequences where chronotopes are laminated as each chronotope may entail different evaluative criteria.

This study will investigate how chronotopes are consequential for understanding the teaching practice of Chinese academics teaching English in western China. It will examine how these teachers experience the interrelationships between times and spaces as they attempt to engage in changing their teaching practice and how these interrelationships are consequential for their work. For these teachers, time and space were not simply aspects of the physical world but held a normative moral force that were associated chronotopes in other scales that shaped their understanding of teaching practice and the decision making about changing practice.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **Participants and Context**

The participants in this study were nine tertiary level teachers of English from Yunnan Province who had taken part in a 1-month workshop offered for English teachers from universities based in Yunnan

and Guizhou Provinces. These two neighbouring provinces are located in south-western of China where English language teaching has been affected by a widening resource gap between the affluent east and poorer and ethnically diverse areas in the west. Wang (2017) shows that resource allocation for school students in Yunnan is three to four times less than that for students Beijing and Shanghai, and well below average funding per student nationally. This is replicated in university funding and the provinces have less access to strategic funding, with each province having only one 211 Project university.<sup>1</sup> English education, especially in primary and secondary schools in these provinces, lags behind other provinces in China and there is a serious lack of qualified English teachers (Fan & Cheng, 2015; Wang, 2017).

English language teaching in rural China is typically grammar-focused, textbook-driven, examination-oriented and teacher-centred (Shi, Delahunty, & Gao, 2019), although recent Chinese policy has attempted to direct teaching into more student-centred models (Xu & Fan, 2017). Classes, especially in rural China, are very large and this also has an impact on teaching practice. The universities visited in this study appeared to be reasonably well resourced for teaching. Each had classrooms furnished with computers; these were large, most having 75 or more stations, and tended to be used primarily for teaching listening classes where the computers were used for playing sound files and collecting students' responses.

The workshop was designed to help improve the standard of English and English language teaching in rural China; it also aimed to advance participants' English language and pedagogical skills through the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and best practice ideas. It aimed to help teachers address the challenges of raising teaching standards and improving learning outcomes in rural China. Its key objectives were to provide teachers with the professional understanding and skills to explore their current teaching practice, to identify their main teaching challenges, and to address these challenges through the sharing of ideas, collaborative discussion, practice activities, guided reflection, and planning. The workshop content was informed by a pre-workshop survey of the participants that sought to identify that key issues and challenges teachers faced in their local contexts and it focused on:

- Lesson planning
- Methods and approaches in English language teaching
- Communicative approaches, task-based teaching, and student-centred learning

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<sup>1</sup> The 211 Project is a strategic cross-century project formulated by the Chinese government for the implementation of a strategy to invigorate the country through science, technology, and education.



- Teaching grammar, vocabulary, and the four macroskills
- Syllabus design
- Materials design and selection
- Presentation skills
- Strategies for encouraging student participation
- Approaches to formative and summative assessment
- Classroom management and lesson planning
- Using English for classroom communication

Participants were invited to reflect on new theories and to consider ways in which they could bring their own ideas to life through practical teaching solutions that could be applied in their own classroom contexts. The overall focus of most sessions was on principles, theoretical issues and exchanges of ideas, guidelines, and practices. At intervals through the more theory-oriented input and discussions, the workshop facilitators presented model lessons in which theories and principles were enacted in more concrete ways. The design of the course ensured that there were opportunities for participants to take part in workshops and practice activities, including an introduction to exploratory action research methods and in micro-teaching sessions. Teachers worked together in pairs, small groups, plenary sessions, and through a virtual learning environment to identify, reflect on issues of particular relevance and importance to their own teaching situations and were encouraged to share their successes and consider how they might learn from others working in similar contexts and facing similar challenges.

Of the 67 teachers who took part in the workshop, the teachers for this project were identified from those who evidenced engagement with plans to implement change in their practice based on the workshop, for example by participating in a follow-up webinar held 6 months after the workshop for teachers to discuss their progress and plans. Of these teachers, nine volunteered to participate in a follow-up study to examine how teachers engaged with and implemented ideas from the workshop. These teachers had very good levels of English language that meant that they were considered able to participate in interviews in English. The nine participating teachers represented six institutions with three universities each being represented by two teachers as shown in Table 1. The majority of the participants were female, and this is typical both of the profile of the participants in the workshop and of English language teachers in China more generally.

**TABLE 1**  
**Institutions and participants**

|               |            |        |
|---------------|------------|--------|
| Institution 1 | Teacher 1  | Female |
| Institution 2 | Teacher 2  | Female |
| Institution 3 | Teacher 3  | Male   |
|               | Teacher 4  | Female |
| Institution 4 | Teacher 5  | Female |
| Institution 5 | Teacher 6  | Male   |
|               | Teacher 7  | Male   |
| Institution 6 | Teacher 8  | Female |
|               | Teachers 9 | Female |

## Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection took place 9 months after the conclusion of the workshop and comprised classroom observations of each of the teachers and interviews. It was felt that a 9-month period would be sufficient time for the teachers to have reflected on their workshop experience and to have begun incorporating some of their learning into their teaching practice. The observations and interviews were conducted in the participants' respective institutions.

For each teacher, a single class was observed to give an understanding of the teachers' context and overall teaching approach. All nine teachers knew in advance that they were going to be observed and each was free to decide on the focus of their English language lesson, although in every case they opted for either a reading or a listening class the broad content of which was largely determined by the assigned textbook. All classes were regularly scheduled classes and focused on the topics assigned for the class. However, we acknowledge that the observer's paradox (Labov, 1972) is relevant to understanding these classes given that the teachers had time to prepare in advance and may have departed from the normal format of teaching and included more content from the workshop because of the observation. The lessons observed were delivered to students studying English either as a major or a minor subject. The classroom observations lasted between 90 and 120 minutes and a total of 17 hours of observations was conducted. Comprehensive field notes were taken by one – and in most cases two – of the research team. The field notes were later compiled and coded for the types of activities occurring in the class, and how the activities were sequenced and were annotated with details about students' participation and teacher conduct.

The interviews were conducted individually immediately after the classroom observations and transcribed in the following weeks. The interviews were relatively informal, semi-structured using questions that

had been prepared in advance but allowing opportunities for teachers to raise their own issues and concerns. Teachers were invited to talk about their experiences of the workshop and the ideas they had taken from it. The interviews lasted for an average of 43 minutes and ranged in length from 35 minutes to 58 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English, but participants were invited to use Chinese if this would allow them to express their thoughts more easily. Only two of the interviewees chose to take up this option and only for limited parts of the interviews. The interviews were transcribed verbatim preserving aspects of delivery such as hesitations and false-starts and included features of interaction such as overlapping talk. The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researchers commenced by familiarising themselves with the interview data and produced a list of codes. The codes emerging from the data can be seen in Table 2. The codes were iteratively examined to identify patterns between them that could generate broader themes. The themes generated were then examined to identify links and contradictions and were iteratively revised and linked back to the initial codes to further refine them. From the initial thematic analysis, those relating to time were extracted for the purposes of this study.

## **TEACHERS' CHANGES TO PRACTICE**

During the classroom observations, it became apparent that across all the participants in the study, specific elements from the workshop had been introduced into their teaching practice. These elements included poster presentations, jigsaw tasks, ring classes, games, using name sticks to identify students to respond in class, and intervening in the formation of groups. The use of these practices as the main influence of the workshop was confirmed in the interviews. The techniques chosen tended to be relatively small-scale, stand-alone elements of practice. These elements were most often drawn from the teaching demonstrations; that is, they imitated practices that had been presented to exemplify theories and principles rather than working from theories and principles. These practices were typically grafted onto existing practices, often as interruptions to the scheduled activities in the textbooks and after which more established, textbook-based practices could be restored. Thus, ideas from the workshop were adopted by all of the teachers, but do not seem to have been integrated on a principled basis as a change to overall teaching practice. A good example of this lack of integration could be seen in the use of group work, which appeared to be done simply to have a group-work task, but with little connection to the overall learning focus of the class and little

**TABLE 2**  
**Codes merging form interview data**

| Code                              | Gloss  | Example   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Pedagogy                          | Teaching approach and teaching processes                                 | You know uh some time the students uh maybe uh don-no-no teacher will teach the students in-in-in this way about the words for each unit. OK, please read these words after me one by one. Okay, what-what does mean? Chinese English. Okay next one. And let's check the answer. Yeah, but I changed it. |
| Curriculum                        | Learning goals and programme structures                                  | So uh we for one semester we needed to finish six units. And each unit consist of two parts, section A and section B. And we needed to teach them reading skills, the writing skills, the translation skills  |
| Materials and resources           | Teaching materials and resources, including textbooks                    | Uhh I teach this book, it's called English Great Reading. Yeah. English reading for the non-English majors.   |
| Institutional culture             | Institutions' policies, practices, expectations, values, and beliefs     | Teaching actually is only part of our job and the uh-the school authorities didn't uh attach uh importance on teaching so much, right? And the if you are on time on the class, uh that's okay, right? And the-the-the leaders will hope you to devote yourself to write some papers.                     |
| Affordances for change            | Elements in the context that support teachers in enacting change         | Umm I think the-the best way to improve my teaching is to attend classes uh to attend other teachers' classes.  |
| Constraints on change             | Elements in the context that hinder teachers in enacting change          | Video conference mediated co-teaching is very interesting but there's no equipment and no connection in my classroom.   |
| Teachers' professional experience | Teachers' professional biographies, studies, and qualifications          | And then after graduation uh I was sent by this university to Jiao Tong University to further my study. So uh after-after that uh I was required to go back to-to ((name)) university. So that's the beginning of my career.  |
| Teachers' personal experiences    | Teachers' personal biographies, life circumstances, and domestic content | back home I am also a father, a husband. I have to spend time with my daughter . . . yeah it affects my teaching  |

clear sense of the learning purpose of the group work. In some classes, students were left to get on with the group work either without any teacher monitoring, or very minimal monitoring, meaning the teacher had very little sense of what was being achieved in groups. The teachers' choices raise the question of why they chose these practices, and, in the interviews, the issue of time was often invoked as a way of understanding how teachers planned changes in their practice.

# **THE CHRONOTOPES IN INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PRACTICE**

## **The Nature of Academics' Work**

The nature of teachers' work in university contexts and how teachers' work is organised within institutional frameworks is a significant element in the context in which changes in practice are carried out. For all the teachers interviewed, teaching was not the sole focus of their work and all also had responsibilities for conducting research and for administration of teaching and learning. Teachers at these Chinese universities were not in a position to intervene in the curriculum they were required to teach and did not have autonomy to make changes in their classrooms. All of them were required to teach from textbooks assigned for their courses by their institution and were allocated a certain amount of the textbook that they were expected to cover in each lesson. In fact, the teachers often began their class by giving an overview of what the class would cover, expressed in the form of the Unit in the textbook on which they were focusing and the pages that would be covered in the class. The lack of teacher control over the curriculum meant that any changes needed to be embedded within the time boundaries of a pre-established teaching plan. All attempts at change must be consistent with the externally imposed demands on coverage of material, for which teachers are accountable to their managers. For example, all of the teachers encouraged group work in their classes as one of the changes in practice they attributed to their professional learning and in many cases, the focus of the group work was a task from the textbook. Such tasks were often designed as individual tasks and so the use of group work was an alternative way to present a required element of the day's teaching. In some cases, however, the tasks chosen for group work did not seem to lend themselves to collaborative work, especially in the Reading and Listening classes that were observed. The teachers' aims of developing a more student-centred teaching approach were thus often constrained by the curricular framework of the textbook and externally mandated demands for covering material in a set time.

All the teachers interviewed raised the issue of time as having an important impact on their work and their discourses about time reveal elements on the chronotope within the universities. One of the time pressures relates to the ways that time devoted to teaching work is used. The amount of time that is possible for change is constrained by the nature of the content that the teachers are teaching, both in terms

of the number of different courses they need to teach and to the requirements for delivering the curriculum in different ways.

*Extract 1 (Interview: I2:Teacher 2)*

1. Teacher: Umm I think the first thing is that we have a heavy workload.
2. Researcher: Mm.
3. Teacher: So uh we for one semester we needed to finish six units. And each unit consist of two parts, section A and section B. And we needed to teach them reading skills, the writing skills, the translation skills.
4. Researcher: Hmm.
5. Teacher: So I think it's very difficult to focus on just one area. If you- if you- if you spread your energy to each subject, you will feel that you-the students didn't get-get enough input from the teacher.
6. Researcher: Okay. [So you are saying one of the problems is just covering the =
7. Teacher: [Mhmm.
8. Researcher: = amount of curriculum you're supposed to [teach in the [time.
9. Teacher: [Yeah. [Yes.
10. Researcher: Okay.
11. Teacher: Because that we are going to do,
12. Researcher: [Hmm.
13. Teacher: [that we are must do. We must finish this uh this sixty units for one semester (h).

In this extract, the chronotope of teaching is located within a larger institutional chronotope with particular behavioural scripts that carry moral force, such as covering a certain amount of content in an allotted time, or allocating time to all students equitably, that operate as frames for understanding and evaluating professional behaviour. For Teacher 2, one of the problems she faced in changing her practice was the time pressure that she was under in her teaching. The large number of different courses she had to cover required time for preparation and thus consumed time outside the classroom. The chronotope is thus one of filled time with allocations made to specific activities and with teachers as actors whose time is fully taken up by activities required by others. The requirements to cover material in a designated time period consumes time inside the class. These demands on her time mean that she lacked time for developing her

teaching practice, which required time outside class, and also lacked time for implementing changes in her classroom because of the pressure to cover the material. Moreover, selecting to develop practice in one course or with one group of students takes time that could have been devoted to other students and this can compromise the quality of one's work with those students (turn 5, *you will feel that you-the students didn't get-get enough input from the teacher*). There is thus a sense that changes in practice have a time cost that may need to be paid by giving less attention to other students. Bloome et al. (2009) note that one aspect of a chronotope is whether it affords possibilities for an individual to act upon and change the world as opposed being acted on and changed by it. This teacher sees the chronotope as acting on her and removing possibilities for agency in her teaching work, and this sense was shared by the other teachers.

This teacher went on to explain how this sense of fully occupied time had a direct influence on her work in a course of English for Public Speaking.

*Extract 2 (Interview: Institution2:Teacher 2)*

1. Teacher: Another problem is uh ummm I have a lot- I have too much work to do.
2. Researcher: Um[hmm.
3. Teacher: [Sometimes I did not find enough time to- for me to think about uh the new activity, and to do the PowerPoint myself.
4. Researcher: Mhmm.
5. Researcher: Okay. [Tell us a little bit about what sorts of things make it difficult=
6. Teacher: [Hmm.
7. Researcher: =for you to get the time?
8. Teacher: Just like I mentioned that I have uh four courses.
9. Researcher: Mhmm.
10. Teacher: I think I needed to- I need to uh- just to focus on the undergraduate-under-undergraduates. [and I should not take the elective courses.
11. Researcher: [Hmm.
12. Teacher: Although I like it very much, for example, the English public speech-speaking, uh but it-it means too much work=

She says (turn 3) that time pressure means that she does not have time to think about the changes to practice she would like to make or to do the preparation required if she has decided to change her

teaching, again representing the chronotope as acting on her rather than offering her agentive positions. Moreover, the course in which she wishes to make changes is an elective course and thus is one that she feels is perhaps less useful as a place to expend her time than a core course for undergraduates. Different classes therefore have different chronotopes and the ways that action is valued in each varies; time spent on and with core classes is more valuable than time spent on and with elective classes. This chronotope constrains possibilities for exercising agency and creates an evaluative framework for understanding how and where time should be allocated, producing a normative framework that can be a significant inhibitor for action. In these two extracts, the teacher represents her experience of time in the university as a struggle to integrate the multiple temporal scales (Lemke, 2000) of her professional life, ranging from the activity she wishes to implement, to the demands of the class, the requirements of the course and the larger curriculum, and out of class work. In fact, it is the need to attend to this multiplicity that contributes to her sense that she lacks the possibility to act agentively on lower level scales (the activities she wishes to implement) because of the demands of higher level scales.

Such time demands are further complicated by competing demands of the different tasks required of academics; that is by further multiple chronotopes that are invoked in the context of academic work. One significant issue for the teachers was the balance between the time spent on teaching and the time spent on research.

*Extract 3: (Interview: Institution 1:Teacher 1)*

1. Teacher: Uh, but to me- it is so time consuming.
2. Researcher: Hmm.
3. Teacher: And yeah so and also uh at present- at present uh we Chinese teacher uh most of the Chinese teachers have to spend a lot of time to-to write some papers.

For Teacher 1, the time spent on developing her teaching practice is problematic because it competes with the time available for writing research papers (turn 3). The chronotopes of teaching and research are thus in conflict and dealing with this conflict is central to her understanding the nature of academic work. The difficulty of integrating the chronotopes of teaching and research was an issue for all the teachers interviewed and reflects the complex demands on the teachers' time in carrying out their academic duties. For example, for



Teacher 5, finding ways to balance the competing demands of teaching and research is central to how she understands her working environment.

*Extract 4: (Interview: Institution 4:Teacher 5)*

1. Teacher: Umm teaching and uh-umm-umm-what I want to say-and-uh-research-yeah-a-a-and papers-uh-(h) to publish papers.
2. Researcher: So how's that an issue? [In what ways?
3. Teacher: [Yeah-uh- there's two- two- two parts. My teaching work- and the research work.  
(3 lines omitted))
4. Teacher: Yeah-yeah.
5. Teacher: Yeah. It's very difficult. Yeah.

As discussed above, there is a sense that the time allocated to teaching is not enough to allow for change and maintaining quality teaching in all courses and for all students. At the same time, the amount of time devoted to teaching as an area of work is problematic because time spent on teaching outside the classroom is time taken away from doing research. The competing demands on time reveal the scalar complexities that are in play. The smaller scale chronotopes of teaching and research are embedded in larger institutional and academic chronotopes. These larger scale chronotypes construct a hierarchy for attributing value to aspects of academic work and so this embedding is consequential for the ways they influence practice and decision making. Competing time demands mean that the time required to develop classroom practices may be seen as an unwelcome cost for work in other areas. These competing time pressures mean that if change is to be adopted, then it needs to be change that can be done with as little demand on out-of-class time as possible, and adopting techniques that can be inserted easily into existing practice provides a way to allow some development of teaching practice within competing time demands. The competing demands on teachers' time were thus played out and conceptualised in terms the chronotopes of the institutional culture and the ways that they constructed evaluations of the various components of teachers' work. We turn to this in the next section.

The competing chronotopes of teaching and research are not determinative of behaviour and not all teachers responded to the competing demands on time in the same way. For Teacher 8, a decision to focus on teaching in preference to other aspects of her work was a way to resolve competing demands on her time.

*Extract 5: (Interview: Institution 6:Teacher 8)*

1. Researcher: Okay, tell me how do you manage your-your job balancing teaching and research.
2. Teacher: I sacrifice.
3. Researcher: What [do you sacrifice?]
4. Teacher: [ Uhhhhhh ] Some work.
5. Researcher: Yeah. What-what do you sacrifice?
6. Teacher: Research.
7. Researcher: You've [sacrificed research.
8. Teacher: [I-I think we don't research right now.
9. Researcher: Uhuh.
10. Teacher: =Yeah because uh uh I and my husband
11. Researcher: Mhmm.
12. Teacher: okay we take full care of the two kids, they are just two and five.
13. Researcher: Mhmm.
14. Teacher: Uh. You-you do not have time [okay to do the research.
15. Researcher: [Mhmm.
16. Researcher: Right.
17. Teacher: [But I-I-I- don't care. [(Hhhhhh).
18. Researcher: [Okay. [So you- uh for you then teaching is the priority.
19. Teacher: Yeah. And the kids.

For this teacher, lack of time is something that calls for sacrifice (turn 2) and for her the only way to resolve the time pressures is not to participate in one area of her work profile (turn 6). Her interview also shows that time pressure is not just the result of competing demands of chronotopes in the workplace but also of competing demands of work and home life (turns 10 and 12). Thus, there is a lamination of institutional and external chronotopes in which domestic activities of the home and academic activities of the workplace are brought into relationship (Prior & Shipka, 2003). In this case, institutional chronotopes are in conflict with personal/domestic ones. There are values and priorities expressed in which family comes first and work second, and at work there are also values and priorities at play that differ from the publicly held chronotopes of the institution.

These teachers stressed that changing practice requires time for development and time to plan changes to practice. However, teachers in this study viewed themselves as being constrained by the chronotopes

that shaped their work and expressed difficulties in managing the competing chronotopes of the various components of their work. Time made competing demands on them and time required to develop teaching were related to a commensurate loss of time for other aspects of academic work, especially research. The perceived sources of time pressure were varied and included competing demands at work and the demands of life outside the university. The guiding principle for selecting techniques as the basis for change may be that such techniques can be inserted into practice relatively easily and so do not require a great investment of time for their implementation.

## **The Ways Institutions Value Academic Work**

The division of time between teaching and research for these teachers was not simply one of apportioning time to different elements of work. The ways that teachers thought of time was heavily influenced by the ways institutional cultures constructed the value of the components of academic work. This had consequences for how teachers understood the division of work between teaching and research, as all teachers felt that research was more valued in their institutions than teaching.

As the extract below indicates, when applying for promotion, research performance was a fundamental consideration.

*Extract 6: (Interview: Institution 3:Teacher 3)*

1. Teacher: Uh-the issues I face-you know-(h)-uh frankly speaking, uh the prospect of promotion.
2. Researcher: Mhm.
3. Teacher: Like from uh I-say an assistant lecturer to a lecturer to associate professor and then to professor. O- so my- the major problem I'm facing is that I think I am-I am-I- I invest a lot of time and effort in teaching but uh the system, uh, they are using-they say, uh the uh administrations, yeah they are using to assess uh us teachers, uh mostly on our-say uh, research project, the papers  
[the publishing-It's publishing. I don't think this is fair (h). Umm-
4. Researcher: [Yeah.
5. Researcher: So what you're saying is most of your time is given over to teaching  
[the main criterion for promotion is academic papers.
6. Teacher: [Yes.
7. Teacher: Yes. Yes.

For Teacher 3, time devoted to teaching was important, but she feels that her investment was not valued by her university and that her performance is not evaluated in terms of her teaching and the time she devotes to it (turn 3). Here, there is a lamination of different scales constructing how academic work is understood. The smaller scale of the teacher's day-to-day work is mapped against a larger scale of career progression. Investment in activities in the short term are evaluated in terms of their contribution to the longer term chronotope, which itself is laminated within a yet larger scale of neoliberal evaluative regimes of skill development, accountability and self-improvement (Jankowski & Provezis, 2014). The larger scale and the smaller scale are in conflict and dedicating time to teaching can have negative consequences in high stakes contexts, such as promotion. A similar perception was expressed by the other teachers and was particularly felt as a problem in balancing work and non-work activities, as Extract 7 indicates.

*Extract 7: (Interview: Institution 6:Teacher 7)*

1. Teacher: Uh-we may face uh great pressure in-research. Academic research.
2. Researcher: Right.
3. Teacher: And uh-umm it seems that if you want to continue climb the-the ladder [the ladder you have to umm you have to study f-further (hh)]
4. Researcher: [Hmm.
5. Teacher: just further study and do more researches. And uh uh and-as for me personally speaking I'm a mother of two kids.
6. Researcher: Hmm.
7. Teacher: And umm it's a little bit uh high demanding for me [right now=
8. Researcher: [Yeah.
9. Teacher: =[since my kids are still very young.
10. Researcher: [Yeah.
11. Researcher: Mhmm.
12. Teacher: And-and also some of the pressure comes from uh the peers as well,
13. Teacher: [since that some of them have started to pursue their doctor's degree.
14. Researcher: [Hmm.
15. Researcher: Oh.
16. Teacher: Yeah. I think that's- for me that's the biggest issue.

For this teacher, the competing demands for time from both teaching and family life are seen as eroding possibilities for advancement (turns 3–9). Here, multiple chronotopes and scales are presented as being in conflict and needing to be managed by the teacher. The domestic and work chronotopes require trading off time. The personal biography of the teacher as a woman, mother, and academic is set against the time scales of academic advancement and her career trajectory. All the teachers except for Teachers C and G, both of whom are male, discussed the conflict between the academic and domestic chronotopes and this would appear to reflect an influence of larger scale chronotopes of gender (Prior & Shipka, 2003). The pressure she feels is not coming only from university management, however, but is more disseminated through the publicly held chronotopes of the institutional culture so that others' decisions to prioritise research are perceived as pressure to do the same.

There was a perception that in the publicly held chronotopes of the university not only was research valued, but that teaching itself was devalued by university management.

*Extract 8: (Interview: Institution 1:Teacher 1)*

1. Teacher: (Teaching) actually is only part of our job and the uh-the school authorities didn't uh attach uh importance on teaching so much, right? And the if you are on time on the class, uh that's okay, right? And the-the-the leaders will hope you to devote yourself to write some papers.
2. Researcher: Mhmm.
3. Teacher: So uh I think maybe in recent uh uh years I-I actually I didn't uh spend a lot of time on on teaching. Because uh I felt a great pressure because I have a uh a lot of other things to do.

Teacher 1 feels that management sets a low threshold for evaluating teaching (*you are on time on the class*) and that there are thus few incentives to improve teaching as any such improvement was not seen as contributing to how one's academic work was evaluated. As another teacher said:

*Extract 9: (interview: Institution 1:Teacher 1)*

- Teacher: And actually whether I do it good or bad, actually it has very little influence to my career.

The pressure to produce research thus leads people, even though they feel a personal desire to teach well, to withdraw time and effort from teaching in order to invest them in other areas of work. This quote further reinforces the teachers' sense of the conflict between the smaller scale of the classroom and the larger scale of her career trajectory.

The two domains of teaching and research are therefore not equally valued in the construction of the publicly held institutional chronotopes and the question of balancing teaching and research discussed above is not simply one of working out time allocations but rather of finding increased time for research in a workload that is already perceived as full. Deciding to focus more time on teaching is thus a decision to allocate time to a small-scale activity that is less valued in the institutional chronotopes, with consequences for the larger scale of academic progression. As Extract 5 illustrated, a decision not to focus on research is a "sacrifice" of one's future career to meet present needs. The ideological weighting given to research asserts a particular pressure in the chronotope on time-poor teachers who wish to develop their research practice and changes that can be adopted with little time cost may be a way of balancing a desire to teach well with the demands of institutional culture.

## **The Ways Institutions Value Changes to Practice**

A further issue relevant to understanding institutional chronotopes and their impact on teachers involved the ways that the institutions valued and supported changes to practice and professional learning as part of teachers' work. While all participants reported that research was more valued than teaching in their institutions, the ways that the various institutions engaged with professional learning and changes to practice range from highly supportive to highly unsupportive. In Institution 6, there appeared to be a strong local culture of professional exchange and learning from each other.

*Extract 10: (interview: Institution 6:Teacher 9)*

1. Researcher: And in your class this morning ((researcher)) said that there were some of your colleagues observing your class.
2. Teacher: [Yeah.
3. Teacher: Yeah.
4. Researcher: Uh-have any of your colleagues uh learn-uh-looked at your practice and tried to do some of the things that you-you are doing that are different?
5. Teacher: Uh-so th-they do something different?
6. Researcher: Yeah. Because they're coming in and observed your class.
7. Teacher: Yep.
8. Researcher: Uh is your teaching having an influence on how other people teach?
9. Teacher: Uhuh-ye-x-Maybe! (h)
10. Researcher: (h)
11. Teacher: =(Hh) Maybe yeah. So uh I did such teaching maybe every semester (h).
12. Researcher: Mhmm.
13. Teacher: Yeah because different reasons. So my colleagues they uh have observing my classes and some of them told me that even they-they choose-maybe just like word dictation.
14. Researcher: Mmhmm.
15. Teacher: Yeah. Wo-words dictation. Or they also tried to eh use umm some activities. But to be honest because compared with me (h) they are more experienced teachers. [I-most time I should learn from th[em
16. Researcher: [Right. [ (h)
17. Teacher: Yeah. That is my point. I always-I want to-I always go to their classes
18. Researcher: Mhmm.
19. Teacher: to do the class observation and learn from their classes.

At Institution 6, the research team noticed (turn 1) that during the classroom observations, there were a number of other teachers present in the class for part of the time and this promoted the exchange above which revealed that such observations were a regular part of their practice of the English teachers at the institution (turns 4, 13, 17, and 19). Such observations were undertaken as a way of learning from colleagues and teachers sometimes implemented ideas they saw in each other's classrooms in their own teaching. In the institutional chronotope, therefore, time was created for forms of professional learning. This meant that the teachers who participated in the Shanghai

workshop had a mechanism within their institutional context to allow them to share their professional learning with colleagues. The Department also submitted these teachers to an internal university teaching competition using one of the techniques they had introduced into their practice – the poster presentation – further validating their investment of time.

*Extract 11: (interview: Institution 6:Teacher 8)*

1. Teacher: Yeah, actually umm when I-when we came back two of us uh miss x uh Kelly [and me were asked to take the competition-teaching competition =
2. Researcher: [Hmm.
3. Teacher: =in our university. And uh-and uh I-I app-I implement the poster uh the poster uh in my contest in uh in my class. And after the class one of the judges came to me and said, oh well that's a brilliant idea to see-uh to see-uh to find out the students' outcome immediately in such straight way since I asked the students to post-to-to-to- to have their-uh to-to have their poster on the wall.  
[So the judges can see their outcomes [immediately.
4. Researcher: [Hmm. [Hmm.
5. Teacher: And they say that uh it's a very good-uh a very good way to know what the students have learned in the class. And also uh I used uh groupi-group and regrouping=

Their participation in the teaching competition brought their teaching practice into the presence of other colleagues and validated their work in introducing changes in their teaching (turn 3). These activities indicate that Institution 6 has a strong professional learning culture which may have counter-balanced to some extent the competing demands on teachers' time in the institution.

At the other extreme, Institution 5 seemed to have a local culture that was unsupportive or even hostile to change.



Extract 12: (interview: Institution 5:Teacher 7)

1. Teacher: Uh the other uh difficulties is that umm uh I-I think the pressure from (Hh) uh you know from our schoo-from our university [uh not only the common
2. Researcher: [Mhmm.
3. Teacher: teacher can come to my class, observe my class and also the leaders or the Dean or someone else will observe our class.
4. Researcher: Mhmm.
5. Teacher: So if I behave differently some people will question. What are you doing in your class? You're just uh like a market. Yeah (Hh).
6. Researcher: Mhmm.
7. Teacher: It's not like uh activity, how to learn, how to blah blah blah. You cannot behave goon-good just like in your class.

This teacher reports that his work can be monitored by colleagues and senior managers at the institution (turn 3) and that if he does something that differs from the usual practices of the school, he is likely to be criticised (turns 5–7). A particular problem seemed to be that his classes, which included group work, were noisier than a regular class (turn 5, *You're just uh like a market*) and that such noise was not indicative of learning in an English class. This teacher is invoking the way the classroom chronotope creates expectations about the activities of the classroom and the nature of participation in them. The classroom chronotope is peopled by quiet, studious students but student-centred teaching and group work produce noise and movement associated with other spaces (*a market*). He also invokes possible laminations of time – time when others are present and times when they are not – that influence his thinking about practice. At each moment, there is a possibility for another chronotopic configuration with different participants, different consequences, and different evaluations. The other teacher at the same institution reported similar problems in making changes in his classroom.

*Extract 13: (interview: Institution 5:Teacher 6)*

1. Researcher: Mhmm. And whenever we try to-to change things, there are sometimes difficulties in-in making changes. What sorts of difficulties have-have you faced in-in changing your practice?
2. Teacher: You know when the dean or the deputy dean of the foreign languages school comes to observe my class, and you know he, just two weeks ago he observed one of my classes and he-he you know told me a lot about my teaching, a lot-lot of comments, not good co(h)mm(h)ents.
3. Researcher: Right.
4. Teacher: (Hh).
5. Researcher: Hmm.
6. Teacher: You know he asked me so what are your objectives of this class? You know I see that your students have some fun in your class. But what are your objectives? Are those objectives achieved? And how are you going to evaluate your students? Because you are teaching them in this way. And I told-yeah after that I told my students, so whenever uh the school leader comes to observe my class please-I will teach the course book.
7. Researcher: Mhmm.
8. Teacher: But when they are not here, I will teach in my own way.
9. Researcher: Mhmm. Okay. Why do you think the uh th-the dean or the deputy, whatever his title was, found things that in your practice a problem? What was this person thinking uh about teaching?
10. Teacher: You know a lot of teachers I think still prefer our traditional way of teaching. [A teacher is supposed to you know stand there lecturing students.
11. Researcher: [Mhmm.
12. Teacher: You know to give them lots of knowledge. It's not important whether you divide your students into teams or not. It's not important to have group discussion.

This teacher reports (turns 2 and 6) that his attempts to develop a more student-centred teaching approach were criticised by the Deputy Dean and that his changes in teaching were called into question and this was seen as calling into question his whole teaching program. He therefore attempted to conceal his new practices from authority figures and to conform to their expectation when observers were present (turn 5). Here, the past and the present are brought into relation, and shape his practice so that what is done now is shaped by what was

done then. In this institution, change is represented as a transgressive act as it deviates from the activities normally associated with the chronotope. Blommaert (2018) argues that deviation from rules of behaviour and associated value judgements of a chronotope can result in attributions of identities that hold negative connotations (see also Blommaert & De Fina, 2017). For these teachers, introducing new practices deviates from established rules of behaviour and behaviours are monitored and can be called into question by those with power in the institution. These teachers are thus subject to the possibility of observation and this possibility has the potential to discipline changes in teaching practice and works to constrain the potential for change in this institution (Foucault 1975).

## CONCLUSION

Understanding the choices of these teachers in how to change practice in their university classrooms involves understanding how they perceive time and its use in relation to different spaces, and how these perceptions play a role in their work. This study found that teachers' decision making about changes in their practice were influenced by cultural constructions of time and space. They perceived time as filled by externally imposed demands on their uses of time at work, such as requirements to cover set content or undertake both teaching and research that were similar across institutions. The local institutional chronotopes were embedded in larger scales of academic work, family life, and gender roles that also influenced how uses of time were understood and evaluated. In addition, the smaller time scales of local decisions about work at particular moments were embedded in longer time scales of academic development and career progression. The different constructions and valuing of time-space in the various chronotopes in which these teachers lived and worked were frequently in conflict with each other and with their desire to implement change. It appears that decisions to implement techniques, which could be done with little time penalty, was a strategy for changing practice within the agentive restrictions of the prevailing chronotopes.

The analysis has thus shown that chronotopes have powerful normative dimensions that shape how teachers understand and evaluate their work, their roles, and their agency. Within the spaces of their institutions, time is constructed in ways that give value to how time is spent and thus influence understandings of whether time is well spent or misspent. Examining time-space as culturally constructed and ideological chronotopes rather than as physical or chronological units shows how time and space come to have epistemic and affective dimensions

that are invoked in moral evaluations of action in context (Blommaert, 2015, 2016). The multiple relationships between time, space, and social actors thus organise possibilities for action and need to be understood as factors shaping the ways that teachers capitalise on their professional learning and bring it into their practice. This does not mean that the chronotope is determinative of action; teachers are able to exercise agency in their choices (White, 2013), but in doing so they recognise that they are acting in ways that are not in accordance with the prevailing chronotope and they know that this is problematic for their participation in their institutions and for how their work is perceived, valued, and rewarded.

Moreover, chronotopes do not exist in isolation but in relationship with others chronotopes in ways that laminate the here and now with other times and other places (Lemke, 2000; Prior & Shipka, 2003); for the teachers in this study, the institutional space bleeds into other spaces and this influences how actions and courses of action are constructed and evaluated. For example, for participants the institutional chronotope may be seen as influencing the construction of time in personal spaces, especially family spaces, and vice versa, creating perceived incompatibilities between chronotopes in each context. Institutionally situated demands on time are perceived not just as relevant in institutional spaces but also as imperatives on the use of time in personal spaces, that may be resisted, but only at a cost to a teachers' identities and positions within institutional spaces. Thus, teachers who prioritise personal time–space relationships over institutional time–space relationships perceive this as damaging to career progression. In prioritising some actions over others, participants invoke chronotopes as interpretive ensembles for positioning self and others and for understanding how self and others are positioned (Leander, 2004). Chronotopes can thus be used as ways of representing and explaining the agency of teachers, or the lack of it, as authors of their own practice.

The chronotope can thus be seen as a significant factor in understanding how change can be enacted in educational contexts, although not the only factor which may be taken into consideration. It is part of a complex ecological context in which change is enacted. In thinking about the role of chronotopes in educational change, we have aimed to show that what is important about time is not just the amount of time needed or available to make changes but also how time is constructed as a cultural object within a particular spatial context. Time–space is not just a context in which action occurs and it is not simply the amount of time and space that is available that needs to be taken into consideration in understanding how teachers organise their work, but rather time–space needs to be understood as

constructed and its constructedness shapes possibilities and potentials (Bloome & Katz, 1997). Thus, in understanding change, it is important to consider the chronotope(s) that exist within the context in which the change is carried out and to consider how the time–space relationship will influence what is done and what is doable. Time is important in educational change not just in the prosaic sense that any change in practice requires time but also because time itself is not simply a measurement of duration, but rather a way of understanding and giving shape to experience. Viewing time and space as cultural constructs that are constitutive elements of practice has implications for both enacting and researching educational change. In particular, it is useful to identify, acknowledge, and understand chronotopes as elements in the change of that can facilitate or impede change. It is therefore valuable in understanding and implementing change to develop an account of the chronotopes that are in play and the ways that they impact on the change process, and when necessary to challenge them and seek to develop new ways of understanding time and space that are supportive of change processes.

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No conflicts of interest.

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