教育机构促进教师职业素质水平持续发展研究

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摘要 论述教育机构如何促进教师职业素质水平的持续发展。阐述教师职业素质水平的发展这一旧课题在日益变化的新形势下的现实意义及进行教师职业发展的内部与外部因素。从教师职业素质发展的定义、内容、形式、方法与实践等方面分析与阐述如何促进教师职业素质水平的持续发展,指出学校在实施教师职业素质发展中出现的问题。强调从整体上促进教师职业素质水平的持续发展,学校不仅要创造机会让教师接受正规的进修课程,更重要的是建立一系列有效的机制、政策,在教师中间创造一种相互学习、相互提高的融洽的文化氛围。

关键词 教师 职业素质发展 教育机构 终身学习

How to Effect Life-long Professional Development of Teachers ——An Organisational Perspective

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Abstract This paper mainly deals with professional development in educational institutions. Based on literature review and from an organisational perspective, the paper discusses the reason for increasing demands for teachers' professional development, provides some insights into how to effect life-long professional devlopment among teachers. It highlights the importance of establishing structures in the school that foster learning culture among teachers and thus facilitating effective life-long professional development of teachers. Besides, problems blocking the effective implementation of teachers' professional development are also spotted and addressed in this paper.

Key Words teachers professional development educational institutions life-long learning

1 External and Internal Context for Teachers' Professional Development

"The nature and extent of economic, technological, social and other developments(for example), have provided compelling reasons for change in education"(Cumming, 1993:39). Today, as the societal and technological changes are taking place day by day, there is a global view that educational institutions are required to make responsive changes through internal restructuring and reform to suit the needs of the rapidly changing society and improve their effectiveness and competitiveness. Obviously, in terms of the main goals of educational institutions, the quality of teaching, or the performance of teachers in classrooms is one of the most important determinants of school effectiveness.

In Hughes' point of view, professional development becomes a crucial issue for good teaching for two reasons: stability of teaching, and the changing context of teaching(Hughes, 1991). As stated above, the changing external context of teaching requires the school to improve their teaching effectiveness, which in turn requires teachers to update and enrich knowledge, to search for new approaches to teaching practice, to explore new methods for assessing learning outcomes, and to design curriculum in accordance with the changing demands of external environment. For example, the technological change, particularly the rapid innovation in information and communication technology, not only enriches the content of knowledge that students need acquire but also offers more ways for teachers to conduct teaching and more channels for information acquisition(Beare et al., 1989). More seriously, the easy access to information and knowledge acquisition thanks to the development of information technology, even challenges the status of teachers as sources of knowledge(Hargreaves, 1997). In order to meet these challenges, continuous, practical and forward-looking professional development is a must for schools to survive and develop, by which the quality of

teaching ensures the quality of learning.

Stability of the teaching force has become an important issue for schooling effectiveness with the rapidly changing society. Suppose that due to various reasons, teachers are discontented with their job, and think about leaving, their commitment to teaching is more likely to decrease, thus resulting in less effective teaching. If there is a high rate of turnover in a school, this school would be considered ineffective, at least, it is not an attractive place for people to work in.

In fact, my personal contact with some young fellows in the school told me that apart from the low pay for teachers, one major reason for the high turnover rate for young teachers in some Chinese schools was that they found little opportunity for them to develop their ability and to achieve self-actualisation. Of course, the reasons may be very complex and it is not easy to identify which factor contributes most to the turnover of each of those leavers. However, there is no doubt that professional development aimed to benefit teachers by offering various opportunities for them to develop their potential capacity, to keep pace with the up-to-date knowledge to increase their confidence, and to realise their self-esteem and self-worth, is a good means by which schools attract and sustain their teaching forces.

2 How to Bring About Effective Professional Development of Teachers

2.1 Definition of Teachers' Professional Development

To bring about effective professional development, it is first necessary to define the content of professional development, or in other words, what should be included in the objectives of professional development.

Conners(1991) defines teachers' professional development as a complex process intended not only to "improve and develop their instructional skills, and their curriculum development, implementation and evaluation skills" but also to allow teachers to develop a wide range of beliefs and attitudes that support effective teaching practices (p.54). This definition suggests that the content of teacher devlopment should take account of not merely the capability of teachers, or more specifically, knowledge and skills that teachers are required to possess to result in effective learning outcomes but also the values of teachers or attitudinal and emotional aspects of teaching that are important in triggering teachers' enthusiasm, responsibility, and energy to pursue self-development and effective teaching. In other words, the content of professional development should include both the needs of schools for a competent and accountable teaching force and the needs of teachers for self-growth.

2.2 Approaches to Teachers' Professional Development

According to Eraut(1986, cited in Conners), there are four approaches to professional development of teachers. The first approach, the "defect" approach, is based on the assumption that teachers would be incompetent if they did not catch up with the up-to-date

knowledge and skills. The second approach is the "growth" approach, which assumes that teachers are active seekers for self-improvement and self-fulfilment through grasping and developing new teaching skills and knowledge. The third approach, the "change" approach, recognises the need for responsiveness of teaching practice to changes in learning and teaching context. Finally, the "problem-solving" approach recognises the importance of teachers in identifying problems occurred during their teaching career and finding solutions to these problems. It is obvious that each approach emphasizes one dimension of professional development. It is suggested that in the practice, the appropriate way of conceptualising professional development should be the infusion of these four approaches into guidelines for professional development with an emphasis on the growth approach (Conner, 1991).

2.3 The Practice of Teachers' Professional Development

In practice, professional development in educational institutions can take both formal and informal forms. Formal forms of professional development include well-designed training courses, organized academic activities such as seminars, forums, and so forth. Informal professional development can take the forms of observing other teachers' work, reading, and participating in school-based curriculum, etc.(Maxwell, 1993).

Though both formal forms of professional development like training courses and informal activities are aimed to improve the quality and competency of the teaching workforce, the difference lies in the different emphasis of these two forms. Formal professional development focuses on the updating and broadening of knowledge, and the advancing of instructional techniques and classroom management skills, which constitute the technical aspect of teaching practice, and influence teaching and learning effectiveness. Informal professional development activities emphasize more interactions among teachers regarding teaching experiences, new ideas, problems and possible solutions in the teaching process etc., which largely depend on the beliefs, attitudes of teachers towards their work and on the interpersonal relationships among teachers. Briefly, informal teacher development bases its success on the teacher culture of the school. However, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of informal professional development(See Lieberman, 1995). McRae(1993) believes that "the best practice in professional development is organic"(p.46). In his deifinition, "organic professional development occurs where working together consistently on teaching practice-ideas, content and method, information and ideas about students-is the norm, violating the boundaries of professional autonomy"(p.46). This provides an implication that effective practice of professional development will be more likely to result in a school where there is a cohesive culture that values learning on the job and learning from each other, which is supported by other writers like Lieberman

(1995), Darling-Hammond et al(1995). Another implication here is that professional development should be school-based, which may be different from the traditional practice of professional development that used to take place outside the school.

Regarding the location of professional development, Lieberman (1995) also maintains that professional development practice should be school-centered, complemented by establishing networks with outside organisations. The main task of professional development in this view is to transform the school into a learning organisation in which not only students but also teachers are involved in learning activities which help improve the quality of teachers and then enhance teaching performance(Lieberman, 1995). It is worthwhile noting that the school-based professional development practice would be more likely to increase the overall teaching quality of the school as a whole by involving all the teachers inside the school in learning activities and self-improvement rather than just offering opportunities for a few teachers who are expected to play the role of backbones of teaching workforce.

2.4　Structures to Support Effective Professional Development

The literature review suggests that establishing support structures that facilitate professional development is essential for effectiveness of professional development(Maxwell, 1993; Lieberman, 1995). These structures may include; structures that help establish a professional learning culture where learning is highly valued and appreciated by teachers, and where teachers are encouraged to be actively involved in updating knowledge content, innovating teaching methods, and integrating assessment and curriculum (Lieberman, 1995; Darling-Hammond et al. 1995); appropriate performance assessmaent system, together with a reward system that encourages the outstanding performance of teachers(School Council, 1991; Darling-Hammond et al. 1995; Wolf et al. 1996); establishing networks or partnerships with those outside tha school to provide wider opportunities for learning for teachers(Lieberman, 1995); structures that optimize the allocation and the use of existing resources in the school(School Council, 1991).

As professional development should be considered an ongoing and career-long process, it is necessary to develop a healthy collegial learning environment in which "teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see" (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995:598). In this way, there would be continuous improvement of teaching practice not only at an individual level but more important at a collective level. A study carried out by Little(1982) found that collegial interaction among teachers such as frequent "discussion of classroom practice, mutual observation and critique, shared efforts to design and prepare curriculum, and shared participation in the business of instructional improvement"(p.331 –

332) contribute a lot to successful and continuous professional development.

To support effective professional development, there is also a need to establish effective mechanisms for assessing teaching performance, and for recognising teaching practice and rewarding outstanding performance. Scriven(1991) argues that professional developmnet is meaningless without appropriate and effective evaluation of teachers' performance. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin(1995) also point out that to support teacher development, it is necessary to adopt new forms of teacher evaluation with an emphasis on the appropriateness of teaching decisions to the goals and contexts of teaching and needs of students. A survey conducted by Timperley(1998) shows that most principals develop performance evaluation systems with an emphasis on the developmental purpose(formative evaluation) rather than the accountability purpose(summative evaluation). However, writers such as Scriven(1991) argued that "the kind of evaluation on which it(professional development) has to be based(formative evaluation) should be more and not less thorough than that required for personnel decisions(summative evaluation)"(p.25). A study carried out by Wolf et al(1996) suggests that well-designed and implemented programs that link rewards and promotion to actual performance of teachers are instrumental in promoting the professional development of teachers by increasing job satisfaction and stimulating greater efforts to achieve self-fulfilment and self-esteem. Obviously, these programs must be based on fair, rational and effective performance evaluation.

Effective professional development requires teachers to have access to quality resources(Cumming, 1993). Policy makers should allocate the existing resources to encourage school restructuring that provides time for teachers' collegial work and learning, that enables teachers to participate in the development and reform of curriculum and assessment, and that anticipates teachers' needs for collegial learning through strong communities of practice (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995:603). "Additional investment in teachers seems to he an irreducible element of an agenda to enact reformers visions of teaching and learning"(Darling-Hammond and McClaughlin, 1995:603). Collins(1991) also agrees that adequate funding and sufficient independent authority are important to effective professional development for teachers.

Another effective way for professional development is that structures must help teachers to establish cooperative partnership with individuals and organisations outside the school. A variety of networks, collaborative partnerships with the outside world can offer teachers professional development opportunities different in quality and kind from those inside the school(Lieberman, 1995). For example, collaborative links with enterprises enable university teachers to integrate their theoretical knowledge with practical application, to broaden and

deepen their knowledge by reflecting on and solving problems confronted in the process of their cooperation with enterprises, to modify or change the curriculum and pedagogical methods to suit the actual needs of students and workplace, etc.

As a matter of fact, to effect successful and continuous professional development, policy makers and educators are confronting a great challenge in restructuring the existing system in schools and shaping school organisations, teachers' practices, role expectations, and assumptions so that they support students and teacher learning. "Sustaining theses attitudes, roles, and practices in the classroom will require other structures and supports, both outside and inside schools"(Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995;599).

3 Problems that Block Effective Professional Development

Although there has been a growing recognition of importance of professional development to education quality, some professional development programs end in failure to attain the original goals. According to Collins(1991), problems that impede effective professional development to take place may be summarised as follows:

(1)Lack of authentic governmental support. Though politicians claim the importance of education in the national economy, they are not really concerned with teaching effectiveness, and thus fail to provide support in real sense, such as sufficient degree of autonomy necessary for school-based management and sufficient funding to support in-school professional development.

(2)Lack of trust in teachers' capacity and expectations for self-improvement. The attribution of students' failure to qualify the requirements of the workplace to ineffective teaching by the public, particularly by business and politician, discourages teachers' enthusiasm about their job, to some extent resulting in indifference to professional development.

(3) Incompatible school structures. The current school structures do not support effective professional devlopment of teachers.

(4)Lack of sufficient resources. Effective professional development is costly, and requires considerable community resources.

(5)Too much stress on teachers. Stressed teachers tend to lack energy to change and grow, which is supported by findings of a study by John McCormick(1997).

In addition to the above problems, ineffective leadership may also be the reason for failure of professional development. Problems caused by ineffective leadership may include the inappropriate orientation in prioritizing the different needs of different teachers for professional development, irrational resource allocation, and impractical or insufficient evaluation programs to examine the effectiveness of undertaking professional development programs.

The main problem for professional development for school in developing countries may be the lack of sufficient funds. For example, in some remoted rural primary or even secondary schools in China,

teachers play a significant role in diminishing illiteracy and civilizing children in the countryside. However, the very low income and tough conditions for teaching rural school make it very difficult for those schools to employ teachers with formal teaching education backgrounds or relevant education qualifications, let alone the opportunity for teachers to receive in-service training. Although there is a lot of moving stories about teachers in countryside schools who dedicate themselves whole-heartedly to the education of those country children, their limited knowledge and especially the hard conditions and limited opportunities for them to improve their own knowledge and teaching skills limit the education quality.

Obviousuly, to solve these problems, governmental and other societal support apart from the sigle efforts of schools and teachers within schools are really important.

4 Conclusion

Teachers' professional development is an important aspect of school restructuring in response to the changing needs of the progressing society if the school is to survive and develop. It should be viewed as an ongoing process and from a long-range perspective as well as a broader perspective. While the traditional view of staff development for teachers focused improved teaching performance on predefined and controlled uniform training programs, the new conceptions of professional development emphasize teachers' "capability for self-improvement"(Cumming, 1993;40) through a large variety of flexible activities. It is suggested that for effective professional development to take place on the campus, it is essential to establish and maintain a variety of structures that facilitate teachers' development in the school. In so doing, account should be taken of not only providing teachers with formal professional development opportunities but also of the establishment of networks and the enhancement of learning culture within the school which fosters life-long professional development among teachers. Besides, governmental support in terms of power delegation, policy and fund, public support as well as effective leaders within schools who are capable of provoking concerted efforts of those within the school to improve schooling effectiveness are really important.

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of the English language itself and which rely on suffixes/word-endings (cf. Guierre, 1984), and/or "pedagogical translations" of stress rules developed by generative phonologists (cf. Dickerson, 1975 and 1978). Finally, there is a need for developing learners' concern for and awareness of their pronunciation in general and the feature of lexical-stress in particular. To achieve this, teachers need to constantly remind their students of lexical-stress as an important part of word identity and possible communication failure due to distortion of this phonological feature.

4　Conclusion

This paper has pointed out that if intelligibility-as a threshold for international communication or for any level of EFL acquisition-is to be achieved when speaking Eng-lish, emphasis must be put upon pronunciation aspects such as word-stress. Data from three different groups of non-native speakers have shown how incorrect placement in word-stress reduces intelligibility. It thus follows that its importance as a clue to word recognition in listening to speech makes it a "high-priority" in language teaching. And in the field of pronunciation teaching, word-stress re-mains the most accessible feature of all suprasegmentals: it can serve as a starting point for tackling the most difficult part, intonation.

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