

Enhancing Teacher Professional Development through Professional Dialogue

An investigation into a university-school partnership project on enquiry learning

Professor Winnie Wing-mui SO
Department of Science and Environmental Studies
The Hong Kong Institute of Education


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New Senior Secondary - Liberal Studies



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Issue Enquiry Approach

Steps in issue-enquiry	Examples of learning and evidence/strategies
[1] Identify the issue	Brainstorming, using news, clips/clips
[2] Consider the scope of enquiry	Group work, whole-class discussion, negotiation
[3] Collect and input information	Lecture, visit, information search
[4] Organise information	Mind-mapping, journal writing, group presentation
[5] Analyse information	Partner group discussion, non-group student project learning
[6] Examine possible outcomes	Role-play, simulation, interview
[7] Evaluate each possible outcome	Whole-class discussion, debate, survey
[8] Make judgemental/decisions about viable outcomes	Group work, role-play, community service, presentation of conclusions
[9] Make plan to revisit the judgemental/decisions	Personal reflection, non-group discussion


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Project

- Two-year **university-school partnership** project
 - Preparing Students for the **NSS Liberal Studies: A School-Based Approach** to Enhancing **Enquiry Learning** at Key Stage 3
- **Aim** of the project
 - Bridge the gap
 - **junior and secondary curriculum**
 - for more effective learning of Liberal Studies
 - Equip teachers to be **effective facilitators** of enquiry learning


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Teacher Professional Development in HK

- Emphasized and support financially by the government
 - 150 hrs of **professional activities** in a three-yr cycle
- Teacher development activities included (Li & Chan, 2010)
 - **In-service teacher education course** – school-based elements incorporated for teachers to try out what they learned
 - **School-based support** – coaches - consultants brought in from outside – running workshops and provide samples - **little impact on teachers**
- **School-HEI partnerships** (Li & Chan, 2010)
 - Co-planning, co-teaching, lesson observation and post-lesson discussion are conducive to teacher professional development


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Continuous Teacher Professional Development

- **“Towards a learning profession”** - reviewed and defined by the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualification (2009)
 - **External experts**
 - give teachers **added exposure and stimulate** their thinking
 - tap advice and expertise to enhance **level and scope** of teachers’ professional learning
- **HEI**
 - Take up the role of **external experts**
 - Expected to **provide input** and **stimulate teacher reflection**

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Continuous Teacher Professional Development

- **How**
 - How to meet these expectation?
- **What**
 - What are the best ways to engage teachers in making the changes?


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Professional dialogue

- Professional dialogue (Wells, 1999)
 - **a process**
 - **open and in-depth communication**
- Continuous professional dialogue
 - features the **depiction of practice** and **scrutiny of different approaches in a critical and attentive manner** sharpen teachers’ competence (Feiman-Nemser 2001)
 - Have a positive impact on teachers’ **knowledge and competence** in applying **new pedagogies** (Dinham, Aubusson, and Brady 2008; Feiman-Nemser 2001; Hargreaves 1994; Little and Horn 2007; Nelson et al. 2010; Snow-Gerono 2005)


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Professional dialogue

- Teachers have to go beyond simple sharing
 - put emphasis on **investigating their practice** in order to bring positive influences on teaching and learning (Nelson et al, 2010)
- More than sharing is involved
 - use professional dialogue as a tool to **develop new understandings and ways of teaching** (Broadhead, 2010)

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Professional dialogue

- **Difficulties** impede the construction of professional dialogue
 - School context
 - Individual teachers' value and practices (Huberman, 1990; Siskim, 1994)
 - Teachers' unwilling to share in an open manner (Hargreaves, 2000)
- **Address the difficulties** (Zeichner, 2003)
 - Enhancing the organization of the members of the professional community
 - Promoting a collaborative culture


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University-school partnership

- Establish **professional communities** (Baumfield and Butterworth 2007; Baumfield and Butterworth 2005; Burstein and Fiszler 2003)
 - **cooperation and interaction** among the teachers and thus to professional development
 - **research expertise, training and resources** provided by the university staff to support teachers (McLanghlin & Black-Hawkins, 2007)
 - translated into useful and practicable practice
 - **trusting relationships** between school teachers and university are conducive to professional learning


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Towards professionalism in leading enquiry learning

- A **specialised process** is required (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2007)
- **Explicit instruction and guidance** are more effectual (Kirschner, Sweller & Clark, 2006)
- **Strategies** which need to be mastered by teachers for the implementation of enquiry learning:
 - Experiential learning
 - Collaborative learning
 - K-W-L (Know-want-learn) model
 - 6W model
 - Questioning and discussion
 - Scaffolding


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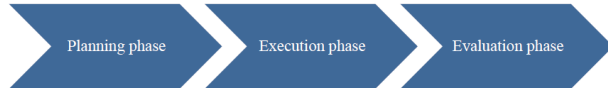
Towards professionalism in leading enquiry learning

- **Pedagogical content knowledge**
 - Address not only the **knowledge gap** in enquiry learning, but also to accentuate the **development of teachers' skills** in delivering it to students

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Implementation framework of the project



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of situations and needs. • Formulation of common goals and action plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings to monitor and inform the progress and effectiveness of the project. • Provision of teaching resources by the project team. • Documentation of lesson observations and school visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-project interviews to gather more opinions on the project. • Final meeting to address the problems and issues arising in the project. • Compilation of final reports.
Data collection measures		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School visit reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School visit reports • Lesson observation reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews • Final reports


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Participants

- **Duration**
 - in 2008/2009, 35 teachers and 1,290 students from 8 schools
 - in 2009/2010, 40 teachers and 1,868 students from 12 schools
 - over the two consecutive years, 5 schools
- **School subjects**
 - a variety of disciplines
- **School teachers**
 - teaching experience ranging from 1 to 29 years
- **Support team - Project Officers**
 - supervised by Project Consultants who are professors in HEI

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Data Collection and Analysis

- **Qualitative approach**
 - Lesson observation reports, school visit reports and final reports
 - Semi-structured interview upon completion of the project in each year

➤ **To identify** the favourable conditions for professional dialogue

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Findings and Discussion


Strategies adopted by the support team

- initiated and expanded professional dialogue
- deepened teachers' understanding of enquiry learning
 1. Conveying information regarding enquiry learning
 2. Introducing new pedagogies
 3. Providing feedback and conducting lesson observations
 4. Reviewing school-based teaching
 5. Analyzing students' assignments with the teachers
 6. Configuring ways to address diverse student needs with teachers

← Fundamental basis

← Collaborative work


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1. Conveying information regarding enquiry learning

- Familiarize teachers with
 - Core **understanding** of enquiry learning with Liberal Studies
 - Steps to **guide students** to work on the enquiry project
 - Clarifying common **misconception** of enquiry learning


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2. Introducing new pedagogies

- Inspiration on alternative teaching approaches and consideration of employing new pedagogies
 - Collaborative learning
 - Know-What-Learn model
 - Issue-based learning approach
 - Importance of feedback


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3. Providing feedback & conducting lesson observations

- Springboard for professional dialogue
 - written reports and videos for teachers to reflect on practices and examine whether the pedagogies worked in their classrooms
 - to benefit students
- A context and content for professional dialogue to take place
 - constructive feedback so that teachers know how they can improve
- Increased awareness of the effectiveness of classroom practices
 - facilitating student learning


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4. Reviewing school-based teaching materials

- Getting feedback from external experts
 - teachers make necessary amendments and **refine** the teaching materials in a way that would benefit the students
 - increased competence in producing **appropriate** teaching materials to enhance student learning


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5. Analysing students' assignments with the teachers

- Work together to analyse and rethink student assessment
 - teachers adopt suitable methods to evaluate student performance
- Gaining insight of student ability
 - teachers competence in addressing the needs of students of various abilities and introducing pedagogies
 - improvement in assessment practices and made use of assessment information to improve student learning

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6. Configuring ways to address diverse student needs with the teachers

- Continuous exchange of ideas
 - figure out the direction of teaching
 - gear towards students of different abilities
- Sharing common goal of quality teaching resources via dialogue
 - work towards the goal of suiting the needs of students
 - teachers becoming more sensitive to students' diverse needs, tailoring practices and teaching resources to different students

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Contexts conducive to professional dialogue and teacher professional development

Fundamental basis for professional dialogue

Sustain professional dialogue by promoting collaborative work



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Conclusions

This study

- Provides empirical evidence demonstrating how a **university support team** can support teachers systematically and comprehensively
- offers concrete ways on **how professional dialogue** can be carried out with an impact on **teacher professional development**


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Conclusions

- Work of the university support team in this study is not seen to be an end in itself
 - Examination of new pedagogies and issues related to enquiry learning and Liberal Studies
 - Suggestions were analysed and adapted to suit different school contexts
- Develop teachers to take the **initiative** and maintain the **skills** and **enthusiasm** to take part in professional dialogue
- The support provided to the teachers is to urge them to think deliberately about their **students** and their **practices**

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Thank You!

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