

Preface

In this era of accountability, schools are being made more and more answerable for the achievement and performance of students. Furthermore, in line with the needs of the global knowledge economy, schools are being pushed to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and teachers to prepare students for the current and future workplace. Consequently, teacher education is a key issue being debated in the world of education today. This book “Teacher Empowerment Toward Professional Development and Practices: Perspectives Across Borders” is a timely response to the need for continuous teacher development around world especially in developing countries. Teacher professional development (TPD) or continuous professional development (CPD) involves the empowerment of teachers through autonomy, accountability and continuous learning. Continuous teacher development is the core concern of all educational organizations and is the means by which teacher improvement can be attained.

Effective student learning does not happen in a vacuum. First of all, schools needs to be transformed into learning communities, for both students and teachers, and this is facilitated by the school leadership which implements the policies for teacher training and teacher development. By fostering a spirit of shared leadership and collaboration, school management can create a culture of learning where teachers share their ideas and learning experiences and review their classroom practices to upgrade their teaching skills for the betterment of the school and student achievement. Such practices can be further enhanced by the integration of technology into the classroom that uses instructional tools and online activities to engage students in their learning. The integration of technology into the classroom also boosts students’ creativity. However, it requires professional training and teacher competence in computer-based instruction (CBI).

From the above points, it is clear that teacher education and development is a matter of critical importance for all schools. Students require quality teachers and teachers need to continually upgrade their knowledge in order to meet the needs of the twenty-first century and the changes in student diversity and learning styles. Teachers are responsible for preparing and delivering high-quality lessons that maximize learning. Pedagogy therefore needs to keep pace with developments in

education, moving from a more traditional, teacher-centred approach, such as memorization or lecturing to more learner-centred methods that engender comprehension and application of knowledge. Teachers and students both need to grow as individuals. The road to good teaching is an arduous one, requiring a wealth of experience and a variety of techniques.

As the majority of the chapters of this book relate to developing countries, it draws attention to the fact that there is a serious call for educational reform and an indication that teacher empowerment as well as professional development is needed. There is a public outcry over the state of the educational system in Africa and other developing countries. The decline in educational standards of some developing countries has adversely impacted teacher education and the quality of their teaching. Thus, it is clear that the lack of proper educational resources has taken its toll on teacher's professional development as well as their teaching practices. It is also important to note that, even in some developing countries where the educational system is well structured, there continues to be a struggle to provide quality education and to offer continuous education and professional development for teachers.

Therefore, this book addresses the problems and issues related to teacher training and teacher development in developing countries as well as the educational policies relating to them. It draws on studies written by authors from a variety of international backgrounds, mostly from developing countries and shares their research and findings. Their research therefore looks at teacher empowerment, professional development and teaching practices from different perspectives.

The combination of chapters within this book strongly affirms that teacher professional development is an art of self-empowerment. Teacher autonomy, leadership and efficacy are set to grow over the coming decades as precursors for professional development. This book believes that, as demonstrated by the empirical findings, reports and theories provided by various authors in their chapters, there is a strong relationship between teacher's empowerment and their professional development. An example to illustrate this relationship could be when teachers are autonomous in designing school curriculum. Here they select their own teaching materials for instruction and lead their classrooms, and they participate in the decision-making process. Ultimately it creates a sense of belonging, empowerment and accountability. It motivates them to engage in lifelong learning activities and paves the way for further improvement in their area of expertise whilst also becoming practitioners.

Empowering teachers is a type of mechanism to boost trust amongst teachers. It instills a sense of autonomy in teachers to pursue their personal and professional growth in order to remain relevant in their fields whilst also improving teaching and learning. It can be argued that, less empowered or motivated teachers may seek alternative careers and find refuge in other professions or careers that empower and better motivate them. To further support this argument, the authors in this book are active researchers in their respective fields related to teacher professional development.

The chapters within this book provide insights, findings, theories, concepts and methods for teachers seeking to improve their repertoire of instructional strategies or their other professional practices.

Part I of this book shows how shared leadership, autonomy and accountability are prerequisites for effective leaders and managers and their multifaceted roles. It also offers self-development approaches for empowering teachers and motivating them to improve their professional practices.

Chapter 1: ‘Evolution of Teacher Leadership as a Challenging Paradigm in Rethinking and Restructuring Educational Settings’ by Adnan Boyac and Yakup Oz reveals teacher leadership to be a changing concept involving transformational leadership, distributed leadership and organizational structures that guide the management of schools, as well as promoting constructivist and collaborative professional learning for teachers.

Chapter 2: ‘Promoting Teachers’ Leadership Through Autonomy and Accountability’ by Nabi Bux Jumani and Samina Malik looks at teachers as the cornerstone of schools. Teacher quality and competency are a central issue for school improvement. Hence, developing teachers’ capacity to engage in self-directed learning transforms them from being mere administrators and record keepers to become accountable, autonomous and productive leaders who engage in decision-making.

Chapter 3: ‘Sharing School Leadership: Teacher Empowerment or Principal Relegation?’ by Ismail Hussein Amzat looks at school power-sharing and leadership from a new angle. The author questions that power should be shared, arguing that total autonomy for teachers renders the principal redundant and powerless. However, he concurs that shared leadership and partial power-sharing help to improve school performance and student achievement due to the participation of teachers in the decision-making process and the development of school programs.

Chapter 4: ‘Changing Definition of Teacher Professionalism: Autonomy and Accountability’ by Joseph Wu, Hoi-Yan Cheung and Raymond M.C. Chan considers teacher professionalism and how it benefits society from the perspectives of the different stakeholders of schools (teachers, students, and parents) in Hong Kong.

Chapter 5: ‘Teachers’ Autonomy and Accountability in Assessing Students’ Physical Education in School-Based Assessment’ by Ruzlan bin Md. Ali and Arsaythamby Veloo recognizes that school-based assessment (SBA) is one methods for supporting teacher autonomy and developing their sense of accountability. The chapter discusses assessment in physical education (PE) and covers both the theoretical and practical aspects of this. It also discusses the impact of PE assessment on the teachers’ orchestration and design of assessment activities as well as their responses to ensuring fairness in the eyes of stakeholders when determining the level of students’ performance.

Part II sheds light upon professional training and the role of lifelong learning for the improving teaching and promoting continuous development of teachers’ knowledge, skills and performance.

Chapter 6 presents ‘Transforming Education through Teacher Empowerment and Development in Namibia: Possibilities and Challenges’ by Cornelia Ndahambelesa Shimwooshili Shaimemanya. In this chapter, the author advocates teacher empowerment as a vehicle for transforming world education, particularly in developing countries. The chapter also discusses the issue of teacher training, development and empowerment for the improvement of teacher quality in Namibia and the achievement of Vision 2030 in a knowledge-based economy.

Chapter 7: ‘Mathematics Continuous Professional Development and Its Relevance to the New Era in South Africa’ by Zingiswa MM Jojo addresses the perceived incompetence of mathematics teachers in South Africa. As a solution, the introduction of sustained professional development, lifelong learning and peer-learning is presented as well as teachers are encouraged to engage in critical self-reflection and innovation in the mathematics classroom.

Chapter 8: ‘Professional Training and Lifelong Learning for School Heads of Departments: A Gateway for Headship Continuous Improvement’ by Sharon Thabo Mampane focuses on the training of heads of department (HoDs) to promote lifelong learning through mentoring and coaching, as well as exploring innovative ways of supporting lifelong learning through school middle-management training and professional development.

Chapter 9: ‘Engaging Teachers in Lifelong Learning in Oman for Knowledge Growth and Development: Government Roles and Higher Institutions’ by Ismail Hussein Amzat, Salim Hamed Al-Mahruqi, Muhajir Teslikhan and Turkiya Al Omairi presents teachers’ perceptions and engagement in lifelong learning (LLL) in Oman, and the role played by the government and higher education institutions in engaging and encouraging teachers in LLL activities. The authors affirm that in spite of significant efforts on the part of the government to improve the Oman education system, there are still areas of weaknesses and room for improvement.

Chapter 10: ‘Counseling Ethics Education for Enhanced Professional Identity and Development: Guidance and Counseling Teachers Lifelong Learning Acquisition Empowered’ by Noor Syamilah Zakaria, Jane Warren and Ab. Rahim Bakar presents an in-depth case study exploring and interpreting how guidance and counseling teachers will help them to learn, understand, experience, and apply counseling ethics to evolve their professional identity and develop a counselor education training program. The chapter calls for substantial changes in the instructional approaches used at higher educational institutions in Malaysia, for the promotion of lifelong learning of guidance and counseling teachers and the enhancement of their identity as counseling professionals.

Chapter 11: ‘An Approach to Motivation and Empowerment: The Application of Positive Psychology’ by Christine W.Y. Mak, Samuel M.Y. Ho, Rita Ching and Edmund T.T. Lo explains how positive psychology empowers teachers and students by giving them hope. The authors attempted to make a theoretical link between teacher motivation and student motivation using positive psychology. At the end of the chapter they formulate their ‘SHINE’ intervention for improving positive psychology among teachers.

Part III explores the thinking abilities required of teachers in the twenty-first century teaching, learning as well as the pedagogical shortcomings of conventional teaching practices.

Chapter 12: ‘Teacher Responsive Teaching and Learning Initiatives Through Action Research’ by Mary Koutselini introduces action research as a form of teacher empowerment. Teaching is presented as a cyclical process whereby teachers plan, act and respond to students’ needs, evaluate their actions and then replan new actions based on students’ responses and participation. The author suggests that in this way, teachers and students learn new skills, strategies and communicative attitudes.

Chapter 13: ‘Teaching and Learning for Real-life: The Application of Real-life Moral Dilemma Discussion (Re-LiMDD) for Classroom Interaction’ by Vishalache Balakrishnan explores the application of real-life moral-dilemma discussion (Re-LiMDD) in the teaching and learning of the social studies classroom and non-social studies classroom. The author argues that linking content to students’ real lives encourages deep learning and equips them with higher order thinking skills (HOTS) as a natural and authentic process.

Chapter 14: ‘Infusing Thinking-Based-Learning in the Twenty-First Century Classroom: The Role of Teacher Skillful Thinking Skills Training’ by Muhammed Yusuf explores and reviews TBL related theories, applications and practices in teaching and learning. It also emphasizes the importance of professional training in TBL for boosting students’ ‘skillful thinking’. The author claims that promoting skillful thinking will enable teachers to infuse TBL into classroom activities and enhance students’ skilful thinking across the globe.

Chapter 15: ‘Theory into Practice: The Content of Pre-service Teachers’ Reflections in North Cyprus’ by Anas Musa Ismail and Çise Çavuşoğlu focuses on the reflections of pre-service English language teachers in Northern Cyprus. The author states that there is a need to develop and incorporate reflective dialogue between pre-service teachers and their supervisors, and between pre-service teachers themselves during teaching practicums.

Part IV contains chapters dealing with the influence of professional learning communities (PLCs) and the use of information and computer technology (ICT) in education for teacher empowerment and professional development and how technology enhances discussion and interaction between teachers and learners both inside and outside the classroom.

Chapter 16: ‘Fostering Teachers’ Professional Development Through Collaboration in Professional Learning Communities’ by Steyn Trudie presents a case study about how a school succeeded in developing a PLC. The author asserts that PLCs play a big role in teacher empowerment and that the principal’s leadership role is instrumental in driving the professional learning process.

Chapter 17: ‘School-Based Professional Learning Community: Empowering Teachers as Assessment Leaders in the Change Context’ by Garima Bansal presents a case study about the influence of a school-based PLC on teachers’ class-based,

formative assessment practices. The author suggests ways of establishing successful school-based PLCs that enhance teacher empowerment and professional development.

Chapter 18: ‘Professional Learning Communities in a Web 2.0 World: Rethinking the Warrants for Professional Development’ by Yvonne Liljekvist, Jorryt van Bommel and Christina Olin-Sheller explores the potential of using technology to develop PLCs for in-service mathematics teachers in Botswana. The authors believe that these emerging technologies will improve classroom experiences and professional development not only for mathematics teachers but for also teachers of other disciplines as well.

Chapter 19: ‘Emerging Technologies as Tools for Enhancing Professional Learning Communities of Mathematics Teacher Development in Botswana’ by M.J. Motswiri, E. Zimudzi, K.G. Garegae and A.A. Nkhwalume shows how theoretical reflections of PLCs in a Web 2.0-world enhance teachers’ professional development. The authors discuss how Swedish teachers use social media to expand their PLC beyond the school environment, representing a new behaviour among teachers that changes the opportunities and framework for professional development and growth.

Chapter 20: ‘Using an e-Portfolio for Teaching and Teacher Continuous Learning: A Process for Professional Development Enhancement’ by Byabazaire Yusuf focuses on the experiences and written reflections of postgraduate and in-service teachers using e-portfolios to teach English language. The author maintains that the use of e-portfolios in the teaching will facilitate the sharing of content knowledge, the improvement of pedagogical skills and the promotion of collaborative activities. It will also help teachers to engage in lifelong learning and professional development.

Due to the international backgrounds of its authors, this book spans a range of areas that are of crucial importance to teacher education and professional development, such as teacher empowerment, professional training, teacher knowledge and skills development and the improvement of pedagogical practices. As such, it enables teachers to keep ahead of changes in the field of education and stay relevant in a rapidly changing world. For these reasons, this book will be of interest to teachers, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers who work in international settings. It should also be read by academic planners and educationists engaged in teacher training, teacher development, educational innovation and school improvement.

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