

Preparing Teachers For The Future: A Focus On Teacher Qualities

培育明天的老師: 集中品質方面

Dr. Frank H. Fu, Professor
Department of Physical Education
Hong Kong Baptist University
傅浩堅教授
香港浸會大學體育系主任

Dr. Lena Fung,
Coach Development Manager
Hong Kong Sports Institute
馮蕙娜博士
香港體育學院教練培訓經理

摘要

本文討論Carnegie和Holmes兩派專家報告所認同的未來教師質素。一組(Carnegie)相信未來經濟的發達是有賴一個重新評估培育教師的方向。另一組(Holmes)亦相信要徹底地改革教師的培訓, 是要把重點放在「互動教學」上。根據文獻記載, 教師成長的兩個先決條件包括為終生學習者及反思專業人員。文中亦列出本地教育學家及專業人仕對教師質素的觀點。這篇文章根據最近研究發現, 討論了「智慧」和「教學智慧」在教學表現方面所擔當的角色。

ABSTRACT

The paper discussed the qualities of future teachers as identified by the Carnegie and Holmes document. The former believed that future success in economy required a re-definition of the direction in which teachers were prepared. The latter also believed that an extensive reform of teacher education was needed, with an emphasis on "interactive teaching". A review of literature suggested that two major predominant mechanisms in teacher growth included the need to be life-long learners and reflective professionals. Views of local educators and professionals on teacher qualities are also presented. The possible role of 'wisdom' and 'wisdom in teaching' in teaching performance is discussed in light of recent findings.

Introduction

Since the early 1980s, there has been an increasing awareness among North American teacher educators to examine means by which teachers could be adequately prepared for the future. The call for this heightened attention reached a critical point in 1986 with the

publication of two documents in the United States. One being "A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century", and the other being "Tomorrow's teachers : A report of the Holmes Group". The former was produced by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy task force whereas the latter was produced by the Holmes Group. Together, these two documents have incited more literature and controversy on the topic of teacher education than any other and have called for teacher education reform in the last Century. Although these reports were written from the American perspectives, they could provide valuable insights which might be equally applicable in the Hong Kong context.

The study of teacher qualities has taken various forms, and one of its main objectives is to classify general characteristics which deem desirable and conducive to effective teaching and therefore, quality education. Themes of such attempts ranged from identifying personal characteristics such as personality to those which are more profession related such as teaching styles and teacher knowledge. Review of literature on this area showed that teachers were constantly posed with new challenges as a result of changing social views and global interactions; and in some instance, teachers had been expected to cultivate new qualities overnight so as to meet the demands of society. This paper is not a retrospect of effects of societal change on teachers and teaching, rather, it aims to take a projective view of what might be expected of teachers in the future. Therefore this paper will focus on an overview of those qualities noted as pertinent for future teachers by the Carnegie and Holmes documents, and discuss mechanisms which might enable teachers to develop those qualities.

Teacher qualities

The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) placed the responsibility of ensuring a strong

economy on the education system. They equated the United States' declining role in the global economy with an outdated education system and with teachers who have failed to meet the demand of today's society. Thus, in part, future success in economy required a redefinition of the directions in which teachers were prepared. And according to the document, future teacher should :

"... have a good grasp of the ways in which all kinds of physical and social systems work; a feeling for what data are and the uses to which they can be put, an ability to help students see patterns of meaning where others see only confusion; an ability to foster genuine creativity in students and the ability to work with other people in work groups that decide for themselves how to get the job done. They must be able to learn all the time, as the knowledge required to do their work twists and turns with new challenges and the progress of science and technology. Teachers will not come to the school knowing all they have to know, but knowing how to figure out what they need to know, where to get it and how to help others make meaning out of it. Teachers must think for themselves if they are to help others think for themselves, be able to act independently and collaborate with others, and render critical judgement. They must be people whose knowledge is wide-ranging and whose understanding runs deep (p. 25). Teachers need a command of the subjects they teach, a sound grasp of the techniques of teaching those subjects, information about research on teaching, and an understanding of children's growth and development and of their different needs and learning styles (p. 71). College graduates going on to professional graduate education should have a rigorous undergraduate curriculum that embraces a common core of history, government, science, literature, and the arts. That core should develop the essential skills of comprehension, computation, writing, speaking, and clear thinking. It should deepen appreciation of our history and culture, foster understanding of the theory and application of science and technology, develop aesthetic sensibilities, and inspire creative impulses (p. 73).

Like the Carnegie Forum, The Holmes Group (1986) viewed the current American education system as outdated and ill suited to prepare citizens of the next Century, and had proposed an extensive reform of teacher education. An important notion to the Holmes Group was "interactive teaching", and in order to do this, teachers should be :

"... empowered to make judgements and decisions on their students' behalf. They possess broad and deep understanding of children, the subjects they teach, the nature of learning and schooling, and the world around

them. They exemplify the critical thinking they strive to develop in students, combining tough-minded instruction with a penchant for inquiry. Competent teachers are careful not to bore, confuse, or demean students, pushing them instead to interact with important knowledge and skill. Such teachers interpret the understandings students bring to and develop during lessons; they identify students' misconceptions and question their surface responses that mask true learning. Competent teachers have knowledge, skill, and professional commitments". The professional knowledge these teachers possess goes beyond a strong liberal education. It is not merely common sense, nor is it learned only through trial-and-error teaching or the experience of being a student. Rather, it includes academic and clinical learning that prepares one to manage both mastery of content and the complex social relations of the classrooms in a way that fosters student learning as well as an attachment to learning (PP. 28-29).

The qualities of future teachers as outlined by those passages seemed clear enough, but what could and needed to be done in order to furnish teachers with those qualities warranted further elaboration. In the subsequent paragraphs, such an attempt would be made.

Mechanisms for developing teacher qualities

Review of current literature on teacher education indicated that the two most predominant mechanisms necessary for teacher growth included the need to view teacher education as a continuum (Griffin, 1989; Zahorik, 1986) and the need for teachers to be reflective (Shulman, 1987; Peterson and Comeaux, 1989). By treating teacher education as a continuum negated the notion that teaching could be learned in a one year, two year, or three year programme. This idea was perhaps best expressed by Cruickshank (1987) who posited that while the most obvious intention of teacher education was to prepare students teachers for their initial experience, the major goal should be to "graduate novices disposed to becoming life-long students of teaching".

If learning to teach were accepted as a continuous process, then teachers must be taught to be reflective so that they could progress along the continuum as life-long the importance of this process by pointing out that due to the continual change and uncertainty associated with the act of teaching, the ability to

"... think about what one does and why - assessing past actions, current situations, and intended

outcomes - is vital to intelligent practice, practice that is reflective rather than routine... Reflection influences how one grows as a professional by influencing how successfully one is able to learn from one's experience" (p. 525)

In sum, it seemed that the future state of the art in teacher preparation was to emphasize, on one hand, the need to be life-long learners, and on the other hand, the need to be reflective professionals. By furnishing student teachers with these concepts, the philosophy to view graduation from teacher preparation as a starting point for further growth and development rather than as an end point in education would also be transpired.

On a more practical note, the Holmes Group (1986) had called for an integration of the following five components in a teacher preparation programme :

"The first is the study of teaching and schooling as an academic field with its own integrity. The second is knowledge of the pedagogy of subject matter - the capacity to translate personal knowledge into interpersonal knowledge used for teaching. A related third component is comprised of the skills and understandings implicit in classroom teaching - creating a communal setting where various groups of students can develop and learn. The fourth consists of the dispositions, values and ethical responsibilities that distinguish teaching from other professions. Finally, all these aspects of professional studies must be integrated into the clinical experience where formal knowledge must be used as a guide to practical action (p. 51).

If one accepts that this has been the pattern in teacher preparation programmes, the crux of the matter will be not so much the case of what needs to be done but rather how things should be done in order to produce life-long learners and reflective professionals. To answer this "how" is no small task, and it is certainly beyond the scope of this paper to even begin an address. However, education policy makers are urged to face this challenge, or at least begin a debate on the soundness of this new thesis and its applicability in Hong Kong.

Views of local educators and professionals

The Hong Kong Government has focused on the various issues in teacher development and qualities. Efforts to poll local educators/professionals' views on teacher qualities led to the identification of the following aspects :

1. Knowledge - General
Subject
Local (school and culture)
Professional
2. Personality - Attitude
Commitment
Self Concept
3. Technical skills - Communication (both languages)
Class management
Subject application
Assessment

The necessity to ensure that teacher training institutions are producing teachers with desirable qualities must be emphasized along with the mechanism in attracting high quality prospective students to enrol in professional preparation programmes and become teachers. The relationship of teacher quality and development must be assessed together with their implications on financial resources.

Wisdom, Wisdom in Teaching and Teaching Performance

The relationships of wisdom, wisdom in teaching, personal teaching efficacy, and general teaching efficacy to teaching performance as well as the relationships of wisdom, wisdom in teaching and teaching performance to personal teaching efficacy and general teaching were investigated by Fung (1996). Data obtained from 89 final year student teachers in Hong Kong showed that wisdom in teaching has the greatest impact on teaching performance. Together with personal teaching efficacy, they accounted for 54% of variance in teaching performance (see Figure 1).

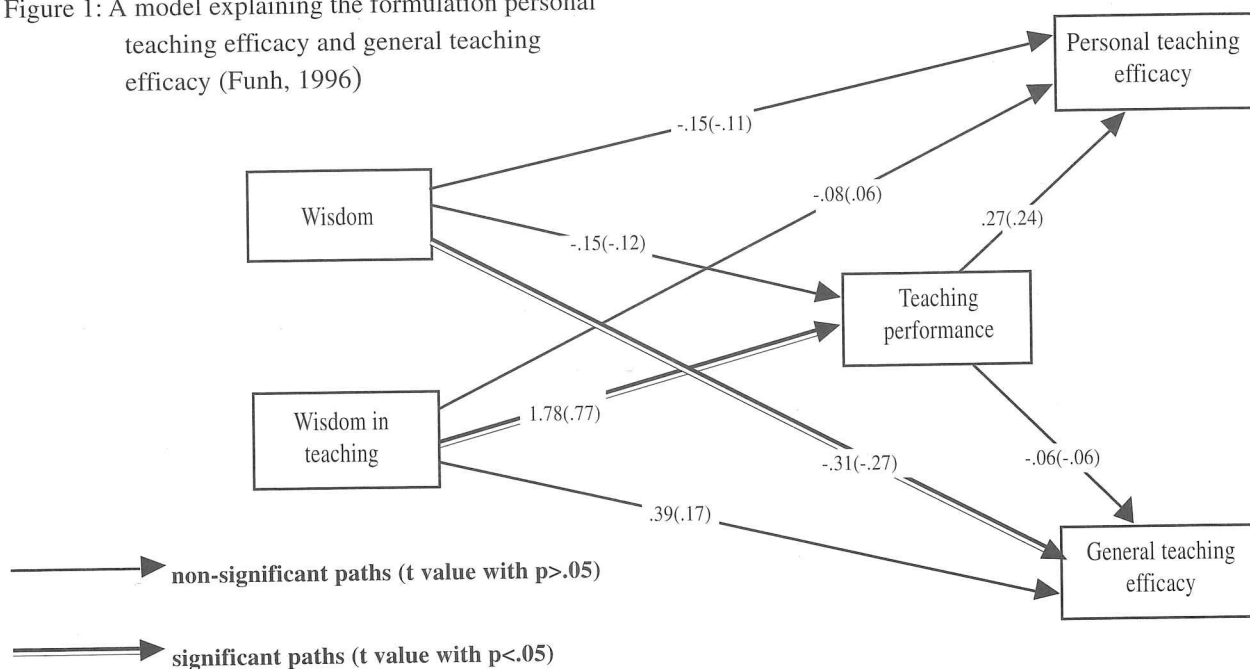
Conclusion

The awareness of need for teacher growth is nothing new, but to include developing life-long learners, reflective professionals, and wise teachers as goals of teacher preparation programme will be an innovation. North American education theorists have spoken adamantly of their merits, but we know that the road from theory to practice takes time, and it is still too early yet to fully comprehend the impact of this move. However, this does not mean that we cannot begin to evaluate whether this line of thinking can take root in Hong Kong; and, if this philosophy is to be adopted, what changes and adaptations need to be made to the present teacher preparation programme. Since teacher education in Hong Kong is currently going through a transition period, there

is no better time than the present to think carefully about such issues. Desirable teacher qualities were identified by local educators and professionals. Their implications on future professional programmes must be considered

in light of improving the status of the teaching profession and financial resources involved. The importance of developing and providing programmes to facilitate the growth of wisdom in teaching should be stressed.

Figure 1: A model explaining the formulation personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy (Funh, 1996)



References

- Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. (1986). A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century. New York : Author.
- Cruickshank, D.R. (1987). Reflective teaching: The preparation of students of teaching. Reston, Virginia: Association of Teacher Educators.
- Fung, M.L. (1996). A study on wisdom, wisdom in teaching, teaching efficacy, and teaching performance. Unpublished PhD. Thesis. Canada: University of British Columbia.
- Kagan, D.M. (1990). Ways of evaluating teacher cognition: Inferences concerning the Goldilocks principle. *Review of Educational Research* 60,419-469.
- Griffin, G.A. (1989). Coda: The knowledge-driven school. In C. Reynolds (Ed.), *Knowledge base for the beginning teacher* (p. 277-286). Toronto : Pergamon Press.
- Guskey, T.R., Passaro, P.D. (1994). Teacher efficacy : A study of construct dimensions. *American Educational Research Journal* 31, 627-643.
- Peterson, L.P. & Comeaux, N.A. (1989). Assessing the teacher as a reflective professional : New perspectives on teacher evaluation. In A.E. Woolfolk (Ed.), *Research perspectives on the graduate preparation of teachers* (p. 132-152). Englewoods Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice Hall.
- Richert, A.E. (1990). Teaching teachers to reflect : A consideration of programme structure. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 22, 6, 509-527.
- Raudenbush, S.W., Town, B., and Cheong, Y.F. (1992). Contextual effects on the self-perceived efficacy of high school teachers. *Sociology of Education* 65, 150-167.
- Shulman, L.S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching : Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57, 1, 1-32.
- The Holmes Group. (1986). *Tomorrow's teachers : A report of The Holmes Group*. East Lansing, MI, CT: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 270 454).
- Zahoric, J.A. (1986). Acquiring teaching skills. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 37, 2, 21-25.