

Some countries experience in teacher professional development: how to benefiting from them according to the vision of Saudi Arabia 2030

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Abstract

The quality of teaching and learning in schools has always been a source of interest for schools and governments ,For this reason, countries around the world investing in the professional development of the teacher as the driving force behind reform , This paper aims to identify the experiences of Singapore and America in the professional development of the teacher in order to benefit from them in Saudi Arabia in the light of Vision 2030, by reviewing the literature on professional development in the two countries, and the research reached a set of results, the most important of which are: Singapore has developed a comprehensive system to select, train and compensate teachers and develop them professionally. And in the United States, salary scales include strong incentives for teachers to continue their education. The salary increases automatically each time a teacher gives a course.

Keywords: teaching quality, PD, professional development, Saudi, vision 2030.

Introduction

The quality of teaching and learning in schools has always been a source of interest for schools and governments, and continues to grow in importance. For this reason, countries around the world are trying to improve education, investing in the professional development of the teacher as the driving force behind reform. Some recent studies have described the current state of professional development in an attempt in order to focus attention on providing more effective opportunities for teacher learning. Most of these studies have indicated that one-off and short-term training programs have continued to be commissioned by school leaders for all teachers, which have proven to be insufficient strategies for teacher performance change. **(Tom J. McConnell et al, 2013) p:267**

professional development (PD) refers to the participation in various types of educational experiences that are related to an individual's work, formal or informal. Formal experiences involve more structured or organized activities, including attending seminars, professional conferences, courses, or workshops. On the other hand, informal experiences are more casual and can include discussing one's work with other colleagues, conducting independent research projects, reading on one's own, learning from a peer, or observing a colleague while at work. Clearly, an individual can complete a wide range of experiences in order to grow and develop professionally. However, regardless of whether an individual participates in formal or informal experiences, professional development in general, provides professionals with new knowledge and helps them learn how to effectively apply this information at work in the future in order to improve their overall performances and work environments. **(Katelyn Palmer ,2017) p:3**

Teacher professional development (PD)

Teachers with prior experience at any educational level are required to remain well-informed concerning the growth in knowledge in various domains, and they therefore need to continually professionalize themselves. **(B. Philipsen et a,2019) p:2**

Some researchers define PD as any activity that is intended partly or primarily to prepare paid staff members for improved performance in present or future roles in the school districts, this can include workshops, teacher inquiry/action research, coaching/mentoring, coaching, lesson study, virtual modules, simulations, conferences, summer institutes, or various combinations of these. PD aims to help practitioners learn new ideas and skills, make better professional judgments, and improve upon their teaching practice in order to have a greater impact on their students. Most teachers participate in some form of PD each year, and most school districts provide PD with the goal of refining teachers' practices in order to improve student achievement. **(Parkhouse et al.2019) p:418**

There are two main types of professional development activities: traditional and non-traditional, the international literature has compared traditional professional development activities (consisting of short workshops, conferences etc.) to non-traditional professional development activities (consisting of mentoring, coaching, peer observation, and so on) , The duration of a professional development program is a key determinant for deciding whether the activity is regarded as traditional or nontraditional, researchers have criticized traditional professional development activities, because, while shorter in the time commitment they require of participants, they tend to be less effective in reaching their desired goal. Therefore, they offer little or no impact on the skills of teachers. also noted that traditional professional development programs lack efficiency regarding specific teaching and learning issues, On the other hand, nontraditional professional development activities (mentoring, peer observation, and so on) tend to utilize greater time on task; and as a result, are more effective than their traditional PD counterparts. **(Adem Bayar, 2014) p:321**

Teacher educators and professional development (PD) specialists have identified three key domains of professional knowledge and skills necessary for improving teachers' classroom teaching: **(Robert W. Roeser et al ,2012) p: 1**

- (1) subject-matter or content knowledge.

- (2) Pedagogical knowledge: concerning how and when to teach the subject matter
- (3) Developmental knowledge: concerning how and when to teach content to students of different ages.

But others, highlighted the following common traits of PD that had the largest effects on educators' instructional change :(**Donna J. Gallo,2018**) p:169

- (1) a focus on developing teachers' knowledge through content-specific programs
- (2) Opportunities for active learning and engagement such as analyzing student work or videos of classroom practice
- (3) Collective participation or collaboration in communities at the school level,
- (4) Sustained PD activities on the same topic.

These traits provide space for teachers to share their content knowledge in tandem with learning and implementing new strategies, and they promote collaborative learning and decision making.

Research has established that the educational system within which PD occurs has implications for its effectiveness. Specifically, conditions for teaching and learning both within schools and at the broader, system level can inhibit the effectiveness of PD. For example, inadequate resourcing for PD—including needed curriculum materials—frequently exacerbates inequities and hinders school improvement efforts. Failure to align policies toward a coherent set of practices is also a major impediment, as is a dysfunctional school culture. Implementing effective PD well also requires responsiveness to the needs of educators and learners and to the contexts in which teaching and learning will take place. (**Linda Darling-Hammond et al, 2017**) p: 5

Saudi Arabian vision 2030

The vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2030 is pointing to enhance the role of the teacher, rehabilitate and develop it.

In response, the national transformation program included the objectives of the Ministry of Education in its second objective: "Improve the recruitment, preparation, rehabilitation and development of teachers", which identified among its indicators an increase in the average number of hours of professional development for teachers. **(National Transformation Program 2020), (Brendan Mitchell, 2018) p: 40**

The National Transformation Program 2020 describes the Saudi Vision 2030 as being a methodology and the roadmap for development where the resultant actions will position the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a leader in all fields. In essence the Vision is so much more; providing the Kingdom with the directions, commitment, goals, and objectives to achieve its identified aspirations and define itself nationally, regionally, and globally. The Vision is descriptive in nature on how the Kingdom envisages achieving its aspirations, while at the same time demonstrates commitment, support and collective motivation to deliver the outlined aspirations for the citizens of the Kingdom. The Saudi Vision 2030 provides macro longer term goals for the Kingdom and how it sees itself positioned nationally, regionally, globally, and at the heart of the Arab and Islamic world. **(Brendan Mitchell, 2018) p: 41**

It is very clear that the above shows that Vision 2030 suggests and understands that there is a connection between education reform in Saudi Arabia and economic reforms. The vision is considerably ambitious and aspirational, and it promises that Saudi Arabia will develop a stronger economy. To our understanding, what the vision suggests is that there is an urgent need in Saudi Arabia for educational reform, particularly in the area of teacher development, with such reforms in the education system, teachers' development and curricula will undoubtedly impact on the culture in general, in Saudi Arabia, specifically in fostering 21st-century skills for future generations. However, regarding teacher training, the prince states, "teachers will receive training to raise their awareness of the importance of communicating with parents and equip them with effective methods to do so successfully", the Prince's statements give us an indication that there is a renewed commitment from the Saudi decision maker to fund teachers professional development and develop policy reforms by advancing a vision, mission,

And philosophy statement to foster students' lifelong skills development which is central to the successful implementation of any economic reforms in Saudi Arabia. However, for the Vision 2030 to be implemented successfully it requires more than an awareness or commitment of education reform; an on-going process requires long-term funding and evaluating. **(Alhasan Allmnakrah et al, 2019) p: 12**

(PD) in Singapore

When you look at a small island state of 716.1 km² with no natural resources, you see Singapore, it has successfully mastered international studies such as progress in international literacy, PIISS, The International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB). According to a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "Singapore ranked first in global competitiveness in 2007 because of an educational system that best meets the needs of the competitive economy.", Where education gets The second highest amount in its annual budget, has helped this focus on education Singapore to make tremendous progress in scholastic achievement since its independence in 1965. **(P.L. Placier et al, 2016) p:31**

There are currently about 33,378 teachers (with 23,774 being females) in Singapore in 2016. Out of these 33,378 teachers, 30,008 are graduate teachers and the rest are non-graduate teachers. The deployment of graduates in the teaching service is a deliberate one to ensure that only the best of each cohort of students are chosen to become teachers. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is the central body that is responsible for all matters related to education in Singapore. They are the direct employer of all primary, secondary and junior college teachers in Singapore. All teachers teaching in government schools in Singapore have to go the National Institute of Education, Singapore (NIE) to be certified to teach. Prospective teachers undergo a series of stringent selection processes including interviews and tests by the Ministry of Education (MOE) before they are selected. Upon selection, these students will be hired directly by the Ministry of Education and will be paid a salary when they undergo their pre-service teacher education at the NIE. **(Aik-Ling Tan, 2018) p:2**

NIE offers three initial teacher preparation (ITP) programs, which target three groups of aspiring teachers. Each program equips trainee teachers with the knowledge and skills to competently meet the demands and challenges of teaching a particular subject to a particular age-group of students. There is the two-year Diploma in Education program which prepares trainee teachers to become generalist teachers in primary schools. There is the four-year Bachelor of Arts/Science (Education) program, an undergraduate university degree program (NIE is an institute within the Nanyang Technological University which confers the degree) which provides students with both university-level academic education in the subjects they will teach, and professional development for teaching. This program has two tracks – the primary track which qualifies students to teach in primary schools, and the secondary track which qualifies them to teach in secondary/pre-university classes. **(Lee Chin Chew,2016) p:167**

(PD) in US

Since the 1950s U.S. teacher education has been identified as a national problem. The most severe criticisms accompanied international crises such as the Soviet launch of Sputnik, the Cold War with communism, and global economic competition. National crises exacerbated “a long standing tug of war between state and national level policy-makers” over control of teacher education, The National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), a collaboration of organizations with a shared interest in teacher education, was founded in 1954 and undertook efforts to raise the quality of affiliated programs. But politicians do not always believe that teacher education can “reform itself”. Clearly, critics argued, American schools were failing, and teacher education was to blame. some researchers summarized the numerous books and reports excoriating teacher education in this period, and find that the Competing values and arguments are:**(P.L. Placier et al, 2016) p:57**

1. Equity, 2. Quality ,3. Accountability,4. Deregulation.

But now in US, Professional development is a driving force for improvement of instruction and student achievement and one of the major agendas in federal educational reforms since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Most recently, the federal US\$4.35 billion Race to the Top (RTTT) Program encouraged and rewarded states that developed innovative plans for educational reforms. One of the four core educational reform areas in the RTTT Program specified by the U.S. Department of Education is “recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most”. **(Motoko Akiba and Bryan Wilkinson, 2016) p:74**

One recent trend in the U.S. is a move away from one-time workshops, which in the U.S. have been common. In one-time workshops, teachers meet for 1-3 hours to listen to a lecture on an isolated topic. National data show that in the past couple of decades’ districts have moved away from these kinds of short workshops toward PD that attempts to adopt the five core features described above. For example, analysis of the nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey shows that fewer than 20% of U.S. teachers had eight hours or fewer of PD in the 2011-2012 school year. A national study of PD in the U.S. showed that the percent of teachers participating in PD related to the content they teach increased from 59% in 2000 to 83% in 2004 and 87% in 2008, These figures suggest that PD providers increasingly understand the importance of sustained, content-focused PD, and are directing resources to ensuring that teachers have access to such activities. **(Laura M. DESIMONE & Michael S. GARET,2015) p:257**

Conclusion

At last, we noticed that the high quality of the workforce in Singapore today comes as a result of deliberate strategies, especially those dating back to the 1990s onwards. Since then, teachers have been the cornerstones of the education system and have become a high-performance leader. Singapore has developed a comprehensive system to select, train and compensate teachers and develop them professionally.

And in the United States, Professional development programs for teachers receive significant attention. This is supported by the fact that the money spent on these programs far exceeds what is spent in any other country. Teachers are interested in the presence of training programs, especially short ones.

In some states, teachers are required by law to continue their education after they are appointed. In almost all states, salary scales include strong incentives for teachers to continue their education. The salary increases automatically each time a teacher gives a course, Teachers' salaries shall be increased if they obtain any degree, such as master's and doctorate, during service.

Through the above, the researcher can make some realistic and achievable suggestions, which are used as lessons learned from the experiences of Singapore and the United States in the professional development of the teacher, which is consistent with the vision of the Kingdom 2030, as follows:

- Conduct research to assess the current status of teacher performance in service, and design and implement programs to eliminate the gap between the actual level of teachers and the level that must be in accordance with international standards adopted.
- Invite civil society organizations to activate their role in the teacher's professional development in partnership with the Ministry of Education.
- Continuous evaluation of the teacher training impact, and use results to improve program planning.
- Restructuring the organizational structure of the training units within schools in light of the so-called professional development team.
- increase and diversify training and professional development institutions for teachers.
- Timely necessity of training with the living conditions of teachers.
- Activate distance learning technology to train teachers in their positions if necessary.
- Training teachers to use information technology and communication means, and to employ them to achieve optimal professional development, such as e-schools, e-administration and others.
- Ensure that teachers have the minimum knowledge and academic skills.

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