

**RESEARCH PAPER****An Approach to Teachers' Professional Competencies in The 21st Century****Bui Minh Duc, Nguyen Ngoc Tu, Dao Thi Viet Anh and Hoang Thi Kim Huyen**

Ha Noi Pedagogical University 2, Viet Nam

Email: tungasia82@gmail.comReceived: 3rd January 2017, Revised: 28th January 2017, Accepted: 5th February 2017**ABSTRACT**

The quality of a nation's education and human resources depend much on its teaching workforce. Hence, training a teacher with adequate competencies is playing a critical role for country's development. Recently, teacher's professional competencies and teacher's professional development have been receiving much attention. In seeking for orientation and innovations in teacher training process with the aim of developing professional competencies, studying and analyzing experiences from other countries can be seen as a important starting point. This paper presents the core competencies of Singaporean teachers, along with some analysis and evaluation for the Graduand and in-service teacher competencies framework. Thereby, the authors would like to bring a reference point of view for the development of teacher professional standards in Vietnam, as well as for the training and retraining of teachers today and the next few years, especially for the education renovation after 2015.

Key words: Education, teacher, renovation, development

INTRODUCTION

Among the factors that ensure the quality of education and quality of human resources for the development of a country, the quality of its teachers has been considered as a key factor that plays a decisive role. From theory to practice, from the East to the West, it is showed that the developments of the curriculum, textbooks, teaching conditions... are hard to promote the efficiency, or even useless, if the quality of teachers is weak or is not taken into account. Thus, for many countries around the world, teachers and teacher quality appear in the education development strategies with great attention and to be considered as the key factor for the success of education and country development.

To achieve the above-mentioned ideas, besides incentives for teachers, investment in developing educational institutions, teacher training, a system of standards for teaching profession, or teachers' competencies standards, needs to be developed. In fact, teachers' competencies standards have been developed and completed in many countries, such as Singapore, Australia, United State. It could be said that, for the first time after decades, by professional standards, teachers and educational institutions already have the basement for cultivating and expertise. This is a goal to strive for, a measure for managers and teachers to evaluate and self-evaluate. This also is a significant step forward in education science, in training and retraining of teachers.

In accordance with this trend, the professional standards for Vietnamese teachers in junior and senior schools has been developed and issued. However, in the 21st century landscape, education must focus on nurturing the whole child- morally, intellectually, physically, socially and aesthetically. Students need to acquire new knowledge, skills and dispositions to ensure their survival and success as individuals, as members of the community, and as citizens of our nation. To achieve this, we must develop teachers who are able to undertake greater responsibilities as they are at the forefront of educating our youth. Hence, these professional standards for the teaching workforce need to be updated and adjusted. In order to do this, one of the basic strategies is to consult the educational results and achievements from developed countries, then to adapt to the education reform process, including teacher training and retraining, in our country.

Bearing these ideas in mind, we first present the core competencies of Singaporean teachers, then we analyze and discuss about the graduand teacher competencies framework issued by National

Institute of Education, a university-based teacher education institution in Singapore. Thereby, we would like to bring a reference point of view for the development of teacher professional standards in Vietnam, as well as for the training and retraining of teachers today and the next few years, especially for the education renovation after 2015.

SINGAPOREAN TEACHERS' CORE COMPETENCIES

According to the National Institute of Education, Singapore (NIE), the following competencies are needed for a graduand teacher:

(1) NURTURING THE WHOLE CHILD:

The teacher believes that all pupils can learn, he/she shows care and concern for all pupils, and:

1. develops a culture of care, trust and friendliness that enhances the well being and character development of pupils;
2. uses a variety of methods to determine current and future pupil needs and expectations, and provides necessary guidance and support;
3. encourages practices that support the physical, emotional and social well-being of pupils;
4. has high expectations of all pupils, respects their varied backgrounds, and is committed to their development as learners;
5. uses communication skills, listening and attending skills in his/her interactions with pupils; and, has skills in identifying and assisting pupils with basic learning problems.

(2) PROVIDING QUALITY LEARNING OF CHILD:

(A) On Teaching And Learning, The Teacher:

1. has a well integrated understanding of how pupils learn and develop and provides learning opportunities that support their development;
2. is organized and self-managing in relation to time, planning, resources, attention and relationships;
3. creates instructional opportunities adapted to diverse learners;
4. uses a variety of instructional strategies to teach concepts in ways that encourage pupils to see learning as meaningful;
5. has a repertoire of approaches that engage pupils in problem-solving, and critical and creative thinking; and,
6. plans, develops and delivers IT-integrated and multi-media supported learning experiences to engage pupils and to help them understand issues pertaining to cyber wellness.

(B) On Class Management, The Teacher:

1. creates and maintains an effective classroom environment that encourages positive social interaction, self-motivation and active engagement in purposeful learning;
2. manages the resources of time, space; activities, and attention to engage pupils individually and in groups in productive tasks;
3. proactively plans to maintain discipline and order in class;
4. facilitates pupils' acquisition of self and relationship management skills; and,
5. uses basic helping skills to assist pupils in coping with learning.

(C) On Learner Monitoring And Assessing, The Teacher:

1. understands the link between the purpose of assessment and the intended learning outcomes;
2. comprehends that assessment is closely tied to the teaching learning activities;
3. comprehend that assessment is closely tied to pupil motivation and their academic performance;
4. understand the interdependence of 'assessment of learning' on 'assessment for learning';
5. can use a range of appropriate monitoring and assessment strategies and instruments to identify learning needs, to evaluate progress, to provide evaluative feedback to help pupils in their progress, and to take follow-up action;

6. understands statistical concepts in representing pupils' patterns of responses to assessment tasks; and,
7. recognizes objective and ethical assessment procedures.

(3) PROVIDING QUALITY OF LEARNING OF CHILD IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (CCA):

The teacher is aware of the opportunity to use CCA to inculcate desirable values and attitudes, and to support the holistic development of pupils. He/she is aware of:

1. the use of CCA to provide opportunities for pupils to maximize their potential and is committed to supporting CCA activities;
2. the need to manage pupil behavior in CCA activities; and,
3. basic safety procedures/considerations during activities, including basic first aid.

(4) CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE WITH:**(A) Subject Mastery:**

The teacher shows strong working knowledge of subject matter and related educational issues, and seeks to deepen his/her understanding of the subject area and teaching practices. He/she draws on deep and well integrated disciplinary knowledge; draws on well developed Pedagogical Content Knowledge; has knowledge of recent developments in the field; helps pupils associate concepts and principles to their everyday experiences; and is able to apply his/her subject knowledge to help learners of different levels understand core concepts and their applications.

(B) Reflective Thinking:

The teacher adopts a critically reflective stance towards his/her own professional practice as a basis for ongoing monitoring and refinement of those practices, including the identification of strengths and areas for improvement. He/she seeks opportunities to grow professionally; and is aware of major areas of research on teaching and of resources for professional learning.

(C) Analytic Thinking:

The teacher demonstrates a capacity to engage with problems. He/she identifies possible cause-and-effect relationships, develops plans to respond, prioritizes tasks in order of importance, and carefully monitors responses; makes and defends complex choices and decisions; and frames, analyses and synthesizes information in order to solve problems and provide solutions.

(d) Initiative:

The teacher seeks opportunities to take initiative to improve his/her professional practices. He/she is aware of the value of, and need for skills in innovation and entrepreneurship.

(E) Creative Teaching:

The teacher explores the use of creative teaching techniques/strategies to cater for pupils with different abilities.

(F) A Future Focus:

The teacher is committed to environmental sustainability, social justice and equity. He/she is aware of the need to develop 21st century skills and values in his/her pupils. He/she recognizes that, in a rapidly changing world, the ability to experiment with and advocate for new practices will be a core professional capacity.

(5) Winning Hearts And Minds:**(A) Understanding The Environment:**

The teacher is aware of the rationale for national education policies and practices and their infusion. He/she has critical awareness of the norms and values inherent in the Singapore system of education; understands the Desired Outcomes of Education; and is aware of the role of school rules, and is committed to understanding and abiding by the operating procedures and organization structure of the school to which he/she is appointed.

(B) Developing Others:

The teacher takes initiative to support peers and colleagues.

(6) WORKING WITH OTHERS:**(A) Partnering Parents:**

The teacher is aware of the need to build collaboration and partnership with parents to maximize the learning of pupils; uses strategies to keep parents informed on the progress of pupils and school activities; and values perspectives of parents.

(B) Working In Teams:

The teacher actively seeks out opportunities for professional collaboration within and beyond the school. He/she cooperates with and supports colleagues; shares information and good ideas; expresses positive expectations of others; and speaks positively of team members.

(7) KNOWING SELF AND OTHERS:**(A) Turning Into Self:**

The teacher takes care to monitor his/her emotional and professional self in order to identify immediate support and/or developmental needs; and to achieve work-life balance, and seeks guidance where necessary.

(B) Exercising Personal Integrity And Legal Responsibilities:

The teacher is aware of the need for professionalism in all aspects of his/her demeanor. He/she is aware of his/her legal responsibilities and the need to maintain high standards of professional integrity when discharging his/her duties and responsibilities.

(C) Understanding And Respecting Others:

The teacher is committed to National Education, and to valuing diversity in all its forms. He/she demonstrates sensitivity to cultural and religious differences.

(D) Resilience And Adaptability:

The teacher is tough in spirit, able to persevere in times of challenge, keeping a positive disposition; stays the course though there may be obstacles to surmount (he/she is optimistic); is able to think on his/her feet and make decisions appropriate to the situation at hand; and encourages and teaches her/his pupils to be resilient and adaptable.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYZING

The Graduand Teacher Competencies (GTC) Framework articulates a set of professional standards, benchmarks and goals for NIE graduands. As a holistic integration and alignment of the Values Skills and Knowledge Model (V3SK) and the MOE competencies framework for beginning teachers, GTC Framework includes three performance dimensions of teaching profession standards, which are professional practice, leadership & management and personal effectiveness. Each performance dimension is presented in more details by its components, and then each component is concretized by its particular standards, which can be used to facilitate teacher training and retraining process, as well as expertise and assessing teachers. The GTC Framework also provides clear expectations for stakeholders in terms of the competencies of NIE graduands.

By the GTC Framework, NIE has shown very clearly the requirements of fostering and self-fostering to develop teacher's career, besides teaching and nurturing competencies [9]. On one hand, they emphasize "legal responsibility and the need to maintain high standards of professional integrity" when teachers perform their works and take their responsibility; on the other hand, they also require teachers to be able to "seek for opportunities to improve professional initiative" as well as "awareness of the value and necessity of the skills needed for innovation and entrepreneurship". Always concern about the nation education system, they specially emphasize "the need to develop the skills for the 21st century" and the need to be aware that "in a world of rapidly change, the ability to test and criticism new strategies could be the focus of professional competencies". These issues have been posed specifically and have been updated in this GTC

Framework by NIE. The GTC Framework have shown positive educational ideology of Singapore education system. This not only is reflected in the advanced teaching techniques equipped to each teacher, but also presented in the construction of "a culture of care, trust and friendly", in the attitude of "respecting the diversity of knowledge", and in skills of "listening and take care of students in interaction with them".

Singaporean do not turn their education system into a business or commercial services, but they take the positive elements of the law of the market economy to their education system and promote it moving forward. This is reflected in their concept and discoursing about a professional competency which is the ability to "provide quality learning of child". Here, the teacher, as the representative of the country and the education system, bring "high-quality public services" to students, help students to create "Best Learning Products" for themselves.

The GTC Framework has shown very clearly fundamental competencies of human beings in the 21st century, that is: understanding, sympathising, problem solving, cooperative, ICT. This reveals that the updates to the teaching profession standards of Singaporean education system have met the requirements for education development in the new era.

CONCLUSIONS

The GTC Framework reveals requirements and standards for a potential candidate to become a teacher in Singapore. This framework is an useful reference for Vietnam on the journey of developing and completing our teaching profession standards. It is also an intellectual perspective that should be considered and studied by Vietnam education institutions in order to to improve the quality of teacher training in the new social context.

REFERENCES

1. Adecco (2012): Survey Of Children In Singapore Reveals That Becoming A Teacher Is The Career Of Choice. Retrieved from [http://sg.adecco-asia.com/Adecco/RSS/newspress_pressreleases/20120110_Press_Release-_Adecco_Singapore_-Latest_Career_Findings_From_The_Adecco_Singapore_Childrens_Survey_\(10th_January_2012\).pdf](http://sg.adecco-asia.com/Adecco/RSS/newspress_pressreleases/20120110_Press_Release-_Adecco_Singapore_-Latest_Career_Findings_From_The_Adecco_Singapore_Childrens_Survey_(10th_January_2012).pdf).
2. AHISA (2015): Initial Teacher Education: School-based Practical Experience. A discussion paper prepared for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. Available at: <http://www.aspa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/150703-AHISA-AITSL-Discussion-Paper-School-based-Practical-Experience-June-2015.pdf>.
3. Gopinathan, S., Ho, W.K. and Tan J. (2001): Teacher education and teaching in Singapore: Into the new century. In Y. C. Cheng, M. C. Mok & K. T. Tsui (Eds.), Teaching effectiveness and teacher development: Towards a new knowledge base. Hong Kong/Dordrecht: The Hong Kong Institute of Education/Kluwer Academic.
4. Lim K.M. (2013): Teacher education in Singapore. Paper presented at the SEAMEO RIHED Regional Seminar on Teacher Education, National Institute of Education, Singapore.
5. Lim K.M. (2014): Teacher Education & Teaching Profession in Singapore. Paper presented at the International Conference on the Teaching Profession in ASEAN, Bangkok, Thailand.
6. Ministry of Education Singapore. Teaching and Learning of 21st Century Competencies in Schools (2010):. NIE TE21 Summit, 2 November 2010.
7. National Institute of Education, Singapore (2009):. A teacher education models for the 21st century. October 2009. http://www.nie.edu.sg/files/spcs/Te21_online_ver.pdf.
8. Nhung Pham, Margaret Johnson (2013): Reforming Teacher Education: Early results on TechTeach from the Candidates' Perspective. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association, San Antonio, February, 6th-9th.
9. OECD (2014): The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)- 2013 Results. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/talis-2013-results.html>.
10. Wen, Ling-Yu; Hsu, Shun-Fa; Chen, Shiu-Yu; Wu, Jun-Yen (2007): Application of a blended e-learning method in designing a training program for developing professional competences of university teachers: e-CBT. Model,"Educational and Network Technology (ICENT), 2010 International Conference on, pp.66-70, 25-27 June 2010. doi: 10.1109/ICENT.2010.5532128.
11. Yeigh T. and Lynch D. (2013): Chapter 1: Dealing with Teacher Education. In Lynch, D. E. and Yeigh, T. (Editors). Teacher Education in Australia: Investigations into Programming, Practicum and Partnership. Oxford Global Press, Tarragindi, Australia.

How to cite this article:

Duc B.M., Tu N.N., Anh D.T.V. and Huyen H.T.K. (2017): An Approach to Teachers' Professional Competencies in The 21st Century. Annals of Education, Vol. 3[1]: March, 2017: 24-28.