Preparing Teachers to use Technology and Teacher-educators Development: The Case of Hong Kong

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of government in promoting information and communication technologies in teacher education, including pre-service and in-service teachers on the one hand, and analyzes the professional development of teacher educators at the Hong Kong Institution of Education on the other. A challenge for teacher education institutions is to prepare teachers, both practicing and future ones, to effectively use new technological learning tools in their teaching. It is the responsibility of policy-makers, administrators, and teacher educators to create an environment that will facilitate and support teachers to integrate technology and teaching. In 2002, an international group of experts in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have developed a document providing a framework for in teacher education in 2002. The framework is comprised of four clusters of competencies encircled by four supportive themes, namely, 1) context and culture, 2) leadership and vision, 3) lifelong learning, and 4) planning and management of change. The ICT competencies are organized into four groups: 1) content and pedagogy, 2) technical issues, 3) social issues, and 4) collaboration and networking (UNESCO 2002). This framework is used to analyze the case of ICTs in teacher education in Hong Kong. This paper consists of two parts. Part 1 analyses and reports on the implementation strategies and initiatives undertaken by the Hong Kong government during the 5-year IT in Education Strategy Plan (1998-2003). Since funding allocation is one major way through which the government channels resource and support for policy implementation, the paper will begin with a report on the various aspects of the implementation and how that changes with time. Then, it will analyze in the teacher enablement. All teachers (more than 60,000) achieved basic level of IT competencies within 5 years, among them 76.5% achieved intermediate level within 5 years. There were broadly two sets of IT teacher training programs: the first set was for technological aspects, which could be further categorized into central and school-based sub-types. The second set was subject-based integration. Usually most technological skills were taught by private commercial sectors while some tertiary research centers and community educational institutions shouldered the responsibility of providing subject-based integration courses. Finally, the paper will discuss the implications of the strategies used by the Hong Kong government to promote the ICTs in teacher education. In the part 2, case studies of ICTs professional development of four teacher educators at the HKIEd illustrate a range of approaches that enable them to develop the skills requires the use of ICT tools in their own teaching practice. These approaches are producing CD-ROMs as part of teaching package, construction a Chinese e-books library and creating a teacher knowledge interactive website so as to improve teaching and student learning through using new technologies. The development programs were offered by Center for Integrating Technology in Education and the Centre for Learning, Teaching and Supervision will be evaluated. ICTs experts have actively
planned and promoted the workshops to their colleagues so as to use Blackboard for online class discussion. The conclusion of this paper will discuss the factors that facilitate the change of learning paradigm in Hong Kong.