Towards
A Learning Profession

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Interim Report on Teachers' Continuing Professional Development

教師持續專業發展
中期報告

Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications
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The Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) published in November 2003 a document "Towards a Learning Profession: The Teacher Competencies Framework and the Continuing Professional Development of Teachers", in which it made recommendations for a framework for teachers' continuing professional development (CPD). This is a major component of ACTEQ's three-pronged approach in its holistic review of teachers' professional development, the other two components being pre-service initial teacher education and induction for beginning teachers.

This Interim Report takes stock of the situation of CPD in the past two years since the publication of the recommendations. We are glad to report that teachers and schools have been actively participating in all kinds of CPD activities and that such activities are largely contributing to the betterment of student learning in schools. The Report is based on various sources of information, including a comprehensive survey. We are proud to present the picture as a true reflection of the professionalism amongst teachers in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, we have also identified room for improvement. It is indeed the purpose of this Interim Report to seek views and suggestions for further advancement.

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Chairman, ACTEQ

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INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Professional Learning for Teachers

1.1 Learning permeates the various stages of a teaching career, which covers initial teacher education, induction and in-service professional development. Teachers undergo continuous learning to enhance their knowledge, skills and abilities and develop positive values for the benefit of students. Teachers also provide a role model for students in lifelong learning through the pursuit of continuing professional development (CPD). Randi & Zeichner (2004, p.183) observe,"Teaching has been characterised as the *learning* profession…. The work of teaching cannot be accomplished without learning; teaching requires learning within the context of practice – teachers' work. This conception of teaching suggests that *learning* is central to teachers' work and that teachers' work may best be accomplished for learning's sake."[1] CPD is a crucial means to help teachers develop their capacity to learn and investigate so as to improve their practice, and is an indispensable process in bringing about sustainable school development, ultimately for the improvement of student learning. Therefore, in most systems of education, much importance is attached to promoting teachers' professional development.

The Three Components of Teachers' Professional Development

1.2 The Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ)[2] has been playing a prominent role in advising the Government on issues and policies related to teacher education and development. To prepare teachers for various reforms and challenges, ACTEQ has been conducting a comprehensive and holistic review of the continuum of teacher preparation and development, i.e. initial teacher education, induction for beginning teachers and in-service teachers' CPD.

1.3 At present, a study on initial teacher education in Hong Kong vis-à-vis the changing needs in schools is under way in order to facilitate the formulation of policy recommendations on initial teacher education. Regarding induction for new teachers, progress has been made in mapping out the professional requirements and other support measures for an internship scheme to support beginning teachers' professional development. A small-

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[1] J. Randi & K. Zeichner (2004). "New Visions of Teacher Professional Development". *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, Vol. 1, pp.180-227.

[2] See Appendix A for membership of *ACTEQ*.

scale pilot project is being launched in the 2005/06 school year to field-test the scheme. As regards in-service teachers' CPD, a CPD framework was introduced with ACTEQ's release in November 2003 of a document entitled "Towards a Learning Profession: The Teacher Competencies Framework and the Continuing Professional Development of Teachers" ("CPD Document 2003" hereafter). The purpose has been to enhance and institutionalise the practice of CPD. This "Interim Report on Teachers' CPD" is a follow-up report on the developments and progress made since the introduction of the teachers' CPD framework in "CPD Document 2003".

The Interim Report

1.4   Subsequent to the release of the teachers' CPD framework for schools' use in November 2003, teachers' participation in CPD has been more active than ever. Meanwhile, the trials in teachers' CPD have also led to the identification of issues and potential concerns arising from such CPD activities. This Interim Report has thus been prepared with the following purposes:

    (a)   to re-confirm the important principles of the CPD framework;

    (b)   to report on the current state and progress of CPD in Hong Kong;

    (c)   to share examples of good CPD practice for the reference of schools and teachers;

    (d)   to clarify issues and concerns about the implementation of CPD; and

    (e)   to invite further feedback and suggestions about the CPD framework for further review by ACTEQ in mid-2007.

1.5   It is important to recapitulate the gist of "CPD Document 2003" to facilitate discussion and reflection. The spirit and key principles of the CPD framework are therefore revisited at the beginning of Chapter 2. A general description of the developments that are taking place since the release of "CPD Document 2003" is given in the second part of Chapter 2. To obtain a comprehensive picture of the current state and progress of teachers' CPD in Hong Kong, ACTEQ invited two independent educational associations to conduct a large-scale research study on teachers' CPD in March 2005. Chapter 3 presents an overview of major themes in teachers' CPD with reference to this research study, as well as observations on the situation and progress of teachers' CPD. In order to provide practical reference for schools and teachers in planning CPD, examples of teachers' CPD practice are included

in Chapter 4. Based on developments and feedback from frontline practitioners thus far, ACTEQ's reflections and interim recommendations are presented in Chapter 5.

1.6 The efficacy of the CPD policy hinges on the wisdom and experience accumulated over time by all relevant parties. ACTEQ hopes to solicit further views and collect more examples of CPD practice for sharing. All education practitioners are most welcome to send their responses:

- by email to: roacteq@emb.gov.hk

- by fax to: (852) 2537 2446

- by post to: ACTEQ & Professional Development Section

    Education & Manpower Bureau

    Room 1703, 17/F, Murray Building

    Garden Road

    Central

    Hong Kong

  (Enquiry telephone number : (852) 3150 8006)

The Interim Report is also available at http://www.acteq.hk.

TEACHERS' CPD FRAMEWORK (2003) AND MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Background

2.1   ACTEQ has proposed a framework for teachers' CPD in "CPD Document 2003" and recommended a three-year "try-out period" to encourage teachers to undertake various kinds of CPD activities. Subsequently, a series of briefing and sharing sessions and school visits has been conducted to disseminate the content of "CPD Document 2003" and to gauge initial responses from relevant stakeholders. In March 2004, a Steering Committee on Teachers' CPD[3] was set up under ACTEQ to keep track of developments and give advice on teachers' CPD. ACTEQ will make further recommendations on how to take forward teachers' CPD in mid-2007 based on the accumulation of practice and experience over time.

"CPD Document 2003"

Gist of the Document

2.2   "CPD Document 2003" puts forth salient recommendations about teachers' continuing professional development. For successful implementation of the recommendations, practitioners' professional judgement and autonomy are crucial. Essential points contained in the document include:

   (a)   **Underpinning the teachers' CPD framework, a generic Teacher Competencies Framework (TCF) is developed in order to facilitate teachers' professional development in general. In particular, the TCF serves as a "map" that provides reference for teachers and schools in formulating CPD plans specific to the person and appropriate to the school at a particular time.** It is to underpin the entire process of teachers' competencies development. With teachers' personal growth and core professional values as its basic premise, the TCF comprises descriptors of the professional competencies typical of the different stages of development in each of the four core domains of a teacher's work, namely "Teaching and Learning", "Student Development", "School Development" and "Professional Relationships

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[3]   See Appendix B for membership of the *Steering Committee on Teachers' CPD*.

and Services". By referring to the descriptors, individual teachers can use the TCF as a self-reflection tool to locate their own stage of professional development and plan how to make advancement to the next stage through CPD. At the organisational level, the TCF enables schools to look at the collective competency of their staff and then draw up school-based staff development plans. As such, the descriptors of the TCF provide goals to aim for at a particular stage of professional maturity, and CPD is the means to attain these goals;

(b) **A wide definition of CPD is adopted,** i.e. teachers' CPD is not equated only with attending training courses/formal programmes after school or outside school. CPD refers to all kinds of learning opportunities that help teachers strengthen their professional practices, and the different kinds of professional learning and sharing activities taking place within and across schools should also be recognised and counted towards CPD. Teachers are encouraged to engage in a variety of learning experiences, just as their students are. Accordingly, the CPD framework recommends that teachers undertake different kinds of CPD activities, which are broadly classified under the two categories of "structured learning" and "other CPD modes"[4];

(c) **The CPD framework is formulated with focus on relevance and quality rather than quantity.** Firstly, the construction of the generic TCF signifies the considerable importance attached to CPD content, as the domains of the TCF provide teachers and schools with meaningful reference in deciding on the content of their CPD activities and drawing up CPD plans that can best meet their developmental needs. Secondly, the wide definition of CPD covers the different kinds of professional exchanges and sharing that help enhance teachers' professionalism, and hence clearly signifies that CPD quality and its impact on teachers' practices are of prime importance. Quantity, on the other hand, is among one of the various elements for consideration when drawing up any CPD plans or records. As such, ACTEQ has included in the CPD framework the pursuit of not less than 150 hours as a soft target for teachers to work towards during the three-year "try-out period". Nevertheless, such an indicative target is never meant to be any kind of rigid requirement, and it is important for both teachers and school administrators to understand that teachers' professionalism can only be enhanced through quality CPD, rather than mere number of CPD hours; and

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[4] "Structured learning" includes local/overseas conferences, symposia, workshops and courses, offshore study visits, as well as higher academic studies. "Other CPD modes" include job enrichment activities, mentoring, action learning, as well as service to education and the community. ("CPD Document 2003", pp.42-45)

(d) **The ultimate goal of the teachers' CPD framework is to develop a new CPD culture that is characterised by trust in and reliance on the professional choice and judgement of teachers and schools.** ACTEQ encourages teachers and schools to exercise professional autonomy and judgement to explore and experiment with the content, mode, quantity as well as planning and record-keeping of CPD activities. Furthermore, there should be active discussion between teachers and the school management when CPD plans are being drawn up, so that school development needs are integrated with individual teachers' development needs. Professional development activities are effective only when they are designed according to the specific needs of teachers and their schools. There is no intention to impose a "one-size-fits-all" set of "guidelines" or "regulations" on how to handle CPD matters. A CPD culture will flourish only with genuine respect for teachers' professional autonomy and school-based decisions.

Intended Achievements

2.3 Through releasing "CPD Document 2003" and launching the CPD framework for teachers, ACTEQ has hoped to achieve the following:

(a) Put CPD on the school development agenda and the policy agenda – Unless a kind of campaign is launched, teachers' CPD will not receive its rightful emphasis on the school development agenda and government policy agenda amidst the overwhelming necessities that schools have to attend to. Our vision of a professional teacher workforce is one where teachers take responsibility for their own learning and their work;

(b) Reaffirm that CPD must *not* be construed as a requirement independent and on top of other tasks facing professionals in schools – CPD is a core component of quality education. School administrators and teachers need to integrate CPD with education reform and school development initiatives as an integral package. CPD is the means through which teachers are empowered to meet the challenges and changes in contemporary society. The essence of the teachers' CPD framework is thus the incorporation of professional learning into a teacher's everyday life;

(c) Establish a map or framework for CPD over diverse schools – The TCF is a framework; it is *not* a set of guidelines. It is a map, and is used at teachers' and schools' discretion. Schools and teachers can make reference to it for conducting self-evaluation and further develop it as a tool for long-term planning. It is *not* a "road

map" that tells people what to do and where to go. Different schools have different ways of doing things. It is *not* a checklist, and is *not* for uniform requirements, let alone appraisals;

(d) Provide a common expectation across the system – The TCF is intended to serve as a common language for professional dialogue among teachers, within and across schools. It sets out a common expectation across the system, that teachers' professional learning is crucial to school development and improvement in student learning. The TCF also helps identify what competencies are needed for professional development at specific levels of a teacher's professional growth, e.g. "beginning teacher", "competent teacher" and "accomplished teacher";

(e) Encourage the integration of teachers' CPD with school development – One central theme of "CPD Document 2003" is that a well-conceived school-based policy should be formulated with teachers' participation and that agreement should be reached between the school and teachers regarding the corresponding action plans. This is an interactive process, which provides a valuable opportunity for teachers to engage in professional dialogue. Teachers' participation in discussing the various proposals on what is to be recognised and counted towards CPD, in a climate of trust, is essential to fostering teachers' professional autonomy and enhancing teachers' professionalism; and

(f) Nurture a CPD culture that emphasises trust in and reliance on schools' and teachers' professional choice and judgement – Schools and teachers need to take up the professional responsibility for exercising judgement on their own CPD, such as the formulation of related plans and choice of CPD content.

Developments since the Release of "CPD Document 2003"

General Description

2.4 Overall, the reception of "CPD Document 2003" on the TCF and the proposed teachers' CPD policy has been positive. From the findings of the surveys conducted by independent educational associations in 2004, to be reported in Paras. 2.6 to 2.8 below, it is clear that most frontline practitioners agree with the premise that all teachers have a responsibility to participate in CPD for the benefit of students. There is also a high level of acceptance among teachers regarding the provision of a three-year "try-out period". Nevertheless, some concerns have been raised on putting the CPD framework into practice. For instance,

what kinds of activities can be counted towards CPD hours, and how should they be counted? Some practitioners have also expressed worries about the pressure brought about by competition among schools in boosting the number of CPD hours "achieved" by teachers.

2.5 Teachers' participation in different kinds of CPD activities has been active. There is an upsurge in the number of training events organised by the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) to meet the diverse professional development needs of teachers. Nevertheless, there have been identifiable cases where the handling of CPD matters contravenes the rationale underlying the CPD framework, and there are misinterpretations such as an over-emphasis on attending courses or decisions on teachers' CPD without prior discussion with the teachers concerned. Few though they are, such cases have reflected the temptation to aim for mechanical compliance with the number of CPD hours without much consideration of the usefulness of the activities. These issues inevitably arise during this transitional period, when practitioners are still beginning to work with the teachers' CPD framework. We anticipate that with enhanced understanding and practice as CPD further develops in Hong Kong, most of these issues will be redressed.

Two Studies Conducted in 2004 on the Situation of Teachers' CPD

2.6 Various teachers' bodies and educational associations have conducted studies to investigate the situation of teachers' CPD and to look into the trends of developments. Two of the studies known to the Steering Committee are:

(a) The "Survey on Teachers' Professional Development" conducted by the Sub-committee of Educational Research and Professional Development of the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre (HKTC) in May 2004 (P. M. Wong, S. W. Wu & W. S. Tsui, 2004) ("HKTC Survey 2004" hereafter); and

(b) The "Research on Teachers' Continuing Professional Development (First Phase)" conducted by the Hong Kong Primary Education Research Association and Education Convergence (HKPERA & EC) in mid-2004 (R. Chan, J. Lee, S. H. Lee, F. Cheung, K. L. Tso, S. W. Yeung & P. Tang, 2004) ("HKPERA & EC Research 2004" hereafter).

"HKTC Survey 2004"

2.7 In "HKTC Survey 2004", a questionnaire was sent to all primary and secondary schools to collect information on the situation of teachers' CPD. Each school was requested to randomly

ask six teachers to complete the questionnaire. A total of 3,866 completed questionnaires were collected from 664 schools. In the survey, CPD activities were categorised into two major types of "formal education courses" and "professional development activities"[5]. The key findings are as follows:

(a) There was greater teacher participation in "professional development activities" than in "formal education courses" run by tertiary institutions and often leading to a qualification;

(b) For "formal education courses", the attendance situation over the previous 12 months (i.e. June 2003 – May 2004) was as follows:

- around 15% of respondents engaged in teacher training courses such as language education courses;

- around 14% studied Bachelor of Education courses;

- around 25% took courses for the Language Proficiency Requirement; and

- around 9% and around 5% took teacher certification programmes and courses leading to Master in Education or above respectively.

(c) For "professional development activities", the most popular kinds of activities were:

- workshops, conferences and short training programmes organised by schools and external bodies (engaged in by more than 90% of respondents);

- peer lesson observation (engaged in by 88%); and

- collegial collaboration such as joint lesson preparation and development of the school-based curriculum (engaged in by 84%).

In terms of CPD content, more than 50% of respondents spent more than 10 hours on subject-related CPD activities, more than 35% on pedagogy-related activities, and about 28% on curriculum development;

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[5] The classification of CPD activities in this survey is different from that adopted in "CPD Document 2003".

(d)   The percentage of teachers who volunteered to participate in professional development activities far exceeded that of those who were assigned by schools. Over 70% of teachers volunteered to participate in activities related to subject knowledge, pedagogy, information technology, curriculum development, and/or extra-curricular activity, while over 50% participated in activities related to student assessment, discipline and guidance, and/or school administration; and

(e)   The CPD activities undertaken by teachers were of good variety, and a CPD culture was more thriving than several years ago when a similar study[6] was conducted.

"HKPERA & EC Research 2004"

2.8   "HKPERA & EC Research 2004" aimed to investigate the state of affairs regarding teachers' CPD, including teachers' level of acceptance of the CPD policy recommended in "CPD Document 2003" and how the CPD framework was being implemented, as well as the nature of CPD and number of CPD hours engaged in by teachers over the previous 12 months. A random sampling method was adopted, and a questionnaire was sent to 100 secondary schools and 150 primary schools. In each school, 12 teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire. 1,416 returns were collected, with a return rate of 47.2%. Below are some significant findings:

(a)   On the whole, teachers agreed to the overall direction of the CPD policy, and were receptive to the concept that "teachers need to undergo continuous learning". 80% agreed with the implementation strategy involving a three-year "try-out period", and with the need for teachers' CPD plans to be integrated with school development needs. Around 70% accepted the four domains of CPD content as proposed in the TCF, namely "teaching and learning", "student development", "school development" and "professional relationships and services". Moreover, many teachers also envisaged "personal growth and development" and "life enrichment activities" as essential for professional development;

(b)   Regarding the conditions considered conducive to the successful implementation of a school-based teachers' CPD policy, the overwhelming majority of respondents agreed to all the seven conditions listed in the questionnaire, which were:

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[6]   P. M. Wong & C.K. Wong (2000). "A Preliminary Study of the Staff Development Programmes in Hong Kong Schools". *New Horizons in Education,* No. 42, pp.18-29.

- Creating space for teachers;

- School management's understanding of the spirit underlying the CPD policy;

- Teachers' understanding of the spirit underlying the CPD policy;

- A clear career ladder for promotion to facilitate direction-setting for CPD;

- School heads' possession of adequate ability to help teachers design CPD portfolios;

- Recognition given to CPD activities; and

- General sentiments among colleagues towards CPD.

The items all received very high ratings ranging from 87% to 94%. Specifically, "creating space for teachers", "school management's understanding of the spirit underlying the CPD policy" and "teachers' understanding of the spirit underlying the CPD policy" all received a rating of over 90%;

(c) Regarding "structured learning", around 90% indicated that attending seminars was the most common type, followed by workshops on sharing of teaching practices. As for "other CPD modes", collegial sharing and sharing within small learning groups were much more common than activities such as formal mentoring practice;

(d) The majority of respondents had engaged in not less than 50 CPD hours in one year; and

(e) Regarding training courses offered by educational institutions in the category of "structured learning", more than 60% indicated that a more objective review mechanism (such as an external review system) could be provided to assure the standard of various courses. As for "other CPD modes", the overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that schools should develop their own system of recognition of activities as counting towards CPD, in the spirit of school-based decisions.

CURRENT STATE AND PROGRESS OF TEACHERS' CPD IN HONG KONG

"ACTEQ Study 2005" on the Situation and Progress of Teachers' CPD

3.1   "HKTC Survey 2004" and "HKPERA & EC Research 2004" have indicated that there is a more flourishing teachers' CPD culture compared with the situation several years ago. Building on the good start of "HKPERA & EC Research 2004" in studying the processes of implementing the CPD framework in schools, HKPERA & EC were commissioned in March 2005 to extend their investigation with a large-scale research study[7] on the current state and progress of teachers' CPD ("ACTEQ Study 2005" hereafter). The research was basically a quantitative survey with a qualitative component. A summary of the research design and methods is attached at Appendix D. For the two questionnaires designed for completion by teachers and principals, please refer to Appendix D of the Chinese version of this Report.

3.2   The research collected data and analysed the information obtained according to the following eight themes:

(a)   Current CPD practices of teachers;

(b)   Motives of teachers undertaking CPD activities;

(c)   Factors affecting teachers' planning of CPD activities and principals' assistance to teachers in their CPD implementation;

(d)   Important conditions for successful implementation of teachers' CPD in schools;

(e)   General situation with respect to the implementation of teachers' CPD policy in schools;

(f)   Teachers' level of acceptance of ACTEQ's recommendations on CPD;

(g)   Usefulness of teachers' CPD activities in enhancing teaching effectiveness and professionalism; and

(h)   Personal factors affecting teachers' engagement in CPD.

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[7]   See Appendix C for membership of the Research Team.

Findings on Key Themes in the Situation and Progress of Teachers' CPD

3.3   In response to the eight themes listed above, "ACTEQ Study 2005" presents the following findings:

Current CPD Practices of Teachers

3.4   Teachers of all sectors engaged actively in CPD activities of different natures and modes in the 12 months prior to the commencement of the research study (March 2005). The overwhelming majority of teachers attended seminars, surfed online information and educational websites, and observed how other senior teachers handled different matters in daily teaching. Principals reported a level of teachers' participation in various CPD activities higher than that reported by teachers. Secondary and special school principals indicated that virtually all teachers participated in seminars, and special school principals further noted participation by all teachers in external sharing sessions on teaching and learning.

3.5   Special school teachers participated more actively in the following five categories of CPD activities than primary and secondary school teachers:

- Medium/long structured courses;

- Seminars and sharing activities with specific themes;

- School-based exchanges of teaching experience;

- Activities for sharing of individuals' professional knowledge; and

- Literature review and information search.

Compared with their secondary school counterparts, primary school teachers participated more actively in the first four categories of CPD activities.

3.6   Teachers and principals shared similar views about the actual time allocated to the domains of the TCF:

- Around 35% of time was spent on "Teaching and Learning";

- 20% on "Student Development";

- 20% on "School Development";

- 15% on "Professional Relationships and Services"; and

- Less than 10% on "Personal Growth and Development".

Teachers' views on the ideal time allocation for each domain were also collected. The discrepancies between the "actual" and "ideal" time allocations were small, with less than 5% for all the domains. Thus, teachers were able to engage in the CPD activities they preferred.

Motives of Teachers Undertaking CPD Activities

3.7   Teachers and principals held different views about teachers' motives in undertaking CPD activities. For teachers, the motives were normally related to personal growth and development, which include "enhancement of individual professional capabilities", "pursuit of personal growth" and "upgrading of individual competitiveness". While principals agreed that the wish for personal growth was an important motive for teachers, they looked at the issue from an organisational perspective. Principals thought that particular arrangements made by schools to facilitate teachers' CPD were a major driving force for teachers' participation in CPD activities.

3.8   "Fulfilling the requirement of CPD hours as proposed in the CPD policy" was among the three motives regarded by the smallest percentages of teachers as important. Thus, most teachers did not participate in CPD activities solely for fulfilling the CPD hours "requirement".

Factors Affecting Teachers' Planning of CPD Activities and Principals' Assistance to Teachers in Their CPD Implementation

3.9   Teachers held convergent views when ranking the factors which affect teachers' planning of CPD activities and principals' assistance to teachers in their CPD implementation. They considered that the most important factors, in descending order of importance, were:

- "if time can be appropriately arranged";

- "if the activities are teaching-and-learning related"; and

- "if the activities are related to other important job areas".

Principals put more emphasis on the factors "if the contents of the activities match with school development" and "if the activities are teaching-and-learning related".

3.10 Generally speaking, when formulating their CPD plans, teachers had more concern about the potential difficulties (e.g. how to properly manage time for CPD), whereas principals paid more attention to school development and student learning.

Important Conditions for Successful Implementation of Teachers' CPD in Schools

3.11 Teachers emphasised "teachers' autonomy in planning their own CPD activities" as the most important condition. They also attached high importance to the conditions that "school administrators make particular teaching arrangements for them to participate in CPD activities" and "principals and school management understand clearly the spirit of the CPD policy". From the principals' perspective, the most important conditions were that "principals and school management understand clearly the spirit of the CPD policy" and "school administrators provide opportunities for teachers to apply and implement what they have learnt from the CPD activities".

3.12 Based on the above results, it can be seen that teachers were more concerned about the level of autonomy for formulating their CPD plans and the practical issue of whether particular arrangements would be made by schools to facilitate their CPD participation. However, principals believed that the successful implementation of the CPD policy depended very much on school leaders' understanding of the spirit behind the policy. They also cared about whether teachers would implement what they had learnt from CPD activities in daily teaching.

General Situation with Respect to the Implementation of Teachers' CPD Policy in Schools

3.13 Both teachers and principals regarded "allowing teachers to apply for and recognise their own professional development activities" as the most common measure adopted by schools in order to implement teachers' CPD policy. For teachers, the next most common measures were "collecting CPD-related information for helping teachers participate in related courses" and "making particular teaching arrangements for individual teachers participating in long-term professional development activities". However, principals considered "setting up a well-defined CPD recognition system for recording teachers' professional development activities" and "arranging school-based teaching and learning sharing activities for teachers at regular intervals" as two other most common measures.

3.14   Based on the above findings, it can be noted that secondary and special school principals were more concerned about the setting up of a mechanism for organising and recording CPD activities, while primary school heads tended to put more effort into "arranging school-based teaching and learning sharing activities for teachers at regular intervals". Yet, teachers tended to care more about whether specific coordination or arrangements were made by schools to facilitate their participation in various kinds of CPD activities.

Teachers' Level of Acceptance of ACTEQ's Recommendations on CPD

3.15   Generally, teachers held positive views on ACTEQ's CPD recommendations. Though their views varied on the recommendation that "all teachers should engage in CPD activities of not less than 150 hours in a three-year cycle", the majority opted for "very much agree", "agree" and "neutral" with respect to this recommendation. Principals exhibited an even higher level of agreement, as around 90% of principals held positive or neutral views on each of the recommendations on teachers' CPD.

3.16   In particular, a high percentage of both teachers and principals agreed with the two recommendations that "teachers should consider schools' development needs before formulating their own CPD plans" and "a system for professional development activities should be developed with the involvement of both school administrators and teachers". The sharing of common concepts by teachers and principals is essential to the integration of school and teachers' development needs, and can facilitate the development of a school-based staff development policy with a high degree of teacher participation.

3.17   Teachers attached importance to professional autonomy, as they indicated the highest level of acceptance on the recommendation that "teachers can select CPD activities at their own professional discretion".

Usefulness of Teachers' CPD Activities in Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness and Professionalism

3.18   Generally, teachers thought that "observing other senior teachers' ways of handling different matters in daily teaching" and "seeking assistance from experienced teachers" were most helpful. Primary and special school teachers shared the views that "participating in collaborative lesson preparation" and "participating in class observation programmes" were very helpful. However, secondary school teachers perceived "self-initiated professional reading" and "surfing online information and educational websites" as more effective.

3.19 On the whole, informal or unstructured collegial sharing and observations among teachers during daily teaching were regarded as the two most useful CPD activities that could help teachers accumulate valuable experience. Such professional exchanges were considered effective ways of solving teachers' immediate problems encountered in daily work.

Personal Factors Affecting Teachers' Engagement in CPD

Years of teaching experience

3.20 A "U-shaped" pattern was discerned regarding the overall participation in teachers' professional development activities. Teachers with 10 or less years of teaching experience and teachers with 21 or more years were significantly more active than other teachers.

3.21 Teachers with different years of teaching experience tended to participate in different kinds of CPD activities. Teachers with less teaching experience (10 years or less) tended to participate more in medium/long structured courses and in school-based exchanges of teaching experience. Those with 21 or more years of teaching experience tended to participate more in seminars and sharing activities with specific themes, as well as activities for upgrading individual personal qualities.

3.22 When planning professional development activities, teachers with less teaching experience might typically have two considerations in mind. The first was whether the activities could upgrade their qualifications, and this consideration was important for teachers in planning their long-term development. These teachers would tend to choose medium/ long structured courses in order to upgrade their academic qualifications. The second consideration was whether the activities could provide immediate solutions to the problems encountered in daily teaching. Teachers would then tend to participate more in school-based exchanges of teaching experience so that immediate support and assistance could be obtained.

3.23 Teachers with 5 or less years of teaching experience ranked school-based exchanges of teaching experience more highly when compared with the other groups. Furthermore, they considered learning from veteran colleagues more helpful.

Ranks of teachers

3.24 Generally, not much difference was found between the two groups of basic rank teachers (GM/AEO, APSM, CM) and senior teachers (SGM/EO, PSM, PAM, SAM/AM and PGM/ SEO) in their level of participation in various CPD activities. However, basic rank teachers showed a higher level of participation in "medium/long structured courses" (courses with a duration of 6 months or more), "school-based exchanges of teaching experience" and "activities for upgrading own personal qualities". Meanwhile, senior teachers showed a higher participation level in "seminars and sharing activities with specific themes" and "literature review and information search".

3.25 With respect to the perceived effectiveness of CPD activities, basic rank teachers found medium/long structured courses and school-based exchanges of teaching experience to be more effective, and senior teachers perceived that seminars and sharing activities were more effective.

Observations on the Situation and Progress of Teachers' CPD

3.26 "ACTEQ Study 2005" has provided useful information and insights on the current state and progress of teachers' CPD. In addition to the findings from this study, we have the following observations:

(a) The evidence collected reflects a general consensus among teachers and principals that teachers' CPD should be an essential part of a teacher's professional life. A vast majority of teachers have been participating in various kinds of CPD activities. Some of the schools have also started developing their own school-based CPD policy. In many schools, regular school-based staff development programmes have been organised, and systems for recognising and recording teachers' CPD have been set up with teacher involvement;

(b) Nonetheless, there are also identifiable, though not widespread, misinterpretations of ACTEQ's recommendations on CPD. Such misinterpretations typically include:

- equating CPD with attendance at formal training or academic programmes;

- disregarding school-based activities (e.g. collaborative lesson preparation, class observation and mentoring) as CPD, thereby sometimes giving rise to the misunderstanding that CPD is an additional requirement and has to be undertaken at the expense of daily school work; and

- placing excessive emphasis on the quantitative target of 150 hours and regarding that as the goal for fulfillment of CPD.

Such misinterpretations are perhaps inevitable given the rather initial stage of implementation and the vast number of schools, but they reveal the directions for improvement in the advancement of CPD in Hong Kong;

(c) Because of their different positions and roles, frontline teachers and principals exhibit different views on various issues. Teachers tend to pay more attention to their autonomy in planning CPD activities, whereas principals tend to put more emphasis on school needs. Such a role-specific difference is perhaps inevitable and should contribute towards a sound balance. However, it does point to the importance of communication between teachers and principals, and of teacher participation in the formulation of school-based staff CPD plans. Above all, in the face of new education policies, principals and teachers need to be sensitive to the possible implications when formulating CPD plans, to ensure that teachers are able to make the necessary changes and are prepared to meet the challenges;

(d) Because of the increasing demand for teachers' CPD and teachers' increasing awareness of the importance of upgrading their professional competence, a considerable number of CPD courses are run by tertiary institutions to meet the demand. However, the quality of CPD courses can be highly variable regardless of cost, and this is a concern of both teachers and policy-makers;

(e) Use of the TCF to facilitate teachers' self-evaluation and charting of CPD plans is not yet widespread. Many teachers are not familiar with the nature of the TCF and its relationship with teachers' CPD. When schools and teachers have enhanced their awareness of the practical benefits of the TCF in staff development and school self-evaluation and more dissemination activities have taken place, schools and teachers will use the TCF more readily;

(f) In "ACTEQ Study 2005", "collegial support and sharing of experience among teachers" are considered by a high percentage of teachers to be effective. It would be valuable to study how CPD activities that are interwoven with school daily business could be further developed, and this could be an important direction for enhancing teachers' professionalism;

(g) "ACTEQ Study 2005" notes that apart from school-based exchanges of teaching experience, teachers engage a lot in "literature and information search", and consider these effective. This reminds us that CPD may also be realised through individual learning. On the other hand, we are glad to observe that there are emerging cases where teachers consolidate their experiences and disseminate innovative practices to a wider audience through writing or the media; and

(h) Different schools have a different pace of implementing a school-based CPD policy. Some schools are at a more advanced stage and have already accumulated valuable experience. Following the lead of school administrators, a school-based sharing culture has already been developed and teachers participate systematically in different CPD activities for the ultimate benefit of their students. Nevertheless, in this initial "try-out period", there are understandable difficulties for some schools to achieve the intended goals. It is thus important for EMB to collect more examples of good practice and provide opportunities for sharing.

SCHOOL CASES OF TEACHERS' CPD

4.1 During the initial period of the try-out, ACTEQ and EMB have attached great importance to multi-level dissemination of the TCF and the teachers' CPD framework as well as collection of cases of teachers' CPD practices for sharing. A new website (www.acteq.hk) was developed in 2004 to communicate ACTEQ's thinking about and work on teacher education and professional development to the education sector and other parts of the community. The ACTEQ website also serves as a platform for disseminating information about teachers' CPD. For example, information about the staff development day programmes organised by different schools is collected and placed on the website for reference by interested parties. At the same time, EMB has been conducting school visits and arranging professional exchanges among teachers with a responsibility for coordinating staff development, in order to collect examples of school-based CPD practices for continuous dissemination. It is believed that more sharing of actual field experiences can facilitate the building of a consensus on expectations for CPD among relevant stakeholders, and joint efforts can be strengthened as the whole teaching profession moves towards becoming a learning profession.

Examples of School-based Staff Development Practices

4.2 What are included below are some of the many school cases collected during the first round of sharing of CPD practices. The selected cases are among the many from which valuable experience can be drawn in promoting school-based staff development. Before looking at the individual schools' staff development work, there are a few features about them that are worth particular attention:

(a) The TCF is used as a developmental tool by schools to identify and analyse the training needs of staff in order to formulate a strategic staff development plan;

(b) Emphasis is placed on the integration of the development needs of both schools and teachers, linking teacher learning with school improvement and student achievement;

(c) Principals play an important leadership role in enhancing staff's level of participation in CPD, either in the formulation of a school-based policy or in staff's engagement in professional development activities of various kinds;

(d) A specific team or committee is formed to plan and oversee staff development work;

(e) Teachers' feedback on the various staff development initiatives is conscientiously and regularly collected in order to inform further development;

(f) School-based staff development policies and supportive administrative arrangements are introduced by schools to create space and opportunities that facilitate teachers' engagement in professional sharing and learning within school, for example, the introduction of "block lessons". There is usually a high level of teacher participation in such arrangements to ensure ownership and practicability;

(g) Much importance is attached to promoting collegial interaction and support within school. For example, a mentoring system is set up to promote collegial sharing among all teachers in general and provide professional support to beginning teachers in particular;

(h) A platform (e.g. making good use of the school intranet) is created for teachers to obtain updated information and news about various training and professional development activities, and to exchange views about the CPD policy and share learning reflections; and

(i) The school management is good at utilising external resources (e.g. joining partnership schemes with tertiary institutions and inviting relevant experts from different professional bodies) to conduct school-based staff development activities.

4.3 The following school cases have been collected since the release of "CPD Document 2003". The key features of teacher professional development work in each of the schools are highlighted for sharing here. ACTEQ sincerely hopes that many more rounds of inspirational sharing of CPD practices will follow and maximise the positive impact of the valuable experiences gathered in the "try-out period".

School Case 1: Integration of the current education reform measures with the development needs of the school and its teachers

Background:

This is an aided secondary school of over 50 years' operation. A Staff Development Committee (SDC) has been set up for many years. The SDC strives to integrate the current education reform and policy initiatives with the development needs of the school and teachers in planning staff development.

Key features:

- The principal takes the lead in promoting teacher professional development, and frequently conducts training activities for teachers.

- Opportunities are created for teachers to undergo professional learning at school through school-based projects such as the Quality Education Fund projects entitled "Accelerated Learning Tool Kit" and "Teachers' Tool Kit", and through partnership schemes with local universities, e.g. "Unified Professional Development Project for Teachers and Student-Teachers" of the University of Hong Kong.

- A two-way approach, i.e. both "top-down" and "bottom-up", is adopted in the process of formulating the school's own policy and setting up a related system of recognition of activities as counting towards teachers' CPD.

- The school makes good use of the intranet to disseminate information and collect teachers' views, and the process of formulating the school-based policy is a highly interactive one.

- There is alignment of staff development with two other initiatives related to school self-evaluation (SSE) and external school review (ESR), since the school makes use of the findings of the SSE and ESR to inform the planning of staff development work.

- The content of staff development is integrated with the different areas of work related to the school goal. For the coming few years, the school goal is to attain continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

School Case 2: Use of the TCF for charting staff CPD plans

Background:

This is a special school (for the severely mentally handicapped) of more than 20 years' history. Teachers of this school see the need to undergo CPD to equip themselves and enhance their versatility to meet the changes and challenges ahead. They have been actively engaging in different kinds of CPD activities, including participating in school-arranged professional sharing activities, enrolling in training programmes organised outside school, as well as doing professional reading.

Key features:

- The school has formulated its own development framework of a "double-major mode". The double "majors" refer to teacher professional development and school development, i.e. equal importance is attached to both teacher development and school development.

- An approach of encouragement and support is adopted to help teachers derive greater benefits from professional sharing and learning among each other. For example, the school encourages teachers, but does not make it a compulsory requirement, to submit their professional portfolios for record keeping.

- The school makes good use of the intranet to provide a platform for teachers to share their learning reflections and give comments and suggestions about the professional learning activities organised by the school. The principal responds to teachers' sharing through the intranet.

- As one of the Staff Development Day programmes, the TCF was introduced to teachers as a reflective tool to locate their level of professional maturity in the core domains of teaching and learning, student development, school development, as well as professional relationships and services. Teachers were helped to understand the importance of evaluating their own professional competencies in order to identify personal development needs and plan CPD accordingly.

- Teachers were then asked to complete a "TCF-based" self-evaluation questionnaire without identifying themselves. The results were summarised and a collective competency profile of all staff was plotted. On the basis of the collective competency, the school analysed the development needs of staff in all the core domains and drew up a school-based staff development plan.

- To facilitate teachers' self-reflection on their own professional progress from time to time, the "TCF-based" questionnaire is placed on the school intranet, so that teachers can have access to it at any time convenient to them.

School Case 3: School's arrangements and facilitation for teachers to undergo CPD at school and within the timetable

Background:

This aided whole-day primary school started operation in 1999. The school has introduced various supportive measures and administrative arrangements to create capacity and opportunities for teachers to undergo CPD *at* school and within the timetable. At the same time, teachers are encouraged to have wider exposure by participating in sharing and exchanges *with* teachers of other schools.

Key Features:

- The school attaches significant importance to school-based staff development work. Time is arranged on the timetable for teachers to engage in professional learning and sharing together.

- Professional sharing meetings (by level), curriculum development meeting, and monthly whole staff training/sharing sessions are held to provide teachers with regular opportunities for professional learning that is closely tied with school business.

- Arrangements are also made for teachers to engage in co-teaching. Teachers have to jointly make thorough preparation beforehand, conduct post-lesson evaluation together and record their learning reflections in the "reflective diary on collaborative teaching".

- Teachers of less experience are paired up with senior teachers in conducting sharing sessions for teachers of other schools or in visits to other schools, so that the former can gain first-hand experience by observing senior teachers' teaching strategies and ways of handling daily matters.

- By participating in partnership schemes initiated by local universities (e.g. the "Quality Schools Project" of the Chinese University of Hong Kong), the school arranged for teachers to "interflow" to other schools for a short period and engage in collaborative learning with teachers of other schools. The principal believes that this kind of exposure can facilitate teachers' professional growth.

School Case 4: Endeavours to provide ample opportunities for school-based professional sharing and reflective learning

Background:

This aided secondary school started operation in 2000. The school arranges various kinds of school-based professional learning and sharing activities for teachers. In particular, the principal attaches importance to fostering teachers' reflective capacity. A Teacher's Log Book has been introduced since the 2004/05 school year for teachers to share reflections on their teaching.

Key features:

- In order to create more space for teachers to undergo reflective learning, the school has included double lessons in the timetable as far as possible, so that teachers only need to teach at most 3 - 4 classes a day. This enables teachers to have better use of their time. Teachers are encouraged to write down reflections on their teaching after every lesson in the Teacher's Log Book.

- Teachers participate regularly in school-arranged professional development activities to enhance their teaching effectiveness, e.g. lesson observation, weekly subject-based teaching and learning sharing sessions and monthly teachers' professional forums (held on a Saturday morning once a month). Teachers also engage in lesson video taping for self-reflection and sharing at the weekly/ monthly school-based sessions.

- Another way to foster teachers' professional growth is to open up classrooms for visits by teachers from other schools, parents and outside guests.

- Overall, school-based staff development activities alone, including the three Staff Development Days, account for about 50 - 60 CPD hours in a year.

- Teachers' feedback is constantly collected to inform the planning of school-based teachers' CPD work. At the commencement of the 2005/06 school year, the Staff Development Committee made use of the TCF to design a questionnaire to collect information about teachers' self-reflection on their professional competencies, as well as their views about the various school-based CPD activities arranged.

School Case 5: Formulation of a school-based staff development policy with teacher participation

Background:

This is a government whole-day primary school of more than 10 years' operation. The school management, including the principal and senior teachers, has an in-depth understanding of the spirit and main features of the CPD framework as formulated in "CPD Document 2003". Under the professional leadership of the school management, the school has formulated its own staff development policy with teachers' participation and discussion.

Key features:

- The CPD coordinator first studied thoroughly "CPD Document 2003" with a small group of teachers. She then introduced the teachers' CPD framework to all teachers, who were invited to participate in formulating the school's own CPD policy and setting up a related mechanism to recognise and count CPD activities.

- Teachers' professional discretion was respected, as teachers could decide when to start the three-year CPD cycle and how to set criteria for recognising teachers' CPD activities. The level of teachers' awareness and participation was high throughout the democratic process of formulating the school-based staff development policy.

- Consequently, teachers' consensus was reached on the starting date of the three-year cycle (i.e. September 2003) and on the CPD recording mechanism according to "Structured Learning" and "Other CPD Modes".

- The CPD coordinator is well aware that some teachers have different views on the school-based mechanism for calculating CPD hours. However, she believes that a consensus about the meaningfulness of undergoing CPD can be achieved through discussion involving all teachers.

- In the process of implementing the school-based teachers' CPD policy, the CPD coordinator felt deeply that CPD content and quality were more important than quantity, remarking, 'We should not stop at obtaining records of the CPD hours engaged by all teachers. We should ask ourselves, "What's next?"'

More Examples of CPD Activities of "Other Modes"

4.4   The examples above also illustrate that professional learning opportunities are not narrowly limited to discrete training events run by organisations outside school. Within school, there is a whole spectrum of staff development activities including professional sharing sessions, visits among schools, co-teaching and so on. The following sections are devoted to sharing two more examples of interactive professional development activities, so as to provide more concrete reference for teachers and schools in planning CPD of the "Other Modes".

School-based Mentoring Practices

4.5   Mentoring practices are beneficial professional development activities for all teachers involved. "Mentoring" can have two levels of meaning. In its conventional sense, "mentoring" means the provision of professional support for beginning teachers, so that a solid foundation for continuous learning can be laid in teachers' initial years of joining the life-long career. In a broader sense, "mentoring" is characterised by collegial support and professional sharing among all teachers, through which the whole school is transformed into a dynamic learning community where continuous learning is the core business of every member of the community.

4.6   Many local schools have been making admirable efforts in providing professional support for beginning teachers through various types of mentoring activities, which should be recognised as teachers' CPD. They include building a trusting relationship between mentors and intern teachers through informal conversations or regular meetings; enhancing the competencies of intern teachers in the "teaching and learning" domain through lesson observation with pre-lesson and post-lesson conferences; enhancing the competencies of intern teachers in other professional responsibilities beyond classroom teaching through observation of mentors' ways of handling daily school work and so on.

4.7   Mentoring practices are also found in schools where there are no beginning teachers. The teaching staff, including both novice and experienced teachers, engage in professional learning among themselves to further improve teaching practices and prepare themselves for the changes arising from the curriculum reform. For example, in many schools, teachers participate in Lesson Study[8] to develop a research lesson with the improvement of teaching and learning as the core of the learning process.

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[8]   Lesson Study originated in Japan. It is a professional development process that teachers engage in to systematically examine their teaching practice, with the goal of becoming more effective. Working on these study lessons involves planning, teaching, observing, and critiquing the lessons.

School-based Action Learning Projects

4.8   Teachers can learn and enhance their professional knowledge and skills through performing and through reflection on their own practice. Action learning is therefore a kind of CPD activity. School-based action learning projects, in particular, can benefit both the school and participating teachers in that they foster teachers' professional growth and at the same time contribute to school improvement and development. EMB has been promoting teachers' participation in various kinds of school-based action learning projects over the years. One such example is the Learning Circle (LC)[9] action learning project, with 29 participating schools for the 2005/06 school year.

4.9   Under the LC action learning project, EMB organises training workshops on LCs and visits to schools in Singapore, with the purpose of supporting the project schools to form specific LCs to improve classroom teaching. The concept of co-learners is particularly important in LCs: teachers in each LC are co-learners who reflect on their current teaching practices and seek ways to enhance their instructional effectiveness as classroom teachers. Regardless of their professional status and experience, co-learners meet each other on the same platform and recognise each other's expertise. Such a concept helps to bring about warmth and collegiality in an LC, and feedback from many participating teachers suggests that they have found it a powerful approach to learning and professional growth.

4.10   There is a wide range of school-based staff development initiatives, including job-embedded collegial interaction within school, networking among schools as well as the use of external resources and expertise to provide training for teachers and follow-up on-site support. Schools should exercise their professional autonomy to plan staff development that can best integrate school development with teachers' professional growth for the ultimate goal of improving student learning.

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[9]   A "Learning Circle" devised by the Teachers' Network in Singapore is a group of about 5 - 10 teacher-practitioners who voluntarily come together to collaboratively identify and solve common problems, challenge assumptions and address real classroom concerns. Their intention is to improve their classroom practice.

CHAPTER 5

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 In this chapter, ACTEQ puts forward its interim recommendations in order to further enhance teachers' professional development. The recommendations are based on the findings of various studies, data analyses, observations, school visits, interviews with stakeholders, reflection and deliberation since the release of "CPD Document 2003".

Professional Discretion

5.2 **Professional discretion is by design central to effective CPD.** CPD by definition is a professional endeavour, which entails professional judgement and professional discretion. By design, professional discretion is a central theme underlying the teachers' CPD framework released in November 2003. Schools and teachers are expected to exercise autonomy and professional decision for CPD. This is why, in the course of institutionalising teachers' CPD practices and building a CPD culture in schools, ACTEQ has been adopting a "soft-landing" approach from the outset, i.e. *not* to impose any rigid requirements or a set of regulations on teachers, but to achieve a basic common understanding so that CPD can be affirmed as a shared goal among professional teachers. The underpinning rationale of this approach is the flexible interpretation of the quantity and intensity of CPD and the discretionary choice of the mode of CPD. This "soft-landing" approach aims to facilitate the realisation of the spirit of the teachers' CPD framework: trust in and reliance on the professionals, and hence teachers' professional autonomy and school-based decisions in CPD-related matters. The ultimate objective is to advance teachers' professionalism for school development and hence to improve student learning.

5.3 **Plurality and diversity are by nature inherent in CPD activities.** The three-year "try-out period" put forward in "CPD Document 2003" aims to encourage teachers and schools to undertake different kinds of CPD that can meet their professional needs and aspirations. Teachers' attention is drawn to the substance of CPD and its impact on student learning and school development. At the same time, EMB has made it clear that it is *not* prepared to audit the CPD hours engaged in by each and every teacher. With the soft target of not less than 150 hours in three years, schools and teachers are given space to take responsibility for their own professional learning. They need to conceive their own target goals and therefore have to exercise professional judgement. Plurality is respected. Hence, there is a wide range of activities including academic courses, seminars and talks, sharing, cross-school activities, professional conferences, research and planning, and so on.

5.4 **The soft target of not less than 150 hours in three years creates a constructive pressure.**

Based on the information gathered so far, there are few problems for the majority of teachers to engage in 150 CPD hours in a three-year period. The CPD hours normally include attendance at the three staff development days and scheduled school-based sharing of teaching experience, participation in school-based projects, EMB-organised seminars, workshops and training courses of different duration, enrolling in formal programmes for upgrading qualifications and personal capabilities, and engaging in education-related services recognised by schools. In case teachers have difficulties in attaining the soft target, ACTEQ works with EMB to examine the difficulties encountered and tries to provide the necessary support. As no sanctions are imposed, the target of 150 CPD hours in three years acts as a constructive "pressure" for the entire teaching force.

5.5 **Issuing top-down guidelines is avoided.** ACTEQ is aware of the fact that when schools and teachers exercise professional autonomy in planning CPD and developing their systems of recognition of CPD activities, differences are bound to occur. There are concerns about the different "treatment" of CPD activities by different schools, and some practitioners consider it unfair for a certain CPD activity to be recognised by one school but not by another. Thus, there are suggestions that EMB should issue "guidelines" on handling CPD matters for all schools to follow. ACTEQ's view is that teachers and schools know best what is most suitable for their professional development, and hence should enjoy discretion. The imposition of regulations or guidelines on all schools would deprive teachers of opportunities to exercise their professional judgement and make decisions. Worse still, undertaking CPD might easily become a superficial act of conforming to extraneous requirements.

5.6 In sum, research findings and actual field experience suggest that this model has been working well. *It is thus recommended that*

(a) The soft target of not less than 150 hours in three years should be maintained because this soft indicator is important in order to put CPD on the agenda;

(b) The "soft-landing" approach through which CPD is implemented should be maintained as a matter of spirit;

(c) School-based professional autonomy is to be relied on so that teachers and schools can plan and undergo CPD specific to the person and appropriate to the school at a particular time. In planning effective professional development at the school level, the school management and staff have to show full commitment and make concerted efforts to build a climate of trust and open frank communication channels for discussion and exchanges;

(d) Based on our knowledge about practices in schools, effective measures may include:

- Empowering a special committee or a specific organisational framework to oversee staff development work within the school. The committee can serve the dual functions of planning and organising school-based professional development activities for teachers and acting as a bridge between the school management and staff. The function of a bridge is especially important for the dissemination of information and collection of views in the process of formulating a school-based CPD policy and setting up a related mechanism to handle CPD matters;

- Entrusting coordinators of CPD with the role of stimulating colleagues to study current sound professional development practices and see how such practices can be adapted to suit school needs;

- Soliciting external support such as inviting policy-makers and academics from tertiary institutions to schools to conduct sharing related to schools' developmental priorities and needs, and to give on-site follow-up support; and

- Adopting a two-way approach, i.e. both "top-down" and "bottom-up", throughout the process of developing a school-based CPD policy.

(e) ACTEQ envisages further recommendations as the "try-out period" evolves. The following issues have emerged so far, and will merit further investigation:

- Sustained professional and collegial sharing;

- Nurturing the culture of portfolio-building as a valuable aid to professional growth;

- Support for CPD coordinators;

- Teachers' capacity for change in relation to CPD; and

- The role of tertiary institutions in promoting the TCF.

School Leadership for CPD

5.7   **CPD as an important component of school plans.** Principals and senior management staff need to integrate school development needs with teachers' CPD. Their leadership is obviously crucial to effective CPD planning and development. They are expected to draw up a holistic school development plan of which teacher professional development is an integral part. They need to envision professional learning beyond attending formal courses outside school hours, and formulate effective strategies to bring about staff's professional development.

5.8   **Sensitivity to teachers' needs.** One of teachers' major concerns is principals' preparedness to make room for CPD and to make particular arrangements for it. Principals need to be sensitive to educational trends and respond proactively to educational initiatives, so that they can help teachers plan their CPD effectively to address their present and future development needs.

5.9   *It is thus recommended that*

(a)   The professional leadership of both serving principals and newly appointed principals should continue to be strengthened in the realm of CPD; and

(b)   Principals should be encouraged to engage in on-going sharing and give support among each other in the course of taking forward teachers' CPD. Since schools are at different stages of development, it is important for schools that have moved at a quicker pace in developing a school-based staff development policy to share their experience with schools that are at the starting point or have encountered difficulties on the way.

Teacher Participation as a Benchmark for Effective CPD

5.10   **Teachers' needs vis-à-vis school needs.** The responsibility for professional learning falls on teachers themselves. In the face of the curriculum reform and changes in the wider community, teachers are expected to plan their CPD strategically so that their professional learning can help prepare them for the challenges. Teachers draw up professional development needs based on systematic self-evaluation. When formulating CPD plans, teachers should integrate their needs with school development needs, and there should be effective two-way communication between them and the school management.

5.11 **Teachers' participation in planning CPD.** There is a growing trend for teacher participation in drawing up staff development plans. While teachers recognise increasingly that CPD is an indispensable part of their professional lives, they need supportive arrangements and encouragement so that they can take an active part in contributing to nurturing a CPD culture in school. Schools should provide teachers with sufficient opportunities to share with colleagues their learning reflections, and how they have applied the knowledge and skills acquired from CPD activities in daily teaching. They may invite CPD teams of other schools for sharing of successful experience in implementing school-based CPD policies.

5.12 **Sharing and networking.** As teachers seek and construct knowledge, their knowledge base expands. As they share their knowledge among colleagues, both within and across schools, their shared professional knowledge base expands as well. The construction of a cross-school network and community of coordinators of CPD should be greatly encouraged and supported to consolidate individual schools' efforts in implementing teachers' CPD policy. The frequent exchange of views and information among CPD coordinators can help narrow the "gaps" between schools in handling CPD matters. Above all, professional networks of cross-school CPD coordinators can help bolster the capacity of both schools and individuals to connect practices, enquire and innovate together. ACTEQ would also like to see the gradual building up of a "core" of CPD coordinators across schools. EMB may organise focus group sharing and dissemination sessions on effective CPD practices for CPD coordinators. Educational websites such as those of ACTEQ and the HKedCity can play an important role in providing a platform for daily professional exchanges and sharing among CPD coordinators.

5.13 *It is thus recommended that*

(a) Schools should support teachers in their continuing education efforts, and actively encourage them to share their professional learning and disseminate effective practices; and

(b) When formulating CPD plans, teachers should integrate their CPD needs with school development needs, for which effective communication with the school management is vital.

The Issue of Relevance in Teachers' CPD

5.14 **Increased emphasis on school-based CPD.** In the years since the release of "CPD Document 2003", most teachers have been active in undergoing CPD despite adverse factors in the larger environment, notably the decline in the student population, the resulting reduction in class numbers and even the closure of schools. "ACTEQ Study 2005" has indicated that there is increased emphasis on school-based and student-learning related CPD activities parallel to formal academic courses. The variety of CPD activities is also encouraging.

5.15 **School-based CPD activities.** As there are still occasional misinterpretations which equate professional development with attending formal training outside school, preferred emphasis on school-based CPD is deemed necessary. ACTEQ encourages the realisation of professional development with a view to effecting school improvement and student learning. It is contrary to the spirit of teachers' CPD policy if a teacher thinks that he/she has to undergo CPD at the expense of schoolwork and student learning. Teachers' CPD is an integral part of schools' initiatives in delivering quality education. If ample school-based professional development opportunities are provided by the school management, teachers will feel supported and regard this as an important incentive for engaging in professional learning and sharing activities.

5.16 **The application of TCF.** Wider application of the generic TCF can facilitate the process of taking forward school-based staff development work, as it helps provide direction and substance for teachers' CPD. By mapping the dimensions and stages of teachers' professional development with competency descriptors, schools and teachers can draw useful reference on how to advance towards professional excellence through CPD. Teacher education institutions can also be encouraged to include the generic TCF in their programmes for initial and in-service teacher training to help teachers become familiar with the application of the framework.

5.17 *It is thus recommended that*

   (a) Schools should appropriately organise school-based CPD activities to make them relevant to teachers' professional lives. The following practices are for schools' reference:

   • Administrative arrangements can be made to make room for teacher professional development activities on the school timetable, and regular sharing sessions can be held during subject panel meetings or on a school day with early release of students;

- There can be creative use of class time through block scheduling to create more space for teachers' participation in CPD; and

- The provision of inviting physical space for teacher learning in schools helps send a powerful message about the importance attached to CPD by the school management.

(b) Wider use of the TCF in planning school-based staff development work should continue to be promoted. The following measures can be adopted:

- Continuous dissemination work is needed to enable frontline practitioners, especially CPD coordinators, to develop an in-depth understanding of the TCF; and

- More opportunities should be provided for the sharing of experience in the application of the TCF among schools.

The Issue of Quality in Teachers' CPD

5.18   Because of the close relationship between the quality of education in schools and the quality of professional learning opportunities available to teachers, the quality of teachers' CPD assumes prime importance. While a great variety of CPD activities are offered to teachers, how can one tell whether these are of good quality? Some principals and teachers have expressed concerns about the quality of training programmes run by local educational institutions and a wish for the quality of such programmes to be monitored.

5.19   It is understandable that when teachers begin to shift their concern from CPD quantity to quality, they might expect a set of standards of or even parameters for quality CPD that are commonly understood and agreed on by the profession. Moreover, however busy their work is, teachers and school administrators need to face the task of evaluating the effects of CPD.

5.20   There should be further efforts to identify criteria for quality CPD or develop parameters for describing effective CPD. ACTEQ is fully aware of the complications involved in defining quality. It has no intention to dictate quality among course providers or in schools through administrative measures only.

5.21 *It is thus recommended that*

(a) Organisations (both schools and course providers) that provide professional learning opportunities for teachers should strengthen the mechanisms for self-evaluation and self-improvement so that teachers' CPD is worthwhile and of good quality;

(b) Clear messages can be sent to course providers urging them to focus on quality and relevance, rather than enrolment and incomes; and

(c) ACTEQ and other researchers can conduct more in-depth studies on quality issues and share the findings with frontline practitioners.

Concluding Remarks

5.22 The release of "CPD Document 2003" and the concomitant teachers' CPD framework has led to a new level of attention to CPD among educators. ACTEQ is most thankful for the views and concerns raised by stakeholders, as these provide stimuli and insights for revisiting the CPD framework and the pertinent issues involved, reviewing the strategy adopted and facilitating reflection in the interim. There is good reason to feel assured that we are moving in the right direction in promoting teachers' professional learning. We will continue to collaborate with stakeholders in sustaining teachers' continued professional growth.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TEACHER EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS (1 JUNE 2005 TO 31 MAY 2006)

Name	School/ Organisation
1. Prof CHENG Kai-ming, SBS, JP (Chairman)	The University of Hong Kong
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12. Dr WONG May-may, JP	Tack Ching Girls' Secondary School
13. Sister WONG Yeuk-han, Cecilia	Sacred Heart Canossian School
14. Rev YUEN Tin-yau	The Methodist Church, Hong Kong
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TEACHERS' CPD

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9. Rev YUEN Tin-yau	The Methodist Church, Hong Kong
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"ACTEQ STUDY 2005" ON TEACHERS' CPD

Research Design and Methods

1.   In terms of research design and methods, "ACTEQ Study 2005" was conducted in three stages as follows:

  • Stage 1: Qualitative Analysis –

    Five semi-structured individual interviews and one focus group meeting involving educators, principals and teachers were conducted to collect qualitative data for the design of questions to be included in the quantitative survey. The data were then analysed, and used to provide a detailed description of the items under each of the eight themes researched into.

  • Stage 2: Development and Pilot Testing of the Questionnaire –

    Two respective questionnaires were designed and developed for completion by principals and teachers to collect information about the implementation of teachers' CPD at both the school level and individual teachers' level. The information collected from the interviews had served as a foundation for developing the first draft of the questionnaires, which were reviewed by members of the focus group interview and by academic experts. In addition to the collection of quantitative information about principals' and teachers' views on teachers' CPD, one open-ended question was included in each of the questionnaires so as to collect other qualitative views on teachers' CPD from the two groups of respondents.

  • Stage 3: Cross-sectional Survey –

    A two-stage stratified sampling strategy was adopted in the data collection process. Around 40% of local primary and secondary schools, i.e. 200 secondary and 320 primary schools, were selected at random. One copy of the principal questionnaire and 15 copies of the teacher questionnaire were then sent to each selected school, i.e. about 25% of teachers in each school were invited to complete the teacher questionnaire. 520 copies of the principal questionnaire and 7,800 copies of the teacher questionnaire were sent out. Completed questionnaires were returned under confidential cover.

Collection of Questionnaires

2.   Responses from 334 schools[10] were received. The response rate of 64.2% can be considered satisfactory. 305 copies of the principal questionnaire and 4,185 copies of the teacher questionnaire were valid. Of these, 12.1% (506 copies) of the teacher questionnaire and 15.1% (46 copies) of the principal questionnaire contained respondents' views on teachers' CPD as written responses to the open-ended questions. These views were categorised for further qualitative analysis, and served as references and supplementary information for providing recommendations in the research team's report.

The Questionnaires

3.   For the two questionnaires designed for completion by teachers and principals, please refer to Appendix D of the Chinese version of this Report.

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[10]   These included 188 primary schools, 126 secondary schools, 18 special schools, and 2 schools of other types.