

## INNOVATION IN TEACHER TRAINING AND MENTORING IN THE CURRENT PERIOD - ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

**Dinh Xuan Khoa, Pham Minh Hung**

*Vinh University*

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**Abstract:** It is undeniable that teacher training and mentoring innovation in the current period is a necessity to form and develop teaching staff with sufficient quantity, improved quality and consistent structure. The renewal also enhances teacher's quality to implement new curriculum and textbooks as well as contributes to the national fundamental and comprehensive education reform. The paper analyses the existing issues of teacher training and mentoring, then proposes solutions to improve the training and mentoring effectiveness in order to meet the requirements of fundamental and comprehensive education reform.

### FOREGROUND

It is clear that standardization is a common trend in the world. In developed countries, all areas, including economy, society, science, culture, education, etc. have been developed, improved and evaluated based on specific and transparent standards.

The doctrine of 11<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Communist Party affirms that: “The fundamental and comprehensive education reform of Vietnam in the direction of standardization, modernization, socialization, democratization and international integration, among these, reform of educational management regime, development of teaching staff and managerial staff is a key phase” [2; p. 130-131].

In order to develop a standardized national education, it requires formulating standards for educational institutions, for managerial staff and teachers, for levels in the national education system. More importantly, such standards must be used in the orientation of establishing educational institutions; developing

curriculum; enhancing competency of teachers and managerial staff.

In the context of national fundamental and comprehensive education reform and international integration, the necessity of innovation in teacher training and mentoring is more urgent. It is impossible to gain an advanced education without teaching staff who have been trained and mentored under advanced content, methods and models.

The Resolution of the 8th plenum of the Communist Party of Viet Nam Central Committee (Tenure XI) emphasizes that “Innovating deeply training goals, contents, methods, retraining, fostering and evaluating learning results and practices of teachers under requirements of improving quality, responsibility, ethics and professional competency” [3; p. 137]

### **1. Current situation of teacher training and mentoring**

Pedagogy plays an important role in human resources training for the national education system. Over 71 years, pedagogical sector and pedagogical departments/institutions have strived and overcome difficulties and accomplished

emulation of good teaching and learning, as well as fulfill important tasks assigned by the Party and State. Outstandingly, pedagogical institutions have provided a large amount of teachers and educational managerial staff for the nation. Basically, the staff meets requirements of raising public intellection, human resource training, talent mentoring and contributes into the victory of national construction and defense.

However, under the requirement of education reform, pedagogical institutions/departments have still had several shortcomings and inadequacies as follows:

*- There is separation between teaching professional knowledge and practice for students*

There are two knowledge areas in training contents of pedagogical institutions/departments, namely basic science and educational science. Two knowledge areas support mutually and orient to form profession for learners. However, many pedagogical institutions/departments have not taught students how to apply basic science knowledge in teaching at schools. Meanwhile, training in educational science has not associate with contents of subjects and activities which students must teach and engage in schools. Development of knowledge foundation of teaching profession and practice in order to form and develop of practical skill of teaching has not been concerned properly for a long time.

*- Role of teaching methodology teachers has not been appreciated*

It is perceived inadequately in pedagogical institutions/departments about roles of teaching methodology teachers and subjects. It is thought that

teaching methodology is not a science sector and only practise several professional skills; that anybody with basic science level is able to teach methodology and that students who learn well will teach well, etc. Therefore, if a lecturer is evaluated as being limited in teaching and scientific research, she/he will be transferred to teaching methodology subject. If a head of teaching methodology's qualification is doctor, his/her major is not teaching methodology. That's why the image of teaching methodology lecturers in pedagogical institutions/departments is hidden. They themselves have feeling of smugness and inferiority complex.

*- Fostering ideal and morality for students has not been focused*

In higher education institutions, and especially pedagogical institutions/departments, students do not study morality but they must aware properly moral values, most importantly professional morality. For teaching occupation, professional morality is more essential. Pedagogical students must be mentored with professional ideal, have a strong attachment with teaching; comply with education law, rules, regulations of education and training sector; have a sense of discipline and responsibility; keep their quality, prestige and honor; live in honest and sound manner and be a good example for students; love, respect and behave equally with students; help students to overcome challenges in their learning, etc. However, for many reasons, institutions have not paid attention to such issue. Some pedagogical students violates discipline within learning period; and some students do not realize their great honor and responsibility in their human teaching activity.

*- Content of pedagogical training has not adapted requirements of school education*

The sentence “*Pedagogical goes after school*” has existed for a long time in our national education. It reflect backward of teacher training institutions with high schools. It is obvious that while high schools have conducted many changes in terms of programs, teaching methods, evaluation methods, etc., many pedagogical institutions have been “*standstill*” and focused on only “*methodical*” works for dozens of years without any change. Lively environment in high school has not been reflected into occupational training content of pedagogical schools. Therefore, outcomes of pedagogical students lack of many professional skill required in high schools.

*- It is too slow to innovate training methods, test and evaluation methods for students’ learning results*

Although pedagogical institutions/departments have paid attention to and invested in renewal of teaching methodology and test and evaluation methods but it has not been effective and has not gained a significant change. Application of active teaching methodologies in institutions/departments is still limited and formalism. The current teaching method in many pedagogical institutions mainly focuses on “*teacher-centered*” approach, one-way transmission of knowledge; accordingly, students have become passive in receiving lessons. Pedagogical institutions/departments have not played their roles in forming typical example for schools regarding to teaching methodology and evaluation methods.

*- Research on educational science has been inadequate*

Research on educational science in pedagogical institutions has not contributed to solving pedagogical institutions’ issues, and formed rationale basis for planning strategies and polices of educational development of the Party and the State.

For lecturers, scientific research tasks has not been appreciated properly and linked between postgraduate works with scientific research. Research products has not applied or still applied limitedly in its institutions only.

*- Teacher fostering has not brought about real effectiveness*

Although teacher fostering has been concerned by Ministry of Education and Training and educational managerial level over the past years, it has not meet properly and soundly the actual demand of teachers at levels. Many subjects and content of teacher fostering has not derived from difficulties and challenges of teachers in teaching and educating pupils. In addition, method and form of teacher fostering and result evaluation has not proper with each subject, specific conditions of each locality, etc.

## **2. Solutions of improving teacher training and mentoring effectiveness**

### ***2.1. Reforming teacher training and mentoring goals***

Teacher training and mentoring must meet requirements of learning outcomes, i.e. necessary competencies and qualifications which enables students to well-perform teaching tasks and their roles of educator, independent educational researcher and solve arising problems.

Goals of teacher training and mentoring must focus on high adaptability with requirements of educational reform

and development; change of roles of teachers in the modern society. It is said that goals of teacher training must be stable with core values of teaching profession and be “dynamic” in order to develop new contextual qualifications of teachers.

## **2.2. Advantages of teacher training model in multi-sector universities.**

Previously, teachers used to train in pedagogical institutions. However, due to development trend of higher education, most of specialized universities have changed into multi-sector ones, including pedagogical institutions.

In the world, 30 years ago, there was no pedagogical institution in Finland. Teachers have been trained in all universities. In case, a student who graduates with excellent grade for one major (corresponding to subject in high schools), wants to become a teacher, he/she will study pedagogical profession for 1-2 years. For grade 1-6, teachers must be master in education and for grade 7-12, teachers must be scientific master. Thanks to the model, Finland has gained a best teaching staff in the world which made a “PISA shock”.

In Vietnam, in the 1990s, it is stated that “*Pedagogical institutions not only train teachers but also others; Teachers are not only trained in pedagogical institutions but also in others.*” With the policy, many pedagogical institutions has transferred into multi-sector training; many institutions which were not pedagogical ones has joined in teacher training activity. The image of teacher training has been added with many new colors.

In this context, the Vinh Teacher Training University has been changed into Vinh University by the Prime

Minister in 2001. From this, Vinh University has transferred into multi-sector training. When it transferred into multi-sector training, many its staff and teachers were doubtful: Whether in case of transferring into multi-sector training, its “*pedagogical characters*” is *hidden*? Whether pedagogical prestige and tradition over forty years is *overshadowed*?

In fact, its 15 years of multi-sector training has clarified such doubts. Teacher training in multi-sectorial university does not remove its character but affirms its scientific basis and feasibility of teacher training model in multi-sectorial university.

With regards to advantages of training mode, pedagogical training majors may make use of strengths from non-pedagogical training majors, including creativeness, diversity of culture and technology, etc. in order to equip students with a foundation of stable technology, science and culture knowledge. Pedagogical lecturers are facilitated to exchange with other non-pedagogical majors, etc. In addition, teacher training in multi-sector universities also supports for non-pedagogical lecturers with theoretical and practical teaching methodology and techniques.

Therefore, it should not be inflexible with the conception that *Teachers must be trained in pedagogical institutions and pedagogical institutions only train teachers*. Among current higher education teacher training institutions, only two institutions, namely Hanoi National University of Education and Ho Chi Minh City University of Pedagogy are pedagogy-majored one. However, according to their mission and vision as well as practice, they are multi-major

training ones [4, 5]. Other pedagogical institutions such as Thai Nguyen University of Education, Hue University of Education, University of Danang - University of Science and Education are multi-sectorial institutions in the region.

### **2.3. Reforming teacher training and mentoring content and program**

#### **2.3.1. Teacher training content and program**

Teacher training content and program must be restructured and redesigned in order to develop their necessary professional abilities to adapt real requirements of high school education. Thence, teacher training content must pay special attention to pedagogical operations (PO) for students in three aspects, including duration, content and program.

- **Duration:** PO must account for 25-30% of the entire content and program.

- **Content:** it must focus on forming following essential abilities: Understand core concepts, search engines, structure of subjects and be able to make such factors meaningful to their pupils; understand the way pupils study and develop, and be able to create conditions to facilitate their pupils' intellectual and personal development; understand differences of learning way among pupils and form teaching methods in line with various pupils; understand and use diversified teaching methods to encourage the development of critical thinking, problem-solving and action skills for pupils; apply their knowledge about personal and group behavior and motivation in order to create a social-interactive learning environment, actively join in learning process; apply their knowledge of oral, non-oral communication techniques and other

effective information media into creating active search, support and cooperation in classrooms; make teaching plans on the basis of subject, pupil, communication and program objectives; understand and use formal and informal evaluation methods in order to determine and assure continuous mental, social and physical development for pupils; know how to evaluate effectiveness of their actions and selections to pupils, parents, colleagues, experts in an education community; actively search professional development opportunity; know how to develop relations with colleagues, parents and other organization in a big community in order to support learning process and benefit for pupils, etc.

- **Program** should be restructured. Following credits may be integrated: 1) Organizing psycho-physical development activity for children/pupils (Primary, junior high school and high schools); 2) Organizing teaching activities in schools (Primary, junior high school and high schools); 3) Organizing educational activities in schools ((Primary, junior high school and high schools); 4) Organizing creative experience activities in schools (Primary schools, junior high school and high schools); 5) Organizing evaluation and test activities in schools (Primary, junior high school and high schools) etc.

#### **2.3.2. Teacher mentoring content and program**

Teacher mentoring content and program must be comprehensive, including political ideal, morality, knowledge and pedagogical skill.

- *Determining groups of teacher mentoring content*

Teacher mentoring contents may classified into following groups:

+ ) Competency and qualification to adopt high level of professional standards;

+) Competency and qualification under title standards, and operational standards;

+) Competency and qualification to adopt requirements of school education reform and program and textbook reform as well.

- *Developing teacher mentoring specific subjects*

On the basis of teacher mentoring content groups, it must identify teacher mentoring specific subjects.

There should have following teacher mentoring specific subjects:

**Specific Subject No. 1. Combining knowledge teaching, moral teaching with professional orientation in pedagogical activities of teachers**

The specific subject should focus on following issues:

- Meaning of combining knowledge teaching, moral teaching with professional orientation in pedagogical activities of teachers;

- Essence of combining knowledge teaching, moral teaching with professional orientation in pedagogical activities of teachers;

- Methods and ways to improve effectiveness of combining knowledge teaching, moral teaching with professional orientation in pedagogical activities of teachers;

- Combining knowledge teaching, moral teaching with professional orientation in pedagogical activities of teachers for levels (primary school, junior high school and high school)

**Specific Subject No. 2. Integrated teaching and individualized teaching in new programs and textbooks**

The specific subject should focus on following issues:

- Meaning and essence of integrated teaching and individualized teaching in

primary school, junior high school and high school;

- Organizing process of integrated teaching and individualized teaching in primary school, junior high school and high school;

- Requirements of knowledge, skill for teachers in charge of integrated teaching and individualized teaching primary school, junior high school and high school;

***Specific Subject No. 3. Organizing creative experience (CE) activities for pupils***

The specific subject should focus on following issues:

- Meaning and features of CE activities

- Content, form, and way of organizing CE activities for primary school, junior high school and high school (instruct pupils to conduct technical and scientific research; organize clubs, voluntary activities, charity activities, social activities; search occupations, etc.)

- Evaluating result of CE activities of primary school, junior high school and high school);

- Cooperation between schools and localities in organizing CE activities for pupils.

**Specific Subject No. 4. Organizing comprehensive development of human dignity for pupils**

The specific subject should focus on following issues:

- Meaning and essence of organizing comprehensive development of human dignity for pupils;

- Purposes, requirement, content, way of organizing comprehensive development of human dignity for pupils.

- Requirements for teachers in primary school, junior high school, high

school in relation with comprehensive development of human dignity.

**Specific Subject No. 5.** Reform of teaching method, form, and facility in new school education program

The specific subject should focus on following issues:

- Purposes and requirements of reform of teaching method, form, and means;
- Orientation of reform of teaching method, form, and means;
- Organizing implementation of reform of teaching method, form, and means in primary school, junior high school, high school;
- Evaluating result of reform of teaching method, form, and means in primary school, junior high school, high school;

**Specific Subject No. 6. Reform of test and evaluation of education quality in new school education program**

The specific subject should focus on following issues:

- Purposes, and requirements of reform of education quality test and evaluation;
- Orientation of reform of education quality test and evaluation;
- Organizing implementation of reform of education quality test and evaluation methods in primary school, junior high school, high school;

Apart from common specific subjects, specialized subjects for each subjects and types of teachers must be developed. Teacher mentoring organization must be researched and tested based on practical summary over years. It is said that it must combine with application of IT, communication with traditional methods in continuous, regular and school-based manner for core teachers. Core teachers will mentor other teachers in schools. As

a result, teacher mentoring will be implemented in wide and stable manner to adapt the fundamental and comprehensive education and training reform under the Resolution 29<sup>th</sup> of Communist Party of Viet Nam Central Committee (11<sup>th</sup> Tenure).

#### ***2.4. Reforming teacher training and mentoring methods***

##### *i) Combining closely basic science training with educational science training*

There are two major knowledge areas in training contents, namely basic science (BS) and educational science (ES). Two knowledge areas support mutually and orient to form profession for learners. Therefore, BS and ES should be integrated into a consistent system. Professional training must ensures operational feature and operational training must base on professional training. Hence, it should mobilize teaching staff of BS to actively participate in pedagogical operation (PO) for students.

##### *ii) Attaching PO training to reality in Schools*

Based on school reality (psycho-physical characters of pupils, textbooks, teaching and learning conditions, content and method of PO training for students are determined. At the same time, based on pedagogical features of teachers, requirements of qualification and competencies of teachers under professional standards are identified so that PO practice program will form such qualification and competencies for students. Specifically, it will form professional ideals, work passion, enthusiasm; basic and systematic training of pedagogical competencies for students; lecturers of PO subjects must be close to general schools. As a result, knowledge to

be provided to students will be useful. Therefore, pedagogical institutions must have rigid regulation on tour trips to schools for lecturers of PO subjects and must encourage them to directly engaging in teaching some periods in schools.

*iii) Developing a process of PO practice for students.*

PO training not only provides students with educational science knowledge but also forms necessary pedagogical skills: pupil teaching and education; cooperating with educators, family and society; research educational science; self-study to improve their qualification, etc. Such skills are only developed in continuous PO practice through practical activity and probation.

Therefore, a process of PO practice for students must be formulated; it must clearly identify specific works students must conduct from the first year to the final year. The practical process must be consistent with training content of each academic year and entire course.

*iv) Creating favorable environment of PO practice for students*

Effectiveness of PO practice of students depends mainly on environment factors: “*Perceived environment*” in pedagogical institutions and “*actual environment*” in schools. In a perceived environment, students practice

pedagogical skills with “assumed objects”. Practice result in such environment will have big impact on practice on actual environment. Therefore, it should facilitate students to practice pedagogical skills with inter-curriculum, extra-curriculum, group activities, social activities, etc. However, it must clarify importance of PO practice in an “actual environment.” which should not be limited in probations only. Students should practise in real environment soon. It requires constructing school of pedagogy practice under institutions and it should consider that investment in school of pedagogy practice is similar to investments in modern labs of experimental departments.

## CONCLUSION

Innovation in teacher training and mentoring is a necessary requirement. The reform must base on the orientations of teachers and managerial staff development stated in the Resolution 29-NQ/TW by the Communist Party of Viet Nam Central Committee (11<sup>th</sup> tenure). At the same time, it must result from change of teachers’ role in the modern society.

In order to improve effectiveness of teacher training and mentoring reform, it must apply consistently all solutions mentioned above.

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## **TÓM TẮT**

### **ĐỔI MỚI ĐÀO TẠO, BỒI DƯỠNG GIÁO VIÊN TRONG GIAI ĐOẠN HIỆN NAY - THỰC TRẠNG VÀ GIẢI PHÁP**

Đổi mới đào tạo, bồi dưỡng giáo viên trong giai đoạn hiện nay là một yêu cầu cấp thiết nhằm xây dựng và phát triển đội ngũ giáo viên đủ về số lượng, đồng bộ về cơ cấu, nâng cao chất lượng đảm bảo thực hiện chương trình và sách giáo khoa mới; góp phần đổi mới căn bản, toàn diện giáo dục và đào tạo nước nhà. Trên cơ sở làm rõ thực trạng đào tạo, bồi dưỡng giáo viên trong những năm qua, bài báo đề xuất các giải pháp nâng cao hiệu quả đổi mới đào tạo, bồi dưỡng giáo viên đáp ứng yêu cầu đổi mới căn bản, toàn diện giáo dục nước nhà.