

Chapter 15

Scaffolding New Teacher– Trainers Through a Hybrid Co–Training Model From a Transnational Higher Education Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Despite the potentials of collaborative work for enhancing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) of professionals, the educational field lacks a clear model for co-training. This article aims to develop a conceptual framework for this collaborative professional development (PD) strategy to help novice teacher trainers (TTs) grow professionally. Although a lot has been written in the educational literature about co-teaching, there are merely few self-reported reflections about the use of co-training, and it is not clear how to adopt it as a tool for TTs' PD. In an attempt to fill in this gap, a proposed co-training model is constructed based on the philosophy of co-teaching, novice TTs' needs in terms of KSA, and their role-competency in the training room. These concepts are integrated to design a co-training model that is expected to help in scaffolding novice TTs. The author argues that this model, if properly implemented, can support novice TTs.

1. INTRODUCTION

Professional development (PD) in the educational field has attracted unprecedented attention by policy-makers, researchers and individuals. This is evident from the extraordinary consideration given to the PD of teachers in both stages (pre-service and in-service), and in presenting the importance of PD in all its shapes (top-down and bottom-up, individual and collaborative, etc.). Acknowledging the importance

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of in-service PD tools, educators should not only be encouraged to adopt these but, more importantly, should be efficiently introduced to these tools in order to garner the most out of them and to maximize their learning. PD is also seen as an integral part of transnational education, as it involves the negotiation of teaching practices and pedagogical values (Tran et al., 2021).

In transnational higher education (TNE), the PD of the host countries' institutional professionals is imperative to ensure the quality of programme delivery. Quality assurance dictates the readiness of the host country to deliver the HE programmes. "[T]he primary responsibility of the quality assurance agency is to ensure that institutions are approved to deliver HE programmes" (Knight & McNamara, 2017, p. 39). Considering the huge responsibilities of the lecturers, it is important to ensure the competency and abilities of this group in TNE. The impact these lecturers place on their students is huge, as TNE students reported to find "TNE as a way to improve their professional skills, thereby improving their career prospects." (Knight & McNamara, 2017, p. 39).

Pre-service teacher-trainers (hereafter referred to as TTs) play a significant role in the process of new teachers' preparation. This huge responsibility of TT in transnational higher education requires well-prepared TTs. The quality of training "relies on the professional skills of teacher trainers" (Courtney, 2007, p.322). Therefore, the preparation of new pre-service TTs should receive sufficient attention from those responsible for and involved in teacher preparation and training.

It is more likely that TTs have sufficient experience of teaching before they shift to teacher training. However, not all successful teachers make a successful shift to teacher-training, and this is due to the higher demands of the TTs' profession (Beaven 2004 and Wright & Bolitho, 2007). On the other hand, some academics lack the experience of teaching, and this affects their motivation to seek opportunities to improve their teaching skills. "The lack of teaching-related criteria for the appointment of academic staff or incentives for the development of pedagogical skills throughout their careers has the result of diminishing motivation to learn and innovate." (Inamorato et al. 2019, p. 15).

Joining TNE represents a necessity for expanding knowledge, enhancing skills and fostering positive attitudes towards the new profession. Thus, just like those in other professions, TTs need to work on their PD to cope with their duties, grow professionally, be competent, and show initiative. "[I]nsufficient PD ... of academics creates a considerable risk to the quality of higher education and, consequently, to society as a whole." (Inamorato et al. 2019, p. 5). In addition, the study of Tran et al. (2021) shows how teaching in TNE is demanding and calls for supporting new teachers in this field to overcome the challenges "with not only the academic and cultural dimensions of offshore teaching but also the development of resilience in terms of emotional wellbeing to assist them in navigating transnational experiences" (p.1).

Hence, considering the situation in TNE, there is a need for adopting effective PD tools that involve effective preparation of new TTs, which involves the academics from the host countries and the sending countries, in order to prepare new TTs and enable them to cope with their duties. Tran et al. (2021) highlight the importance of offering more situated professional learning that equips teachers with the capabilities of ... maximising the potential benefits of transnational education" (p.2). Inamorato et al. (2019) claim that for a PD design and practice to be effective in a higher education setting, it must follow certain rules, which are: offering feedback and follow up, incorporating active learning, supporting collaboration among communities of practice members, providing expert support and focusing on participants' needs. Thus, Inamorato et al. (2019) argue that there is a need for sustainability and repetitiveness of PD activities in order to provide academics with sufficient time to "learn, practice, implement, and reflect upon new teaching practices" (p.20). In transnational higher education this is crucial and can be arranged to involve locals and expats in a PD programme to maximise the benefits of the adopted PD tool.

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