Chapter 16
Promoting a Balanced Development of High Quality Teacher Resources with Network Technology:
A Theoretical and Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

In China, the availability of high quality teacher resources varies from region to region and differs even among different schools in the same region. Two approaches were taken to solve this resource problem (i.e., traditional educational support and traditional instructional research). The former approach was attempted to relieve the shortages of high quality teacher resources in resources-poor schools by sending excellent teachers to assist in instruction and school management. The latter approach was intended to improve teachers' teaching skills within resources-poor schools by conducting instructional research on the spot. However, both had little effect. What can be done to increase the availability of high quality teacher resources? What is the most effective way to improve the teachers' teaching skills? How does one find new ways to solve the problem of imbalanced allocation of high quality teacher resources? These questions have puzzled the educational professional for a long time. This chapter introduces two innovated approaches to develop high quality teacher resources by using network technology. Network-based educational research approaches allow the teachers in resource-rich schools to teach the students

of resource-poor schools through network video conference systems without leaving his or her own school. The network-based instructional research approach enables the teachers of both resource-rich and resource-poor schools to build alliances according to disciplines and to collaborate on instruction by network videoconference systems.

INTRODUCTION

Because of inequality of economic development between the east and the west as well as the urban and the rural, the dual system of financial investment policy, and urbanized orientation in basic education (Zhou, 2008), there are serious problem as a result of imbalanced allocation of high quality teacher resources, among regions and even schools in the same regions in China. Two traditional approaches were taken to solve the problem, i.e., (1) Traditional educational support, which was intended to relieve the shortages of high quality teacher resources in some schools by sending excellent teachers to these schools to assist in instruction and school management; and (2) Traditional instructional research which was designed to improve teacher's teaching skills of those schools by conducting instructional research collectively on the spot. The investment on these two approaches had yielded little results.

This chapter will illustrate two new approaches which incorporates the balanced development of high quality teacher resources with the network technology, i.e., (1) Network-based educational support, and (2) Network-based instructional research, Using Network-based educational support approach, the teacher of resource-rich schools teaches the students of resources-poor school via network video conference system without leaving his or her own school; With Network-based instructional research approach, the teachers of both resource rich and resources-poor schools build alliances according to their disciplines and collaborate instruction research through network video conference system. These two unconventional approaches will play a key role to solve the problem of imbalanced allocation of high quality

teacher resources, which has puzzled many educational professionals for so many years.

Compared with traditional educational support, network-based educational support can arouse more enthusiasm and creativity among teachers. The teacher of resource-rich schools will be more active because they need not leave his or her own places and students. Therefore, a new model of cultivating talent can be developed. Since the knowledge backgrounds are different between urban and rural students, to teach both classes at the same time will require the supporting teachers to organize both classes in such way that it promotes collaborative learning (Greer, 2009). As such, a new model for training teachers can be developed. The teachers of resource rich school are partnering with the teachers of resources-poor schools in the same discipline and the same grade. During every educational support activity, the teachers of resources-poor school will be trained, coached, and their researches can be collaborated. Consequently, the teaching and research skills of teachers in the resources-poor school will be rapidly improved after a dozen of network-based educational support activities during a semester or a school year.

BACKGROUND

Teachers are the key to the great cause of education. Teacher resources are one of the most important of all educational resources. Because of the inequality of economic development between the east and the west as well as the urban and the rural, the dual system of financial investment policy, and urbanized orientation in basic education, there are serious problem as a result

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