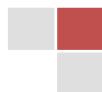




Peer Observation of Teaching as an approach for School based Teacher Professional Development: Minghang Senior High School Teachers' Perspectives

Author: Alsiddig Ismail Mohammed Abdalla
Lecturer at University of Khartoum – Faculty of Education - Sudan
Supervisor: Dr Wang Li Ke
Associate professor at East China Normal University – China

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Background of the study:

Teacher professional development is regarded as one of the key factors that help in achieving quality in education, especially in the developing and less developed countries where a large number of teachers do not have any teacher education, and education institutions are still dependent to great extent on the traditional methods in teacher preparation.

This study mainly aimed at exploring (Minghang Senior High School – Shanghai - China) teachers' views on using peer observation of teaching as an approach for school based professional development and knowing the extent of its effectiveness in enhancing teaching practice according to their views. As it also aimed at investigating the extent of teachers' perception for how peer observation of teaching is done.

The study questions:

The researcher attempted to achieve the study objectives through answering the following questions:

1- What are the views of teachers at (Minghang) senior high school on using peer observation of teaching as an approach for teacher professional development?

2- To what extent could peer observation of teaching be effective in improving teaching practice at high schools?

3- To what extent do teachers at (Minghang) senior high school perceive how peer observation of teaching is done?

To achieve the study objectives, both the quantitative and qualitative method were used. A closed-open ended five scales Likert type of questionnaire was designed by the researcher and administered to a randomly selected sample of 48% out of total population of 200 male and female teachers in Minhang Senior High School in Minhang district, Shanghai, China

The researcher has used SPSS software for data analysis, and he has calculated the percentage, mean and standard deviation, in addition to descriptive analysis for the participants' personal information.

Main findings:

The findings of this study reflected that Minhang Senior High School teachers hold positive views toward using peer observation of teaching as an approach for teacher professional development and they believe that it does enhance teaching practice through exchange of expertise and discussion among teachers, in addition to promoting collegial and collaborative work environment in the school.

On the other hand, the study revealed that some teachers are lacked of good knowledge on how peer observation of teaching could better be carried out, and they are in need of training on how to participate in it.

Other significant findings are that peer observation in the school is facing difficulties of lack of sufficient time because of timetable clashes, and lack of condensed and profound feedback. Therefore, the school should pay more attention to these issues for more effective and beneficial peer observation.

Recommendations:

In the light of the findings yielded by the study, the researcher set the following recommendations for better improvement of peer observation **practice**:

- 1- Peer observation of teaching should be organized and practiced within teachers working hours, not in their free time,
- 2- Peer classroom observation should better be organized under the supervision of school administration at the beginning, and then gradually left to teachers to organize and practice it by themselves,
- 3- Training workshops on peer observation of teaching should be held for teachers and it should be supported by professionals and more experienced teachers, and
- 4- More emphasis should be stressed on feedback given in peer classroom observation.
- 5- The necessity of promoting collaborative work culture among teachers, to reduce anxiety and stresses caused by the observation

Limitations:

The findings of this study reflect peer observation of teaching status only in the school where the study was carried out; therefore, the results are limited and not applicable to elsewhere. Due to lack of time and good knowledge about areas there in China; it was very difficult for the researcher to widen the study population to more than one school, which would be more credible and more valuable.