

Chapter 5

Development of an Effective Staff Professional Development for the Enhancement of Student Learning

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Abstract Higher education institutions around the world have increasingly been concerned with staff professional development (SPD) programmes for academic and teaching (A/T) staff. Since its establishment in 1994, an education university in Hong Kong (which we will refer to as the University) has offered primarily teacher education to foster the development of quality teachers. To meet the demand for students' holistic and whole-person development for the twenty-first century, the University has sought to broaden the range of programmes offered, introducing the concept of 'Education-Plus'. Under the 'Education-Plus' vision, the University has been expanding non-education programmes rapidly since 2010. Many new A/T staff with limited teaching experience have been recruited, needing professional development (PD) to enhance their skills and knowledge. Since 2013, the Centre for Learning, Teaching and Technology (LTTC) has designed and developed an SPD programme to allow A/T staff to enrich their PD and ultimately enhance student learning. The evaluation of the current SPD programme activities revealed that the PD activities were beneficial to A/T's teaching and their PD, but the question has arisen as to whether the current SPD programme is effective, e.g. whether A/T staff have obtained and applied new knowledge and skills to teaching. This paper will discuss the design of the current SPD programme and analyze its activities. The design outlined in 'Three Stages of Professional Development: The Cycle of Change' (Bellanca, 2009) will be referred to in order to develop an

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effective SPD programme. The paper will also design and propose a framework to evaluate the effectiveness of the SPD programme and its implementation cycle.

Keywords Staff professional development · Staff induction · Higher education

5.1 Introduction

For more than ten years, the higher education sector has highlighted the need for PD programmes. The sector has also been concerned with high-quality PD as a central component for the improvement of education at tertiary institutions (Guskey, 2002). Indeed, the establishment and implementation of SPD programmes for A/T staff have been of increasing concern among higher education institutions around the world, since SPD is a significant mechanism for developing and enhancing learning and teaching in higher education. On the other hand, research findings related to teachers' perspectives of success showed that most teachers considered their success depending on their students' behaviours and activities (Fullen, 1999; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Harootunian & Yargar, 1980). Similarly, Guskey (2002) pointed out that teachers usually considered that 'becoming a better teacher means enhancing student learning outcomes' (p. 382), and high-quality teachers can impact student learning substantially (Strong, 2009). Furthermore, teaching at the tertiary education level is increasingly demanding, as students are expected to learn not only subject disciplines, but also more general skills, such as problem-solving, communication and global perspectives. The literature suggests that teaching quality and a successful SPD programme can improve student learning outcomes. Therefore, provision of PD for A/T staff is essential to the institutions.

The framework of scholarship of learning and teaching (SoLT), discussed in Chap. 1, mentioned that in order to improve student learning, A/T staff should be engaged in SoLT. The University should play an important role in supporting A/T staff's engagement, including providing PD opportunities to A/T staff. Therefore, offering a SPD programme is essential to the University's successful implementation of SoLT and enhancement of A/T staff's PD, e.g. improving their teaching skills and strategies and ultimately enlightening student learning outcomes.

5.1.1 *Why Did Current Peer Support Provision Need to Change?*

Mentoring and peer support is a crucial component of SPD programme by which A/T staff improve their teaching through knowledge- and experience-sharing. Research has shown that mentoring is a dynamic system of advice and support for ongoing and training and development (Robins, 2006), serving as an important and

essential activity to contribute to A/T staff's PD and to improve the effectiveness of teaching activities (Bozak, Yildirim, & Demirtas, 2011). Peer observation of teaching was one of the key activities related to teacher development (Bell, 2005; Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Lomas & Nicholls, 2005; Siddiqui, Jonas-Dwyer, & Carr, 2007). Peer observation enabled A/T staff to share their knowledge and experiences and facilitate reflection on their own teaching practice (Donnelly, 2007). A study of performance of two groups of new teachers showed that teachers who received support from trained mentors had higher ratings on classroom activities that met students' interests and kept students on task (Wang, Strong, & Odell, 2004). Moreover, experienced teachers generally agreed that classroom performance was a better way to evaluate quality teaching (Strong, 2009). As mentoring and peer support offers the opportunity for A/T staff to share and learn from each other, and to reflect on their own teaching for improvement, it is therefore an essential component of an SPD programme.

On the other hand, the University, since its establishment in 1994, has primarily offered teacher education to foster quality teachers, including pre-service and existing school teachers for Hong Kong society. Its A/T staff were mainly former secondary and primary school teachers equipped with a rich variety of teaching experiences in school settings. A/T staff belong to or are affiliated with 16 academic departments and the Centre for Language in Education (CLE) at the University, and one of their key duties is to teach pre-service teachers. According to the current practices, a variety of peer support activities are provided for new A/T staff, spread among different academic departments and the CLE. On the other hand, the results obtained from a survey of Peer Support of Teaching Scheme showed that there were a few common activities of peer support that many departments offered to newcomers. These common activities included (1) assigning an experienced colleague or a Teaching Awardee as a mentor to a new A/T staff member in the post of assistant professor or below, and (2) encouraging new colleagues to participate in peer observation of teaching activities, e.g. either inviting his/her mentor to observe his/her classroom teaching or observing his/her mentor's teaching. Some departments did not set up a mentor-mentee pairing system; instead, they encouraged new colleagues to observe experienced colleagues' or Teaching Awardees' teaching or to invite these colleagues to observe their teaching, or the departments asked new colleagues to seek advice on learning and teaching from experienced colleagues when they encountered teaching difficulties. However, the provision of peer support in the University was neither well organized nor systematic, as the University still did not have a consistent peer support mechanism for new A/T staff.

Moreover, to meet the demand for students' holistic and whole-person development for the twenty-first century, the University sought to broaden the range of programmes offered to transform and reach a multidisciplinary university, developing the 'Education-Plus' concept as a result (The Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2009). Under the 'Education-Plus' vision, the University has expanded its non-education programmes rapidly since 2010, and a number of new A/T staff with limited teaching experience were recruited. There is, therefore, a need to prepare new A/T staff to teach in a higher education environment. Research suggests

that professional development should be ongoing and systematic (Tournaki, Lyublinskaya, & Carolan, 2011) and should aim at increasing individual's knowledge and skills in order to enhance student learning outcomes (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet 2000; Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Killions, 2008). The more opportunities to participate in high-quality professional development, the more likely it is that the institution will affect students' achievements positively (Tournaki et al., 2011). Similarly, in Murray and Male's (2005) study of the challenges new teacher educators faced when transferring from school to higher education, interviewees emphasized that it was important for them to develop new pedagogical knowledge when they started teaching in higher education. Furthermore, experienced A/T staff also must have access to continuous PD. As Wood et al. (2011), in their study of types of professional development provided for mathematics teachers and of their preference for delivery modes, observed that it was assumed that (mathematics) teachers employed should have sufficient subject (mathematics) knowledge for their teaching, but it was not sure whether they have sufficient knowledge of learning and teaching. Meanwhile, student populations in primary and secondary schools are increasingly diverse. To meet schools' changing needs, it is very important to equip and prepare the University's students to meet the challenges of higher education. Indeed, to best prepare our students, A/T staff must also equip themselves with and enhance their teaching skills and pedagogical knowledge. In addition, in order to implement SoTL in the University successfully, an SPD programme for the enhancement of learning and teaching was developed and has been implemented since 2013.

5.1.2 Why Is the Development of an Effective SPD Programme Needed?

One objective of offering a SPD programme is to improve teaching. The SPD activities offered from 2013 to 2015 generally included sharing seminars on good teaching practices, presentations on the design, implementation and outcomes of funding projects focusing on the improvement of student learning and peer observations of teaching. Analysis of the evaluation of these SPD activities showed that on average, more than 90% of participants considered the activities to be helpful to their future teaching and inspired them to think about directions and approaches of teaching in the previous two academic years (refer to Table 5.1). At the same time, evaluation of SPD activities was based on the participants' experiences and perspectives on the activities only, and the impact of their PD (e.g. change or improvement of teaching and the enhancement of student learning) could not be evaluated. On the other hand, a key piece of feedback from the senior management on the report on SPD programme was that information of the effectiveness of SPD programme was deficient. To respond to this feedback, first the meaning of 'effective' for an SPD programme must be examined. An effective SPD programme should be ongoing, coherent and linked to student achievement (Killions, 2008). As Bellanca (2009) suggested, change best occurred when

Table 5.1 Summary of results collected in 2013–2014 and in 2014–2015

Year	2013–2014	2014–2015	Total/average
Number of activities held	43	59	102 (T)
Number of participants	406	516	922 (T)
Response rate of evaluation form	75.3%	72.3%	73.6% (A)
Core questions on evaluation form			
(Activity) was worth attending.	93.7%	94.4%	94.1% (A)
(Activity) was helpful to my future teaching/inspired me to think about directions and approaches of teaching.	86.8%	95.0%	90.1% (A)
(Activity) provided me some insights into my current teaching.	100%	90.4%	91.5% (A)
(Activity) motivated me to explore technologies for teaching and learning	97.8%	96.4%	97.1% (A)
(Activity) helped enhance my professional development.	100%	89.2%	90.1% (A)
(Activity) enhanced my knowledge in using technology for teaching and learning	100%	94.8%	97.3% (A)
(Activity) provided me the ideas/helped me to understand better about (the content of the activity)	83.8%	94.6%	90.5% (A)

teachers integrate new knowledge or skills into classroom lessons, and when learners focused on how they would actually improve their instruction by converting static information into action. An effective SPD programme should provide not only teaching knowledge or skills to the A/T staff, but also support for them as they transfer what they have learned to the classroom, for the enhancement of student learning. This transfer of new knowledge/skills is considered a successful ‘change’. Accordingly, an effective SPD programme should facilitate the improvement of A/T staff teaching and heighten student learning.

Questions have since arisen about what effect the current SPD programme had on A/T staff’s current and future teaching? Can A/T staff’s capacities be strengthened and, consequently, can students’ learning outcomes be enhanced? Most importantly, how can the University’s SPD programme work most effectively?

To respond to these queries, this chapter will discuss the current SPD programme and analyze its activities. In order to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the SPD programme, the ‘effectiveness’ of an SPD programme as defined by Bellanca (2009) in ‘Three Stages of Professional Development: The Cycle of Change’ will be referred. An effective SPD programme, including a method of evaluation an implementation cycle, will be developed and proposed. The following questions will then be addressed:

1. What is the evaluation mechanism of the current SPD programme offered, and what are the results of the evaluation?
2. How can the current SPD programme be improved in order to strengthen academic/teaching staff’s teaching and to help enhance student learning outcomes?
3. What is an effective SPD programme and how can its effectiveness be measured in future?

5.2 Establishment of the Staff Professional Development Programme

As mentioned in the previous section, following the development of 'Education-Plus' at the University, since 2010 a number of novice professors have been employed every year, and some of whom have one year or less of teaching experience in higher education. Therefore, professional training for this group of staff is necessary.

Furthermore, mentoring and peer support is a vital component of the SPD programme for A/T staff to improve their teaching through knowledge- and experience-sharing and reflective teaching. The programme offered opportunities to A/T staff, especially new colleagues, to observe other experienced colleagues' good teaching, to obtain feedback and reflect on their teaching for improvement.

Because PD should be ongoing and sustainable (Blandford, 2000), the University needs to offer a systematic and appropriate professional training for new and existing A/T staff. The first Staff Professional Development programme was designed and developed by LTTTC, and in August 2013, the programme was offered to new and existing A/T staff for developing and enhancing their capacities in higher education teaching. The SPD programme consisted of three components:

- Staff Induction Programme for all new full-time A/T staff,
- Ongoing PD Programme for all A/T staff and
- Mentoring and Peer Coaching System.

The Induction Programme was composed of an Orientation Session and two courses: Course One, Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, and Course Two, Using Technologies (Moodle, Turnitin and Mahara) in Higher Education. All new full-time A/T staff were invited to participate in the Induction Programme. Orientation Session was a 3-h programme providing basic information on learning, teaching and assessment at the University, and introducing learning and teaching support that A/T staff could get for their teaching. Experienced A/T colleagues shared their teaching experiences, skills and tips with participants in the 3-h Course One. Participants learned Learning Management Systems provided and supported by the University, such as Moodle, Turnitin and Mahara, and experienced hands-on practices in the 3-h Course Two. Activities of Ongoing PD were organized, including invited talks by experienced A/T colleagues and Teaching Awardees from the University and other local universities, sharing sessions on funding project conduction and e-Learning and blended learning workshops.

Indeed, peer observation of teaching was one of the common activities practiced in many academic departments at the University, although in past years the provision of peer support activities has varied and depended on individual departments' arrangements. Colleagues at the University usually invited experienced or senior colleagues from the same department to observe their teaching. To improve and enhance peer support, a supportive and collegial framework of peer support was suggested to review and reflect on teaching practices as well as to share good

and innovative practices. A Peer Support of Teaching Scheme was developed and implemented in Semester 2 of 2014–2015. Colleagues could invite colleagues from the same department but were encouraged to invite Teaching Awardees from other departments to observe and evaluate their classroom teaching to further enhance and improve their teaching.

5.2.1 Evaluation Mechanism of the Current SPD Programme

In order to develop an appropriate SPD programme for A/T staff, the University has continued to refine and modify the current SPD programme through evaluation. Thus, a quality assurance mechanism for evaluating and improving the SPD programme is essential. Moreover, it is necessary to evaluate the programme at different stages, because such information will help identify needs at different levels, and investigate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the programme (Baker & Sharpe, 1992). According to Baker and Sharpe's (1992) suggestion, three stages were developed to evaluate a professional development programme: (1) needs identification at the developing stage; (2) on-course monitoring and end-of-course evaluation at the progress stage; and (3) post-course evaluation at the reporting and measure of outcomes stage.

To identify A/T staff's needs, when the programme was being developed, the proposal of SPD programme had been considered and discussed by A/T colleagues at different levels of learning and teaching committees, e.g. the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee at the University level, and Departmental Learning and Teaching Committees at the departmental level. After confirming and endorsing the proposed programme, a new SPD programme was first implemented in August 2013. To evaluate and improve the programme, three participants were interviewed to collect their feedback and views on the first Induction Programme. In addition, in order to meet A/T staff's needs and develop future activities, an email survey was conducted to collect views on expected activities for the Ongoing PD Programme.

At the on-course monitoring and end-of-course stages, a survey evaluating PD activities was an essential component of developing a comprehensive quality assurance mechanism. An evaluation form was designed and implemented for each activity. To provide appropriate SPD programme and improve activities in future, the form included some questions regarding the impact on A/T staff's teaching and their professional development; some questions regarding administrative arrangement, e.g. the most popular timeslots and topics; and some code questions to apply to all questionnaires.

In addition, a Survey of Peer Support of Teaching was designed to collect information about participation in peer support activities from each academic department and the CLE at the end of academic year. Feedback from Teaching Awardees was also collected after the implementation of the Peer Support of Teaching Scheme in order to improve this scheme in future.

5.2.2 Analysis of the Evaluation of SPD Activities

A set of evaluation forms was designed and used to allow PD participants to evaluate PD activities in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015. The evaluation results of PD activities offered in the last two academic years showed that two Induction Programmes were held for all new A/T staff in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015, with 41 and 73 attendees, respectively. A total of 41 and 57 ongoing PD activities, including sharing seminars and workshops, were organized in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015, respectively; 365 and 443 participants attended these activities, respectively. Analysis of the evaluation from both academic years is shown below.

The analysis of evaluations of these activities in the past two academic years revealed that on average, 94.1% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that an activity was worth attending. Around 92% of respondents agreed that the activities they attended provided some insights into their current teaching practice, while more than 90% of them found that activities were helpful to their future teaching and enhanced their continuing professional development. About 97% agreed that they were motivated to explore technologies for future teaching and learning (refer to Table 5.1). Some encouraging comments such as ‘very good, organized and inspiring’ and ‘the hands-on section is very useful’ were also received. Moreover, participants suggested that they were interested in such future workshops as ‘How to make history classes more interesting for students’, ‘Seminars/workshops about activities usable in classes that strengthen relationship between the teacher and students’, ‘How to motivate students to participate in the learning and teaching activities’, ‘Designing lectures in attractive ways’. The results from the evaluation of SPD activities were quite promising.

5.2.3 Discussion of Evaluation Results

5.2.3.1 The Provision of SPD Programme was Appropriate

The results of evaluation showed that on average, more than 90% of participants expressed that the activities of the SPD programmes were worth attending, helpful to their future teaching and applicable to their current teaching (refer to Table 5.1). This result was in line with a study evaluating a professional development programme for a multidisciplinary science subject, in which the participating teachers positively evaluated the professional development programme designed to assist and support teachers before, during and after implementation of a science module (Visser, Coenders, Terlouw, & Pieters, 2013). Another similar result, from a study of the effect of a faculty professional development programme to enhance the knowledge level of University teachers in Pakistan, found a positive effect of the professional development training courses on the participants’ knowledge and skills, because the scores of the participants were higher on the post-test of the Higher Education Commission test, as compared to that of the pre-test (Saleem,

Masrur, & Afzal, 2014). These findings suggest that these SPD programme activities were appropriate and successful, and that they were supported by A/T staff who found the SPD programme beneficial to their teaching and professional development during the previous two years.

5.2.3.2 Feedback from Evaluation Served as Good Indicators for Future Improvement

Key comments collected from evaluations suggested that sharing colleagues' teaching practices and applying technologies to teaching were the most desired activities. These results and comments indicated ways to improve and enhance the SPD programme in future. For example, after referring to the feedback collected from the evaluation of SPD activities held in 2013–2014, the SPD programme was refined and modified accordingly. Moreover, a new series of Hong Kong Higher Education Teaching Awardees/Experienced Academics' Experience-Sharing Seminars and Workshops was arranged. Colleagues from other local universities were invited to conduct seminars and/or workshops to share their valuable teaching experiences with colleagues at the University. Blended learning activities were also popular in 2013–2014; therefore, this kind of activity was organized continuously. On the other hand, as shown in Table 5.1, the increase in percentages of the summary of the results in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 revealed that more respondents in 2014–2015 considered the activities to be worth attending and helpful to their future teaching, as compared to those in 2013–2014. The addition of sharing seminars/workshops, led by Teaching Awardees from other local universities, had a positive impact on the SPD programme. This result was in line with Ruegg's (2015) research findings that repeated teacher feedback could be effective in Japanese university students' efforts to improve their English grammar and writing, as well as in line with the finding that receiving feedback had the potential to boost the quality of the actual writing product (Gielen & DeWever, 2015). Therefore, evaluation was essential to developing an effective SPD programme, as the results of evaluation served as strong indicators for future improvement.

5.3 Improvement of the Current SPD Programme

5.3.1 What Did the Current SPD Programme Miss?

Although the results of PD activity evaluation suggested that the current SPD programme was helpful to A/T staff, information regarding the overall effectiveness of the programme is still missing. As mentioned in the Induction section, an effective SPD programme, according to Bellanca (2009), should stimulate A/T staff to change or improve their teaching and should support them in transferring what they have learned from the programme to the classroom, in order to enhance student

learning. Simply put, an effective SPD programme should include two key components: (1) acquisition of new knowledge and/or skills by the participants and (2) transformation of such knowledge and/or skills into classroom lessons for the enhancement of student learning.

Data in Table 5.1 showed that the SPD programmes served a total of 922 A/T participants and, on average, more than 97% of responses considered the activities of SPD Programmes to have enhanced their knowledge in using technology for teaching and learning. More than 90% agreed that (activity) provided helped them to better understand the content of the activity during the previous two years. These results showed that the SPD programme had provided knowledge and skills for improving A/T staff teaching and suggested that the current SPD programme had met one of the requirements for an effective SPD programme as suggested by Bellanca (2009)—that is, the ‘acquisition of new knowledge and/or skills by the participants’.

To achieve another requirement for an effective SPD programme, transformation of new knowledge and/or skills needs to be considered, and student learning outcomes need to be measured. Baker and Sharpe (1992) proposed considering measurement of outcomes as part of a post-course stage of further refinement and improvement of the PD programme. Research also suggests that an effective SPD programme should focus on how students learned subject matter content (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Suk Koon, & Birman, 2002; Desimone, Smith, & Philips, 2007; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001), and the US has used standardized test scores in schools to measure student learning outcomes during the past fifteen years, and the results of student learning outcomes were an added value to measure teacher effectiveness (Strong, 2009). These findings suggest that student learning outcomes should be used to measure the effectiveness of A/T’s staff’s teaching (Guskey, 2002). To understand whether new knowledge and skills are transferred to students successfully, we need to examine ‘how much student can learn’ and/or ‘how student learning can be improved’. Thus, an effective SPD programme should include the evaluation of student learning outcomes.

Nonetheless, student learning outcomes cannot be examined by participating in a single Induction day and/or one-shot seminar, workshop or sharing session. They can only be assessed when an A/T staff makes a change, transferring information gathered from the SPD programme to classroom practice over a period of time. At least a semester is needed to implement this change process and, consequently, to collect student learning outcomes. Therefore, measures of student learning outcomes are a vital component to evaluating a PD programme, and an effective SPD programme should be continuing and prolonged so as to include measurement of student learning outcomes.

5.4 Development of an Effective SPD Programme

5.4.1 Stage One—A Certificate Course

An effective SPD programme for A/T staff must address new knowledge and/or skills for enhancing A/T’s PD and measuring student learning outcomes. Thus,

three programme objectives: (a) providing new knowledge and/or skills for the enhancement of A/T staff's professional development, (b) evaluating student learning outcomes and (c) ensuring continuous programme improvement through ongoing development and evaluation are proposed. These objectives will be met over two stages. In the first stage, a well-structured and comprehensive SPD programme will be designed and developed for new A/T staff, and in the second stage, a framework of effective SPD, including evaluating student learning outcomes and timelines for implementation, will be developed for all A/T staff. This programme aims to enable all A/T staff to obtain holistic professional training and manage the changes (e.g. application of new knowledge and/or skills to classroom teaching) that will improve their teaching and enhance student learning.

Therefore, a certificate course, 'Introduction to Teaching in Higher Education', was developed by refining and modifying the SPD programme run in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 to better equip new A/T staff with essential knowledge and skills in teaching in higher education and to enable them to become competent A/T staff members of the University. This certificate course, which commenced in September 2015, is composed of four themes: (i) Staff Induction Programme—a 6 h programme providing basic information related to learning, teaching and assessment at the University (e.g. policy of learning, teaching and assessment, learning and teaching support and student academic backgrounds); (ii) Practicum—a minimum of 3 h of practicum activities regarding new A/T staff's teaching practices; (iii) Seminars/Workshops in Learning and Teaching—a minimum of 1.5 h' attendance in seminars, workshops or sessions on experience sharing of good teaching and research; and (iv) Learning and Teaching Support—a minimum of 1.5 h of workshops with library-related and/or technology-related skills and practices for the development of staff's scholarship of teaching and innovative teaching. New A/T staff are required to complete these four themes, attending a minimum of 12 h of activities for the certificate course. After the completion of this Course, A/T staff are expected to be able to make changes and apply such changes to the classroom teaching.

5.4.2 Stage Two—An Effective and Sustainable SPD Programme

After developing a holistic SPD programme certificate course for new A/T staff, an effective and sustainable SPD programme will be designed and developed in the second stage. For the purpose of supporting A/T staff in transferring knowledge/skills to the classroom and measuring student learning, Bellanca's (2009) model of 'Three Stages of Professional Development: The Cycle of Change' is referred. Bellanca's Three Stages of Professional Development includes Stage (1), Innovation; Stage (2), Refinement; and Stage (3), Sustainability. Stage 1 of this model comprises pilot innovation. In this stage, teachers take new ideas about teaching and learning and plan to integrate these ideas into their classroom teaching. Stage 2 is the refinement of practice. Teachers in this stage need to keep track on the

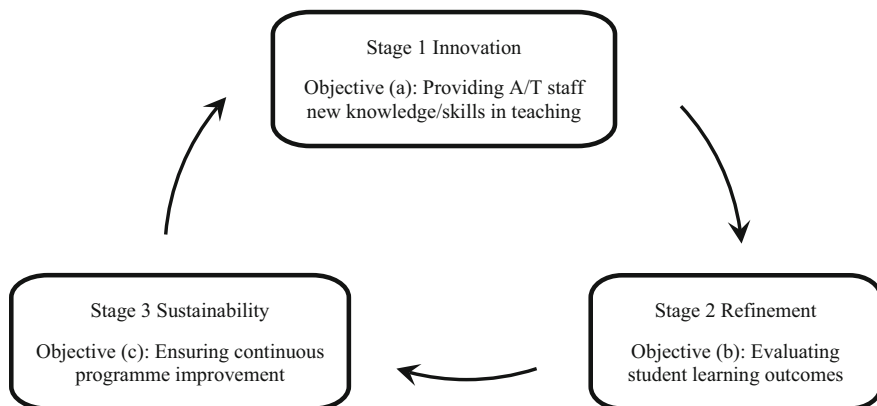


Fig. 5.1 Three objectives of development of an effective SPD programme based on Bellanca's 'three stages of professional development: Cycle of change'

progress of pilot innovation to find out what they are doing well in the pilot and what can do differently for improvement or refinement. Stage 3 is to establish long-term improvement. In this stage, a plan of action is required, one that contains collaborative goals, measurable outcomes, aligned PD strategies, assessment tools and timelines with assessments of integrating innovation. Bellanca's Three Stages of Professional Development Cycle is relevant and aligned with the three objectives of an effective SPD programme and should be to enrich the current SPD programme—certificate course (refer to Fig. 5.1).

Patterned after Bellanca's Professional Development Cycle, the proposed model for an effective SPD programme for the University also consists of three stages, but the content of three stages will vary slightly based on the learning, teaching and assessment practices of the University. The three stages of the effective SPD programme are suggested as follows.

Stage 1 is *New Knowledge/Skills in Innovative Teaching*. This stage aims to obtain new knowledge and/or skills through the certificate course, such as the Induction Programme for new A/T staff, seminars/workshops in learning and teaching, and workshops regarding library-related and technology-related skills and practices for all A/T staff. A/T staff will then plan and design what new knowledge/skills, e.g. flipped classroom, peer assessment and mobile learning, can be applied to classroom teaching to improve student learning.

Stage 2 will be *Testing/Refining to Enhance Student Learning*, and this stage will apply innovative teaching, e.g. flipped classroom, peer assessment and mobile learning, by integration of new knowledge and/or skills into classroom teaching. In Stage 2, A/T staff obtain comments on innovative teaching through peer observation in the Practicum and/or Peer Support of Teaching Scheme for review and reflection, in order to further refine and improve teaching practices. A/T staff may need to further adjust and retest innovative teaching techniques after a trial of one or two lessons.

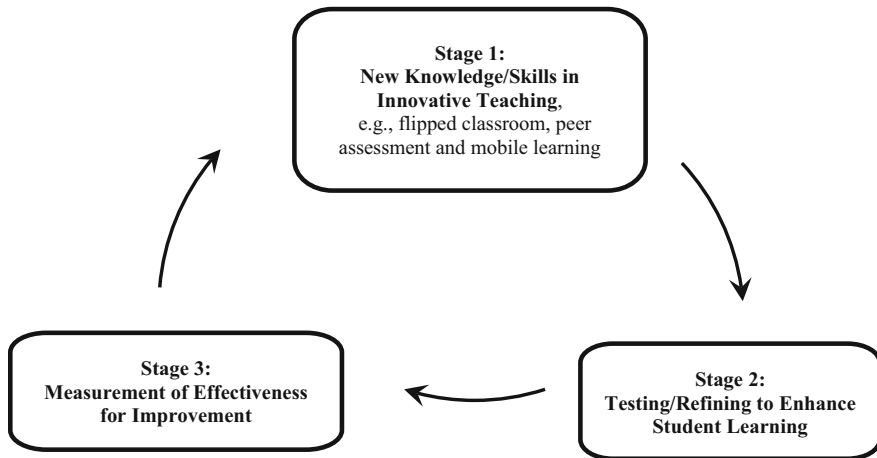


Fig. 5.2 Three-stage development of an ‘effective’ SPD programme at the University

Stage 3 *Measurement of Effectiveness for Improvement* involves measuring the effectiveness of innovative teaching applied to the classroom teaching through the evaluation of student learning outcomes. This stage involves evaluating the innovative teaching by assessing students’ course work, student’ feedback on innovative teaching and student e-portfolios with evidences and by assessing teacher performance through Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) and Degree Programme Evaluations by students. The three-stage development of an effective SPD programme at the University is presented in Fig. 5.2.

5.4.3 Implementation Cycle of an Effective SPD Programme

Because A/T staff members need time to plan and design innovative teaching after acquiring new knowledge/skills from the SPD programme, moving through Stage 1 within a semester is suggested. Testing an innovative strategy or skill in the classroom usually spans a few lessons or whole course. In addition, staff may need one or two lessons to continue to refine innovative teaching, after which the revised innovative strategies and skills will be applied again; therefore, Stage 2 should be implemented in the same semester of Stage 1. At the end of a course, evaluation data of student learning outcomes (e.g. assignment, presentation and field experience) and teacher performance (e.g. scores of SET and feedback from peers on observation of classroom teaching) will be collected for analysis, reflection and reporting, if appropriate as Stage 3. It will take a semester to complete this stage. To end an implementation cycle, a report or reflection will analyze data and make suggestions/comments for improvement. These suggestions/comments will be considered and possibly applied at the start of next implementation cycle. The loop

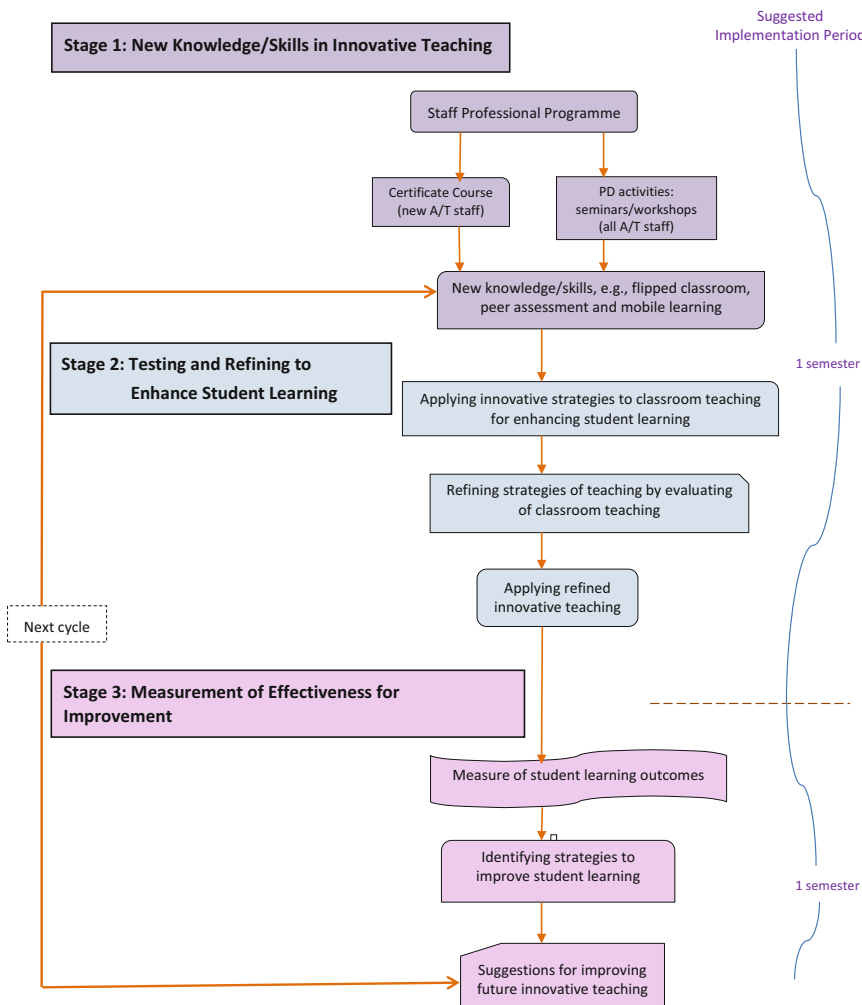


Fig. 5.3 Framework of the implementation cycle of an effective SPD programme

of the implementation cycle will serve as a mechanism for long-term improvement and sustainability of the SPD programme. Therefore, an effective, ongoing and sustainable programme should be implemented in cycles of at least one academic year. Figure 5.3 refers to a framework of the implementation cycle of an effective SPD programme.

5.5 Conclusion

As a whole, the evaluation results of SPD programme activities from 2013 to 2015 have been encouraging. In addition, the University was successful in implementing a quality mechanism to monitor and improve SPD activities provided for A/T staff in the past two years; participants responded that the SPD programme could impact their current and future teaching. Nonetheless, the existing quality mechanism and the implementation period are not sufficient to measure the SPD programme's effectiveness. To evaluate an effective SPD programme, evaluators must show that A/T staff's knowledge and skills can improve student learning outcomes. A period of one academic year is proposed to complete a cycle of evaluation. It is suggested that, to evaluate and refine teaching practices, an improved quality mechanism is needed, along with sustainable feedback from different stakeholders at different stages of implementation. This improved SPD programme will be proposed to the senior management for consideration and is expected to be implemented in the near future.

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