



Exploring interdependence between modelling practice, school-based development and teacher networks

DPE, Mirpur, 16 March 2016

HIGHLIGHTS



Introduction

PEDP III aims to improve the quality of primary education in Bangladesh. While many factors are responsible for ensuring this, teachers' competence and practice is highly important. The Teacher Education and Development (TED) plan lays out a number of activities to build capacity of teachers and education officers; many of which are meant to reinforce each other and yet, explicit links are not visible at the implementation level and initiatives are fragmented. Research evidence shows that, in order to enable teachers to improve classroom practices, teachers need to see how new approaches work in context, to work out with other teachers how to tackle new approaches in their own teaching, and to have sustained support from peers, head teachers and others in the education system. The various aspects of teacher education and development activity - training, networking, school leadership, teacher guides and so on - need to be harmonised and underpinned by a common understanding of teacher professional learning, leading to a coherent programme of primary teacher professional development (TPD).

A series of Technical Forums, organised at DPE, generated stimulating debates around these issues, in order to consolidate critical understanding about key design principles to inform the post PEDP III planning process. In-depth discussions highlighted these principles, which build on examples of best practices so far and illustrate the nature of interdependence between them.

Modelling: seeing and experiencing new practices

What it is

- Seeing effective pedagogies being put into practice, in authentic classroom settings.
- Participating, as a learner, in new pedagogic activities and learning through experience.
- Being armed with critical question(s) to help understand how to translate good principles into good practices.

What it's not

- Watching other teachers doing the same things you are already doing.
- Learning passively, mostly through memorisation and without active involvement.
- Observing new pedagogical practices which are not contextualised.

Introducing new classroom practices and generating learning through peer support in school

What it is

- Developing new skills, building confidence and boosting motivation through practice.
- Sharing of experiences amongst colleagues to enable critical understanding of new pedagogies.
- Objective observation by peers to think differently about what is happening in your classroom.
- New learning generated in each context through practice rooted in individual classroom activities and teaching experiences.

What it's not

- Learning content without understanding how it engages the learners in the process.
- Doing 'something' with your class from a lesson you've seen, without thinking about why you are doing it, what difference it makes, or how it could be improved.
- Not considering others' experiences of practicing new pedagogies to enrich your own learning.

Creating teacher / school networks that support new classroom practices

What it is

- Developing practical understandings of which approaches work, for whom, in which contexts.
- Thinking together about what could be done differently, to improve student learning practices and outcomes.

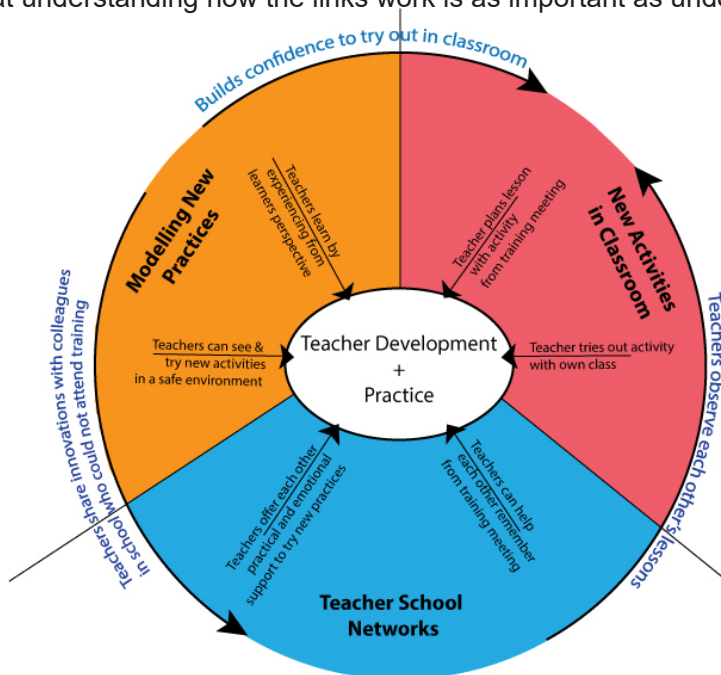
What it's not

- Transmission of skills without critical understanding.
- Dealing with contents detached from the classroom context.

- Offering moral and emotional support to peers for trying something new in the classroom or school.
- Sharing experiences and insights from trying new approaches in different teacher development forums in school and beyond.
- Continuous and structured professional development practices allowing individuals to adapt and grow.

- One-off opportunity to interact and learn from peers.
- Discouraging peer feedback in fear of unfair criticism.

The Forum concluded that understanding how the links work is as important as understanding the individual elements



Recommendations for Post PEDP III Design

- 1 Create a single coherent system for TPD with modular training to address the different needs of teachers, head teachers and education officers, which embeds tested innovative models of TPD which have already worked in the context of Bangladesh.
- 2 Re-orientate teacher educators and education officers to understand, model and teach the promoted practices.
- 3 Support school leaders to encourage openness and working together with the school community to solve problems locally.
- 4 Place digital resources in teachers' hands with clear pedagogic purposes guided by the curriculum.
- 5 Raise the status of in-school peer support so that teachers have the opportunity and are encouraged to do joint planning, observation and feedback on new practices.
- 6 Establish a strengthened mentoring and monitoring system to support on-going teacher development in school.
- 7 Establish a whole-school approach to teacher development, including formal and informal platforms for reflection and peer sharing of experiences, with strong head teacher leadership creating enabling environment for continuous TPD.
- 8 Ensure follow up support, continuous TPD and sustained collaboration with teacher educators through interlinked teacher development activities.
- 9 Change the assessment system to support, encourage and empower learners to take more responsibility for their learning and raise standards.
- 10 Develop the understanding and support of parents and the school community for changes in teaching and learning, and involve them in post PEDP III planning.
- 11 Empower and enable decision-making at teacher, school, cluster and Upazila levels, through a stronger decentralised structure and guidance from DPE administration.
- 12 Improve and invest in teacher recruitment, quality TPD and career paths.