Working Group 3: Professional Development for Policymakers, School Leaders and Teachers

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Introduction

Education is fundamentally important for human advancement. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have potential to contribute to the effectiveness of education but professional development (PD) for all stakeholders is necessary for that potential to be achieved. In building on work from previous EDUsummIT meetings the focus of this theme will be on how to scale successful experience in selected contexts to meet the needs of educators in different contexts.

Research supports the importance of PD being informed by, and directed toward, a vision for ICT in education shared by all stakeholders with strong links between research and practice to ensure that teachers are more than mere technicians and are empowered to adapt practice to changing conditions (Twining, Raffaghelli, Albion, & Knezek, 2013). Engaging teachers and other stakeholders in communities and networks for sharing knowledge can be effective for reducing the gap between research and practice (Albion, Tondeur, Forkosh-Baruch, & Peeraer, in press). Online PD can be effective when it supports strong connections among participants and supports them through mentoring as active developers and sharers rather than mere recipients of knowledge (Prestridge & Tondeur, 2015).

Innovative Practices

Sri Lanka: As a developing country, Sri Lanka is particularly concerned about policy issues relevant to the KEI (Knowledge Economic Index) which measures the ability of a country to use knowledge effectively for economic development. Therefore the SECI (Socialization, Externalization, Combination, Internalization) model (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) is used to inform Professional Development for educators. The underlying idea is that organizations like the National Institute of Education support professionals to create knowledge through the interactions between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. According to the model organizational knowledge expands in both quality and quantity as it spirals through Socialization (tacit to tacit), Externalization (tacit to explicit), Combination (explicit to explicit), and Internalization (explicit to tacit). A 2015 policy study...
investigated the role of ICT in professional knowledge sharing among teachers and school leaders based on the SECI model. The principles from research cited above are evident in this example. **Viet Nam:** In Viet Nam research has found that pedagogies applied by teachers are appropriately linked to subject areas but remain predominantly teacher-centred. For example, science teachers use experiments and language teachers use games and role play. Only a third of teachers use problem-based or other more learner-centred methods and the evidence suggested that they required additional PD and access to appropriate teaching resources to implement the new approaches. Where a teacher was observed using ICT the methods adopted were effective but still predominantly teacher-centred. The study concluded that further PD is needed and that, consistent with the research cited above, it should engage teachers in reflecting and sharing their experiences to learn from each other (Nguyen, 2015).

**Issues and Challenges for Practitioners and Policymakers**

In a time of rapid societal change the content and methods of education are naturally changing in response. The application of ICT to support learning and teaching must respond to these changes and to simultaneous rapid changes in ICT. Effective PD must address these changes in ways that are relevant to the needs of participants operating in different contexts. It is not possible for a central authority to have all of the necessary answers. Instead the systems for developing and delivering PD must be able to learn from both researchers and practitioners in the field and make effective connections between them.

**Policy Recommendations**

- Professional development should engage the widest possible range of stakeholders in education systems.
- Participants in professional development should be engaged as active contributors to development of improved practices and not merely as recipients of centrally distributed knowledge.
- Participants in professional development should be engaged in networks and communities for mutual learning.
- Professional development should be viewed as both distribution of findings from research and source of data for research.

**Recommended Readings**


