

Teacher learning community within and beyond Chinese heritage schools

鄭安中

Many teachers believe that professional development could foster effective instruction and improve their teaching practice. Teacher professional development (PD) is particularly vital for quality-teaching of Chinese language in community-based Chinese heritage schools (CHS). One of the common formats of PD for CHS teachers is short-term training (half-day, one-day, or weekend) given the nature and context of CHSs.

Nevertheless, professional support for CHS teachers seems to end often after short-term workshops. Effective professional development needs to be designed to engage teachers in a learning environment which enhances progressive inquiry, sustainable community, personal support, and teacher's in-depth reflections. A learning community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), formed by groups of people who intent to learn from one another and share common interests and established practices, is then a supportive environment as a means of professional development. This presentation features two types of teacher learning community: one is within a community-based CHS and the other is formed across various CHSs in a STARATLK program. Grounded on qualitative approach to examining teachers' perceptions and practices about effective teaching through interview data, classroom observations, and computer mediated communications (e.g. e-mail & social media), this research reveals the factors in the learning community that support or challenge teachers' professional development, which involve people, artifacts, and different media that foster teaching effectiveness. Discussions and suggestions about developing sustainable learning community for CHS teachers will be provided in the end of the presentation.