

# Policy of School-Based Teacher Training in Chinese High Schools Today and Experience for Vietnam

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## ARTICLEINFO

## ABSTRACT

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School-based training is an important channel in the professional development of high school teachers and has been increasingly respected in recent years. The article focuses on researching the main contents of school-based training in high schools in China today such as goals, methods, content, management mechanisms, results... through collect, research, and analyze legal documents, reports, and related documents. The article also provides assessments and experiences for Vietnam.

**Keywords:** Teacher training; school-based training; primary schools; middle schools; high schools; teacher professional development; teacher development in China.

## INTRODUCTION

School-based teacher training is a regular, autonomous, flexible, individualized and practical teacher training activity that is gradually becoming a trend. This activity takes the school as the core, teachers as the subject, and training has clear tasks. Among teacher training activities, school-based training is one of the most direct, convenient and effective methods.

As a country on the path of strong development, China is well aware of the important role of education in general and teacher training and development in particular. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly stated that "building a strong country in education is a fundamental task in the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people". Education is a national master plan, a master plan of the Party. In the master plan of education, teachers are the foundation. In which, it is necessary to build a team of professional, creative teachers with high qualities, who are satisfied by the Party and the people, and to build and perfect the training and development of teachers at the grassroots level and the teacher training team (CPC, 2018). The "Medium- and long-term national education reform and development plan" clearly stated the requirement to promote the construction of a team of high-quality teachers, perfect the mechanism for training and regularly fostering teachers to meet the high standards and new requirements that the new era has set for teachers. The primary responsibility for training high-quality, professional and creative teachers belongs to teacher training colleges. However, it is not enough to only focus on training teacher training students. It is necessary to further promote the regular training of current teachers, to form the ideology of continuous improvement, continuous development and continuous experience learning in teachers. In which, the work of teacher training based on schools is constantly promoted. The 2013 Guidelines on the issue of promoting reform and comprehensive improvement of the quality of secondary school teacher training of the Ministry of Education (China)" emphasized the importance of school-based research, promoting coordination between teacher training colleges, training institutions and secondary schools, building training resources, and perfecting the implementation mechanism. Enrich the content through collective lesson planning activities, teaching conferences, thematic research, promote research and training activities, and comprehensively promote the role of school-based teacher training.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Concept of School-Based Training

School-based training is an important channel in the professional development of general education teachers. This is a training activity for all teachers in the school, based on solving specific tasks to meet the development goals and needs of schools and teachers, improving teachers' capacity, initiated and organized by schools, carried out right in schools. From a theoretical perspective, this activity helps promote the professional development process of teachers, implement the lifelong learning process of teachers, and build a team of high-quality teachers.

School-based teacher in-service training began to be mentioned in the UK and the US in the 1970s. In the context of teacher training being mainly organized and implemented by universities and educational management institutions, practice and theory were separated, and training contents were not closely related to teaching practice, the US "Competency-centered" education system proposed a "school-based" training model. In the UK in 1972, in the "James Report" by the honorary president of York University, it was proposed that "training of current teachers should start from primary schools, because all teaching and learning activities are conducted here". Later, the idea of "school-centered" training of current teachers achieved perfection in both theory and practice, and became a regulation. Since the mid-1980s, School-based training has received welcome attention in many developed countries in Europe, developing countries such as China and Southeast Asia have also begun to take an interest in this popular model in the 90s (UNESCO, 2014).

Regarding the concept of school-based training, there are many terms used simultaneously such as school-based in-service training, school-based in-service education and training of teachers, school-based teacher education, school-based teacher development, school-based teacher training... In which the concept of "school-based teacher education" emphasizes the scope of schools in the training and development of teachers, from when they are pedagogical students to when they are practicing. Other concepts basically emphasize that the training subjects are teachers working at schools. According to the definition of the European Association for Teacher Training: "School-based training is training activities taking place at schools, determined based on the development needs of the school, initiated and planned by the school, with the aim of meeting the practical needs of teachers in the school" (Jaap Van Lakerveld, Peter Nentwig, 1996).

## **2.2. Characteristics of School-Based Training**

Compared with training methods organized by universities or teacher training institutions, school-based training methods have the following characteristics:

**Autonomy:** in school-based training, the school is the initiating, planning and implementing subject.

**Specificity:** This is also an outstanding advantage of School-based Training. Training activities are designed to address the needs of teachers in the school, serving the school's own development needs with its own inherent conditions.

**Flexibility:** The school is completely proactive in designing training activities that suit the time, teacher qualifications or available facilities.

**Openness:** Although school-based training is based on the school, it does not necessarily rely entirely on the school's existing conditions. The school can completely invite external resources to support it.

## **3. RESEARCH RESULTS**

Currently in China, along with the reform of general education and the promotion of quality education, improving the quality of teachers is more important than ever. In particular, school-based teacher training activities have been widely implemented, playing an important role in improving teachers' quality and capacity, promoting the development of teachers, and improving the quality of teaching in schools. In the system of teacher training forms, school-based training is considered the most fundamental form of teacher professional development, improving the effectiveness of schools in the journey to help teachers meet the requirements of the new education system that emphasizes quality education and creative culture.

Since the 1980s, the issue of school-based training has been of interest in China. In 1999, in the circular guiding the implementation of the "Continuing Education Program for General Teachers", the Chinese Ministry of Education clearly stated that "General education institutions are the key areas for implementing continuing education for general teachers, the principal is the leader and the person in charge, each general school needs to set out specific plans for teacher training, and organize school-based training forms". From here, the concept of "School-based Teacher Training" officially appeared in legal documents in China.

In 2004, at a training conference, the Chinese Deputy Minister of Education Yuan Guiren first introduced the broader concept of "school-based research and cultivation". The concept of "school-based" here still means taking the school as the basis, through the school, for the school. The word "Research" in "Research and cultivation" refers to a broader scope of research, which is the act of solving practical problems based on corresponding theoretical foundations, with the direct purpose of resolving conflicts arising in the teaching and learning process. The word "cultivation" refers to goodness, goodness, that is, self-cultivation, emphasizing the development and cultivation of human qualities and virtues. From that, it can be seen that "Research and cultivation" refers to teachers in the process of researching with topics, solving problems, their professional concepts become deeper, their professional knowledge becomes richer,

their professional abilities are enhanced, and their professional qualities are more developed. Research is a superficial activity, self-cultivation is a hidden process. Both must be carried out simultaneously to create a teacher of the new era.

According to Chinese education experts, "School-based teacher training" or "School-based research" takes schools as the field base, focuses on teachers' overall knowledge and school building experience, the purpose and target audience of training activities are very specific and clear, the training content closely follows the overall development process of the teaching staff and respects the individualization of each teacher, has high interactivity, can combine teaching practice to share personal opinions and experiences, and the training content also becomes richer.

### 3.1. Objectives of school-based training programs in Chinese secondary schools

The general direction to promote the effectiveness of teacher training activities is: building a lifelong learning mechanism, continuing education for teachers, comprehensive training with remote activities as the main focus, core training with direct activities as the main focus, individual training with school-based training activities as the main focus. In which, school-based training activities focus on common and developmental issues of students, improve professional capacity for teachers, improve the training quality of schools. The major goals are: 1, Promote the development of teachers' careers. Based on the standard of "good teachers with 4 Haves", build a team of creative, professional teachers with good qualities, adapting to the development needs of the new era. Based on the professional standards of teachers, research and solve practical problems, delve into the laws of teacher growth in specific schools, improve professional ethics, innovate concepts, improve knowledge, capacity and creativity. 2, Improve school capacity. Based on school planning and work focus, combined with teaching and learning practices, schools propose specific training plans for themselves, meeting the teaching and learning needs of the school itself and building a school culture of their own. 3, Create typical models for each province. Each centrally-run province, based on its own historical, geographical and socio-economic conditions, builds a suitable training program that is imbued with its own identity and has its own influence nationwide.

### 3.2. Methods of implementing school-based training in Chinese secondary schools

Based on the subjects participating in the training process, it can be divided into the following methods:

*The first method*, Personalized learning: this method emphasizes that the subject of school-based training activities is each teacher, through the arrangement and research of experiences and problems in the teaching process, promoting changes in teaching philosophy and improving teachers' capacity. Specifically, there are methods such as: diary, autobiographical teaching, situation analysis, small topic research, etc.

*The second method*, Friends for Progress: this method emphasizes the collective spirit, recognition and research among teachers. Through information exchange, experience sharing, and discussion on topics, we solve problems together and improve our capacity. Specifically, there are methods such as: preparing common lesson plans, creating different teaching methods for the same lesson, observing and commenting, group discussions, topic discussions, lesson plan analysis, etc.

The content is designed for each separate subject, implemented in the following forms: experienced teachers sharing, 1-on-1, old teachers teaching new teachers, forming support groups, specialized sofas, interest groups, many teachers teaching a lesson together and exchanging experiences, many teachers designing a lesson together and conducting multiple experiments. It can also be carried out in the form of school exchanges, project cooperation, grassroots activities, sister schools, school alliances, teaching competitions, etc.

The model of "pairs of friends progressing together" helps to take advantage of the talents of good teachers in the school, promote internal strength, and take advantage of the geographical proximity to help teachers grow together.

*Third method*, Expert guidance: This method takes advantage of in-depth research from universities. Under the specific guidance, demonstration and guidance of experts, teachers are encouraged to develop their careers. This model is highly practical, helping teachers solve unsolved problems. Specifically, there are: topical talks, individual guidance, teaching diagnosis, problem guidance, expert offices, lesson plan grading, etc.

In addition to the above basic methods, school-based training in China also has other methods such as theoretical training, research-based training, school-based training alliances with cooperation of 4-5 schools in a group, establishing key schools to demonstrate school-based training, online cooperation, etc.

In particular, the online collaboration method takes advantage of the development of science and technology to meet the development needs of each individual, creating a platform for teachers to exchange, learn and support each other. This method has official learning platforms such as specialized forums, school networks, online classes, and even self-created small groups on social networking platforms such as blogs, wechat groups, and QQ groups. These groups

have the advantage that members can exchange briefly, directly, respond immediately, have a friendly and close colloquial nature, can exchange documents quickly, information quickly and promptly, and can last even after the main course has ended.

### **3.3. School-based training content**

Based on the school's own development goals, teachers' professional development needs, and regional socio-economic characteristics, the content of school-based training is determined in a reasonable and scientific manner, usually including training in comprehensive qualities such as ethics and self-cultivation, knowledge and skills, specialized topics, etc.

In which, ethics and self-cultivation include basic professional ethics and cultural cultivation, specifically including legal regulations, policies, educational values, moral cultivation of teachers, standards of teacher behavior, professional ideals and career development planning, healthy psychology for teachers, emotional control skills, etc.

Knowledge and skills include subjects and knowledge necessary for professional development of teachers such as general knowledge in education, modern educational theory and educational scientific research methods, specialized knowledge, teaching and learning management capacity, etc. Specifically, the latest research and achievements in subject science and teaching science, program development and implementation, curriculum research and program standards, implementation and evaluation of teaching programs, research and development of school-based training programs. Skills training helps improve professional capacity for teachers in schools. The training content is designed based on the combination of different subjects and different tasks of teachers such as training in basic teaching skills, training in lesson design capacity, training in online lesson design, training in information technology skills, training in homeroom teacher skills, training in practice skills, modern and applied teaching techniques, teaching methods and advanced skills, teaching art and teaching style, design and implementation of stereoscopic teaching objectives, forms and strategies for organizing teaching, designing classroom teaching and case studies, learning in the direction of research - theory and practice, homeroom work and class management, classroom activities, student development and maturity, building good teacher-student relationships, psychological and ideological counseling for students, organizing and managing union activities, etc.

Thematic training includes the following contents: conducting systematic research on hot issues, or topics that appear in the process of educational reform, focusing the intellectual strength of all teachers, helping to bring new issues or new educational ideas into teachers. Thematic training has a close combination of theoretical study, academic research, teaching practice, summary reports... forming systematic research.

School-based training is carried out based on the requirements of general education reform development, combining school practices, selecting special, key and highly effective content. The general education level (primary and secondary) must highlight the content of the new program, new textbooks, new methods, new techniques; promote the improvement of teachers' ethics, teaching activities, test and homework development, experimental activities and family education guidance. High schools need to focus on implementing new programs, new textbooks, student development guidance and teaching management capacity, improving teaching innovation capacity according to new university admission methods, building school characteristics and subject characteristics... In special education, school-based training revolves around subject content and teaching methods, developing and managing special students, teaching strategies and arts in special education, building individualized teaching programs, researching and recognizing the teaching process, educational reform and educational qualities; promoting the improvement of teachers' capacity to reform special education programs...

### **3.4. Mechanism for assessing and ensuring the quality of school-based training activities in general schools in China**

Under the direction and planning of educational administrative agencies at all levels, school-based training activities are in charge, directed and managed by professional departments at all levels, with the coordination of training facilities and electronic education departments, and directly implemented by general schools. The provincial Department of Education is responsible for macro-management and policy development. The educational management agency of the city directly under the province, based on surveys and investigations, develops a 5-year plan and annual plans for the entire city. The district education department develops specific plans for each year, directs and organizes implementation in schools.

Schools base on the situation of teachers to develop training needs, submit school-based training plans to the competent authority, after approval, the school organizes implementation. After the training is completed, the school evaluates and reports the results on the province's "continuing training for general education teachers" network



system. At the school level, the principal is responsible for planning and implementing each year based on the school development plan and the school culture building plan.

The provincial level is responsible for establishing a “School-based Training Steering Expert Council” with the participation of provincial higher education institutions, research institutions, teacher training institutions and e-education experts. The usual support mechanism is that a teacher training college is in charge of a district, a senior teacher (provincial-level excellent teacher or above, core teacher, typical advanced teacher) is in charge of assisting a school, maximizing the role of the teacher training college in promoting teacher training at school, and promoting the spreading effect of typical teachers.

Regarding the funding mechanism for school-based training activities. All levels must continuously promote the allocation of funds for activities. Schools need to implement the policy of “5% of the annual budget allocated for teacher training activities”.

Regarding the monitoring mechanism. Education management agencies at all levels and general schools develop and complete management mechanisms for school-based training activities, considering this part of the list of activities that need to be monitored, inspected and evaluated. School-based training activities are the content of the annual assessment of the performance of schools, principals and teachers. The provincial Department of Education summarizes and rewards school-based training activities every 2-3 years.

### **3.5. Achievements of school-based training activities in Chinese secondary schools**

China is a large country with many provinces and cities with different levels of development, with 164,100 primary, middle and high schools and 12,787,800 teachers. (Ministry of Education's, 2022) School-based teacher training has also had many achievements and shortcomings. In general, after many years of efforts, school-based teacher training has achieved great results. Some provinces and cities pay special attention to developing school-based training and continuously have commendation activities such as Shanghai, Hunan, Guangdong, Shandong, etc.

School-based training has received great attention. The “National Primary Teacher Training Project” (hereinafter referred to as the Project) implemented by the Ministry of Education of China since 2010 has paid great attention to the school-based teacher training method. The Project has greatly contributed to improving the quality of teachers across China. Notably, since 2015, the Project has focused on supporting the Principal-based training method for rural teachers in the West Central region.

The “Notice on the implementation of the national project on training general and preschool teachers for the period 2021-2025” emphasized the implementation of the new development philosophy, building a high-quality education system, and developing the teaching staff in both quality and quantity. During the implementation period of the 14th Five-Year Plan with a vision to 2035, the Project will focus on developing teachers' autonomy, promoting school-based research, and implementing a combined model of direct focus - online training - school-based research and training.

Teacher training in general and school-based training in particular are carried out synchronously and comprehensively, promoting school-based training, promoting existing potential, and focusing on personalizing teachers' needs.

School-based training focuses on technology to improve qualifications and quality, and takes the school alliance model to promote balanced development between urban and rural areas.

## **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAM**

Vietnam is also a developing country with a large population, the gap in education between rural and urban areas has a significant impact on the development of the teaching staff. Throughout the country, especially in rural areas, the physical infrastructure is poor, teaching and research equipment cannot meet the requirements of educational innovation, there is a lack of expert guidance and support from partners. The number of core teachers is not enough. Therefore, school-based training has not been able to achieve the goal of “colleagues supporting each other, professional guidance”.

School-based teacher training activities need to be valued and identified as one of the key measures for teacher development and be thoroughly implemented at all levels, and included in specific plans for each development stage and each school year. Clear regulations, specific goals, and quality assurance monitoring mechanisms will play a guiding role for school-based training activities.

On the school side, it is necessary to focus on innovating teacher training with the following notes:

Enhance the leadership and inspirational role of the Principal.

Clearly understand the school situation, school development goals, characteristics of facilities, and teaching staff.

Taking teachers as the center, designing training programs that personalize the needs of each teacher, turning the training process into an internal need of the teacher so that teachers can promote initiative, choice and creativity (Guangdong Second Normal University (2023)).

Improve the organizational mechanism, establish groups with clear responsibilities for each individual. Focus on the leading role of experts and core teachers.

Focus on training management staff based on school training, send them to training outside the school to improve leadership ability.

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