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# Considerations about the continuous development of teachers for the Master Program: Programs an Investments Management

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## 1. Basis for participating in the continuous development activities for teachers of the Master Program: Programs and Investments Management

Continuous development of teachers is critical. Professional development refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role.

According to Glattenhorn (1987), by gaining increased experience in one's teaching role they systematically gain increased experience in their professional growth through examination of their teaching ability. Professional workshops and other formally related meetings are a part of the professional development experience (Ganzer, 2000). Much broader in scope than career development, professional development is defined as a growth that occurs through the professional cycle of a teacher (Glattenhorn, 1987). Moreover, professional development and other organized in-service programs are designed to foster the growth of teachers that can be used for their further development

(Crowther et al, 2000). One must examine the content of those experiences through which the process will occur and how it will take place (Ganzer, 2000; Guskey, 2000).

This perspective, in a way, is new to teaching in that professional development and in-service training simply consisted of workshops or short term courses that offered teachers new information on specific aspects of their work (Brookfield, 2005). Champion (2003) posited that regular opportunities and experiences for professional development over the past few years had yielded systematic growth and development in the teaching profession.

Many have referred to this dramatic shift as a new image or a new module of teacher education for professional development (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001; Walling & Lewis, 2000). In the past 25 years there have been standards-based movements for reform (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 1993; Hord, 2004; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Sparks, 2002). The key component of this reform effort has been that effective professional development has created a knowledge base that has helped to transform and restructure quality schools (Guskey, 1995; Willis, 2000).

## 2. Objectives

### How can continuous development of teachers increase the quality of the Master Program: Programs and Investments Management?

- a) **Relationship teacher – student.** Much of the available research on professional development involves its relationship to student achievement. Researchers differ on the degree of this relationship. Variables are the school, teacher, student level related to the level of learning within the classroom, parent and community involvement, instructional strategies, classroom management, curriculum design, student background knowledge, and student motivation (Marzano, 2003). Based upon a review of several studies, Marzano (2003) concluded that the professional development activities experienced by teachers have a similar impact on student achievement to those of the aforementioned variables.
- b) **Content quality through continuous updates.** Curriculum development is a continuous process and a possible model for realizing it is the Montana Curriculum Development Cycle (2011), as follows:
  - Review of process and plan for future revisions;
  - Determine readiness of the plan;
  - Establish curriculum committee and curriculum proposal;
  - Presentation of the curriculum to the board of trustees (academics and/or professionals with specific experience);

- Implementation of the curriculum and specific continuous monitoring and upgrades.

*If this model will be adopted by the Master team, a Board of Trustees is to be chosen. My recommendation: the Board of Trustees should be formed by SNSPA academics and professionals with more than 10 years of experience in Management and/or Project Management in corporations, NGOs and public institutions. The recommendations of the Board of Trustees should be implemented in the curriculum and their effectiveness measured after being operationalized.*

### 3. Continuous development formats: focus on trainings – especially delivered by International Associations relevant for the field of Project / Programs / Investments Management or through changes with teachers from other universities and teaching similar courses.

Theoretical observation: Highly skilled teachers are one of the single most important influences on student success (Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2007). Class size and other salient variables do not impact students' learning trajectories as much as the quality of their teachers (Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2007). In addition, teacher-based influences impact students' performances throughout a significant span of their school careers (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Teachers facilitate the process whereby students cultivate habits of mind and knowledge schemes that are prerequisites for success, meaningful contributions and prosperity in an open, technological world (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

**Example of training: e.g. Program Scorecard, which allows, by using it, to** compare actual and expected progress so you can get a better understanding of remaining work and see historical trends on work that has already been delivered. Scorecards are divided into three main sections, as follows:

- Summary. It shows metrics that roll-up all work contained in the program.
- Charts. The Charts section provides historical insight into how work has progressed.
- Breakdown. The Breakdown section provides the ability to decompose the selected Program by specific dimensions.

A special focus to the skills development of teachers in order to flexible and innovative in the relationship with students, not only orientation towards content, is mandatory.

Highly skilled teachers are able to effectively manage their classroom so that classes are run smoothly, with brief, efficient transitions that function according to a well-ordered, flowing environment. Enhancing such classroom management is the utilization of lessons that present students with an appropriate level of challenge, where clarity is provided when needed so that student self-efficacy, motivation, and achievement remain high (Jere, 1986).

For example, Leinhardt & Greeno (1986) compared the practices of highly skilled and inexperienced teachers and found that the former were able to take attendance in thirty seconds and correct homework in 106 seconds whereas the latter took six minutes to check homework and at the end of this time still did not have an accurate appraisal of who had completed the assignment from the previous evening. In addition, one inexperienced teacher took five minutes to distribute paper yet it took a highly skilled, experienced teacher only thirty seconds to perform the same task. The same pattern was revealed during an additional homework correction, where the highly skilled teacher effectively checked work in two to three minutes and the inexperienced educator spent fifteen minutes to accomplish an equivalent goal. This enables experienced, highly skilled teachers to spend a great deal of time on task, with minimal time wasted on getting organized or settling down. Such a result is further maximized due to the highly skilled teachers' tendency to steal time to review math facts from extra, unused portions of the day such as lunch, bus line ups and bathroom breaks. Marked variance in efficacy, as exemplified by those who are skilled and those who lack experience, reflect the salience of practice in the field.

Schoenfeld's (1998) research provides an explanation of why highly effective teachers can respond to classroom challenges automatically, or with little cognitive effort. Specifically, people abstract experiences in the world by looking at the salient features of an experience and categorizing it in some way. Humans then expect all things that resemble that category to look and behave similarly. With extended experience, people collapse this information into typical schemes and when they just "know" the properties of an exchange or a person automatically. This frees up cognitive resources, thereby allowing people to respond more flexibly (Schoenfeld, 1998). In addition, as humans gain familiarity with something they are able to fine-tune their perceptions of it. It is no wonder then that experts, including highly skilled teachers, demonstrate behaviors consistent with exemplary pattern recognition capabilities (Chi, Glaser & Farr, 1988).

Importance of proven pedagogical skills: for students' success, it is not important to learn from professionals who are not able to transfer knowledge and skills.

Expert personal knowledge and an understanding of pedagogical techniques is a prerequisite but it is not a guarantee that one can unpack elements of a domain and present it effectively to students (Kunzman, 1993). What does afford teachers such capability is the unique merger of content and pedagogical understanding into an embodied whole, equipping them to know what concepts are hard for students to learn, what representations are best to use when teaching certain ideas, and what are optimal ways to develop conceptual understanding.

Therefore, continuous trainings for teachers in order to improve their pedagogical skills are mandatory.

Final remark: a special focus should be on the newest literature important for content and skills updates in program management: understanding agile program management vs. traditional program management in very large scale organizations, both with internal resources or by outsourcing.

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