

Abstract

A Study on the Leadership Capacity of Aspiring Principals in Hong Kong

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The leadership capacity of principals and aspiring principals (APs) is pivotal for quality education. It is important to provide principals with opportunities of continuous professional development (CPD) to further enhance their professionalism in terms of school leadership capacities. As for APs, there is also a need to deliver to them pre-service training before they take up the position of principalship. Stipulated in the consultation paper on Continuing Professional Development for School Excellence issued by the Education Bureau in 2002, a certificate for principalship is a basic requirement for APs before their formal appointment as principals in primary and secondary schools starting from 2004. The designated Leadership Training Course for APs covers six areas of leadership (namely (1) strategic direction and policy environment, (2) learning, teaching and curriculum, (3) principal and teacher growth and development, (4) staff and resources management, (5) quality assurance and accountability and (6) external communication and connection to the outside world) under four leadership domains (namely (1) strategic leadership, (2) instructional leadership, (3) organizational leadership and (4) community leadership). This paper reports a quantitative and qualitative study to analyze responses of 94 APs of how much knowledge and skills they have had in the six areas of leadership. The findings demonstrate that the APs are not confident enough in the domain of organizational leadership in which there is a lack of knowledge in staff and resource management. APs are facing challenges posed by the rapidly changing educational environments in the 21st century and in times of education reforms. To meet the challenges ahead, they will equip themselves with the capacity of distributed leadership when they assume principalship as indicated in the qualitative data.