

**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO THE PROFESSIONAL ABILITY  
AND SPECIALISED KNOWLEDGE SELF-IMPROVEMENT  
OF TEACHERS (IN VIETNAM)**

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**Summary.** School principals play a key role in the orientation, direction and administration of learning and teaching activities – education at schools. Consequently, principals must regularly motivate, promote, and urge teachers to actively participate in improvement as well as self-improvement in order to enhance their professional ability together with specialised knowledge and together build up strong schools with the hope of meeting the demand of the innovative and modern education nowadays.

**Key word:** principal; teacher; self-improvement; professional ability; specialised knowledge; school; teaching and learning.

We are living in the ‘intellectual economy’ in which each individual has desire to be educated, shared information, and trained intellectual abilities. Especially, the need for studying for life should be established during each person.

Teachers are the important people who determine success of education in schools. Therefore, it is highly essential that teachers must develop their own professional ability along with specialised knowledge. The principals have a vital role in this issue at schools.

Based on systematic study of methods to enhance teachers’ professional ability as well as specialised knowledge at schools, we propose a number of principals’ measures to upgrade the success of the operation of teachers’ self-improvement.

**1. Innovating teachers’ awareness and attitudes in the specialised knowledge along with professional ability self-improvement.**

The objective of this measure is to highly appreciate teachers’ role in the professional ability and specialised knowledge self-improvement.

To implement these measures to be effective, the principals should:

**1.1. Organise activities to innovate teachers’ thinking about self-improvement.**

The principals need to organise contests with the hope of learning about the knowledge of training themselves at the present period. By doing so, it can help the teachers differentiate activities of self-improvement during each historical period. At the current period, the tendency towards intellectual economy globalization and information technology requires each certain work being implemented by new intellect. As a result, each individual needs to learn incessantly and learn for life and each one needs to have new knowledge to study. It is also true for teachers to change their attitudes that the beginning training is adequate for them and therefore they can work for life into the attitudes that teachers should always have to train themselves, approach new knowledge, approach the achievements of educational science and pedagogical psychology. Teachers should be aware that it is not always necessary for them to learn by attending universities, or by organizing classes, or by being given lessons based on syllaba from lecturers. In the modern society, training can be achieved by direct and indirect ways. Among them, it is very important for teachers to learn and train themselves to enhance their professional development. Self-improvement among the collective environment must satisfy each individual’s need belonging the satisfaction among the need of the collective pedagogy. Self-improvement in the collective environment must satisfy the harmonic relationship between the general (the demand of the collective environment) and the particular (the demand of the particular); between the object of management (teachers’ self-awareness) and the subject of management (principals). The improvement of professional ability and specialised is not only for a particular job but also for creative application into teachers’ career to complete related missions. One proficient teacher must develop their sustainable career in the cooperative and competitive environment, which helps them reach the height of asserting themselves towards standards proposed by UNESCO: learning to know, learning to do, learning to assert oneself, and learning to live together.

**1.2. Organize activities to enhance teachers’ positive views towards self-improvement.**

The positive attitude of teachers towards self-improvement means that they should actively search for appropriate ways and a variety of training methods for training

themselves at any place, at any time, and even at your working place. The most common means of self-improvement is to innovate the operation as well as the activities in each professional group; arrange to train teachers based on each certain theme; increase hours of visiting classes; hone and exchange experiential initiatives with colleagues within a school or within school groups and regions.

**1.3. Motivate each teacher to raise their democratic spirit in unifying perspectives, goals, and self-improvement activities management principles.**

Principals must organise activities in order to raise the democratic spirit, appreciate the self-employed role of teachers; publicize the plans of self-improvement management; unify the criteria of emulation and evaluation, commit to implement the plans of training professional competence and specialised knowledge as well as training on their own in schools.

Each teacher must determines that training themselves which should be regular, incessant, and lifelong is to develop their career. Principals must manage the comprehensive quality, especially, the quality of teachers, thereby, take measures to enhance their professional competence to contribute to develop teaching – learning quality at schools.

Teachers must be active and enthusiastic about training themselves. Principals should create every favorable condition to ensure that teachers are engaged in training and training on their own. Principals also need to creat such a favorable environment that teachers can enhance their creativity in professional activities as well as in teaching students. Only when are teachers acknowledged their achievements, rewarded, and motivated sufficiently, they will work more and more enthusiastically. Principals must establish and develop motivation for teachers' own professional development.

**2. Moving teachers' position from the object of management into the subject of management in training and training their own professional competence and specialized knowledge.**

Principals encourage teachers in being self-reliant and taking their own responsibility for establishing plans of training teachers in schools and plans that teachers should train their own professional pedagogy. Gradually perfecting management mechanisms of teachers' self-improvement under the principles of moving teachers from the object of management into the subject of management (teachers manage themselves in the self-improvement activities).

Establishing schools' general training plans and management mechanisms of teachers' professional pedagogy self-improvement about pedagogical qualification compared with standard qualification; about teaching methods innovation; about inspection and evaluation students' learning results,... Organising activities is to enhance skills of self-improvement. To implement above goals, principals must:

**2.1. Establish proper management mechanisms which should be effective in organization, and self-improvement activities direction.**

Building up direction mechanisms based on the higher planning: schools' teachers training as well as teachers' self-improvement plans must be consistent, public, and comprehensive from schools to professional groups and to individuals' plans.

– Building up management and direction mechanisms based on the continuous and diverse tendency: self-improvement activities based on long-term or short-term programs (based on degree); self-improvement activities inclined towards themes inside or outside schools.

– Innovating direction mechanisms of inspection, test, and emulation of teachers' professional pedagogy self-improvement activities. Highly appreciating the self-management role of each individual according to the schools' management decentralization: Principals are senior managers – Vice- Principals, Union presidents are mediate managers, professional group leaders directly track, monitor, and perform together with teachers during the self-improvement process.

– Building up conditions to meet more and more increasing demands of teachers' professional pedagogy self-improvement activities: time, teaching order, funding order, materials, other modern means of self-improvement.

– Building up connected management relationship between education, training, and utilization of collective pedagogy with the schools' direct management levels.

**2.2. Motivate teachers to develop their democratic spirit in establishing strategic plans to train schools' teachers and individuals' professional pedagogy self-improvement.**

– Establish a team for proposing and developing line-up managing plans. In particular, principals are the prefects; members are professional group leaders, union leaders, typical teachers representing the whole schools' teachers, and so on.

– Determine strategic objectives and build up strategic options.

– Manage training and self-improvement activities to meet the schools' demand: planning teachers, and changing working positions.

– Manage training and self-improvement activities to meet the society's demand: career orientation, vocational training; training life skills, communication skills, behaviour skills within a number of members inside their houses together with outside the society; training skills to participate in social activities.

– Guide teachers to establish their own self-improvement plans:

It is necessary to have specific self-improvement plans so that teachers can achieve effective self-improvement, not only of the choice of which subjects and what to learn, but also of persistent and persevering implementation of plans arranged into each session or each day.

Self-improvement plans of each teacher must be compatible with their own specific characteristics about time, studying methods, self-improvement abilities. Self-improvement plans must ensure to complete not only teachers' general teaching and learning missions, but also their own self-improvement missions such as hamornizing studying and rest activities; interlacing between different types of self-improvement.

Overall, those above mentioned a number of principals' management measures to develop teachers' self-study ability, and to improve teachers' professional ability self-improvement as well as specialised knowledge in schools. Teachers must consider the self-improvement activities as an inseparable part of their career development; need to mainly manage themselves and need to be managed by principals to achieve the most effective in their career development. We will continue study this problem and implement the feasible evaluation of above solutions to several school principals.

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