

Developing Teachers' Knowledge and Skills Pointers for policy development

DEVELOP TEACHER PROFILES TO ANCHOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. Use these teacher profiles as a framework to guide initial teacher education, teacher certification, teachers' ongoing professional development and career advancement.
- Base the profile of teacher competencies on a clear statement of objectives for student learning.
- Ensure that the teacher profile encompasses strong subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, the capacity to work effectively with a wide range of students and colleagues, contribution to the school and the wider profession and capacity to continue developing.
- Make the profile evidence-based and build on active involvement by the teaching profession in identifying teacher competencies and standards of performance.

VIEW TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AS A CONTINUUM

- View teachers' development as a lifelong learning experience in order to cater for the rapid changes in schools, the potentially long careers of many teachers and the need for updating skills.
- Improve the interconnection of initial teacher education, induction and professional development to create a more coherent learning and development system for teachers.
- Consider using additional resources to improve induction and teacher development throughout the career rather than increasing the length of pre-service education.

MAKE INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION MORE FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE

- Provide consecutive or post-graduate programmes of teacher education to give opportunities to train as a teacher after having completed studies in another field.
- Provide curriculum structures that enable people to enrol part-time or via distance education and to combine teacher education with work or family responsibilities.
- Increase the common components of teacher preparation for different types of school and levels of education to increase opportunities for working in different schools.
- Provide alternative routes into teaching for mid-career changers that combine formal study and on-the-job support with reduced teaching loads.
- Grant credits for qualifications and experience gained outside education to reduce course length and costs.
- Provide retraining and upgrading programmes that enable existing teachers to gain new qualifications to teach in other types of schools or take on high-demand subject areas.
- Develop close relationships with schools, teacher employers and the teaching profession.
- Focus research activities within the teacher education system on the issues facing schools and teachers.
- Provide feedback and evaluation mechanisms to monitor the outcomes of teacher education.

IMPROVE SELECTION INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

- Provide more information and counselling to prospective teacher trainees so that they make better informed enrolment decisions.
- Establish procedures to assess whether individuals wanting to become teachers have the necessary motivation, skills, knowledge, and personal qualities.
- Provide incentive schemes to recruit candidates with high-level competencies.
- Provide flexible programme structures that provide students with school experience early in the course.

- Offer opportunities to move into other courses if trainee teachers' motivation towards teaching changes.
- In countries facing teacher shortages, raise awareness of the attractiveness of teaching as a career choice and use selection criteria that ensure the best possible candidates enter teacher education.

CHANGE THE EMPHASIS IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

- Ensure that initial teacher education combines strong content knowledge with skills for reflective practice and research on the job.
- View initial teacher education as the entry point for the profession and the platform for teachers' development.
- Improve partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools in order to provide teacher trainees with a more integrated experience.
- Ensure that students' field experiences and academic studies reinforce and complement each other.
- Ensure that mentor teachers receive appropriate training and support, including time allowances.

ACCREDIT TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND CERTIFY NEW TEACHERS

- Consider accreditation by an independent agency to assure quality in teacher education.
- Ensure that accreditation criteria focus on the outcomes of programmes rather than on their inputs, curriculum and processes.
- Ensure that certification of teachers includes subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, communication skills, experience and personal qualities.
- Establish a mandatory probationary period of one to two years of teaching before full teaching certification or a permanent teaching post is awarded.

STRENGTHEN INDUCTION PROGRAMMES

- Ensure that mentor teachers in schools provide guidance and supervision to new teachers in close collaboration with the initial teacher education institution.
- Monitor carefully the resources dedicated to induction and mentoring programmes and the quality of mentor training.

INTEGRATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE CAREER

- Encourage an approach to professional development encompassing all following three strategies:
 - entitlement-based, providing teachers with agreed levels of time release and/or financial support
 - incentive-based, recognising participation in professional development as a requirement for salary increases or taking on new roles
 - school-based, linking individual teacher development with school improvement needs
- Find ways for teachers to share their expertise and experience more systematically.

FURTHER READING

These general pointers for policy development are drawn from the Thematic Review on Teacher Policy and the findings are presented in *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*, published in 2005. Country background reports prepared by 25 countries, country reviews of 10 countries and other documents are on the OECD website www.oecd.org/edu/teacherpolicy.