References and Enlightenment of Evaluation Tools of American Naspe for the Professional Development of Teacher

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ABSTRACT. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has designed evaluation tools which aim to promote the professional development of physical teachers. This set of evaluation tools is designed in accordance with the relevant evaluation principles, and has special value for the education programs of physical teachers and even headmasters from preschools to high schools, district curricula experts, and physical teachers of universities and colleges. From the aspect of operating process, this set of evaluation tools includes the stages of self-assessment, external assessment, result processing, and supervising the improvement; from the aspect of indicator system, it is composed of 67 indicators in five dimensions of instruction, evidence of student learning, management/organization, learning climate and professionalism. This set of evaluation tools enlightens us that in terms of the evaluation for the professional development of physical teacher, it is necessary to follow the idea of negotiated evaluation, confirm the orientation of pedagogical assessment and design a complete and systematic indicator system.

KEYWORDS: Association for sport and physical education, Evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers, Evaluation principle, Operation procedure, Indicator system

1. Introduction

Since 1970s, countries in the world have taken the improvement of education quality as the direction of efforts. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (USA) released the report of A Nation at Risk: the Imperative for Education Reform. It was pointed out in the report that the first thing to improve the education quality is to improve the teacher’s quality, and the best method to improve the teacher’s quality is to combine with the evaluation for the professional development of teachers. Since then, the United States turned its attention to and gradually implemented the evaluation for teacher’s professional development. At the end of 1980s, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) began to design a unified national teacher qualification system, which aims to improve teacher’s professional development by establishing a voluntary national certificate system and an evaluation procedure of identifying excellent primary and secondary school teachers. At the end of 1990s, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) formulated teacher professional standards from teacher training, which aims to accelerate teacher’s professional development by combining pre-service education with in-service learning. In 2007, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) specially designed evaluation tools for the professional development of physical teachers based on the practical experience of NBPTS and NCATE. With the influence of American educational administration system and the downward shift of teacher evaluation focus, state educational administration sectors independently adopt evaluation tools for the professional development of physical teachers according to the actual situation. Some states like the State of California adopt the tool for evaluation every year, some states like Georgia adopt the tool every other year or every few years, and some states like the State of Indiana have never used the evaluation tool. In accordance with the requirements of NASPE, state educational administration sectors should first submit the applications to the NASPE. According to the applications, the NASPE organizes external specialists to participate in activities such as external assessment, result processing and supervising the improvement of physical teachers. In the past eight years of use, this set of evaluation tools is increasingly sound and effective, and now has become evaluation tools for the professional development of physical teachers that is easy to be operated in the United States. In view of this, the author first represents the principles and value of the evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers, and introduces the operation procedures and evaluation methods of the evaluation tools, then analyzes the indicator system of the evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers, and finally discusses the enlightenment of evaluation tools for the professional
development of physical teachers for the evaluation of professional development of physical teachers in China.

2. Principle and Value of Evaluation Tools

2.1 Principle of Evaluation Tools

Evaluation principles are the basis for designing evaluation tools and the guide for using them. It was clearly pointed out by the NASPE that the design and application of evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers should follow the principles below:

- The instruction of physical teachers can be evaluated through standards, procedures and expectations. Among them, the standards mainly include National Standards for Physical Education and National Standards for Beginning Physical Education Teachers; the procedures are mainly the teaching process of teachers and the learning process of students, such as the whole teaching process of teachers about a particular knowledge and the whole learning process of students learning certain skills; the expectations include the expected learning outcomes of students, the expectations of teacher’s professional development and the expectations of their social services.

- The instruction of physical teachers can be observed and evaluated by professional evaluators. Actually, professional evaluators are specially trained evaluators, mainly including school leaders, school superintendents, peer, school curriculum specialists and other members of society who voluntarily participate in the evaluation and have certain qualifications. Among them, peers, school curriculum specialists and members of society mainly participate in the external assessment of physical teachers, while school leaders and school superintendents supervise the improvement of unqualified teachers.

- The instruction of physical teachers can be repeatedly observed during the school year. This indicates that the evaluators pay attention not to deliberately designed demonstration lessons, but to regular instruction.

- The instruction assessment of physical teachers should take the entire class period as an evaluation unit. The entire class period can not only reflect the accuracy of teaching content and the progressiveness of teaching objectives, but also highlight the consistency between teaching schedule and students’ learning process. Most importantly, it can show the learning process of students and their changes in knowledge, skill and behavior.

- The teaching observation and evaluation of physical teachers should be a part of comprehensive assessment plan, because the comprehensive assessment also includes formal conference and professional growth plans.

- Physical teachers should make responsible assessments for student performance in accordance with state or national physical education standards.

2.2 Values of Evaluation Tools

The evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers developed by the association for sport and physical education has represented the knowledge, skills and behaviors in physical education curriculum from preschool to high school (K–12). It not only provides basis for the classroom teaching of physical teachers, but also provides assistance for headmasters, district curricula experts, and members of society who participate in the assessment of physical teachers. Meanwhile, it can also guide the education plans of physical teachers in universities and colleges. Specifically, the values of evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers are as follows:

2.2.1 For Headmasters from Preschool to High School

In general, the evaluation tool can provide a reference for headmasters to guide the physical teaching and evaluation. Specifically, the evaluation tool will enable headmasters to (1) prioritize and rearrange the items involved in the evaluation tools in daily teaching, and emphasize certain specific pedagogical knowledge, instructional skills and instructional behavior; (2) appropriately adjust tools to meet the needs of formative evaluation, summative evaluation and feedback; (3) modify and improve the target area in the professional growth plans under the guidance of evaluation tools.

2.2.2 For District Curricula Experts

In general, the evaluation tool can help district curricula experts to guide the professional development of physical teachers, including pre-service teachers and novice teachers. Specifically, with the evaluation tools, district curricula experts can accelerate the professional development of teachers, and help teachers illustrate important points or items for improvement by providing in-service programs, which can be included into the guidance programs for novice
teachers. More importantly, evaluation tools can be taken as formal or informal observation tools for teachers.

2.2.3 For Physical Teachers from Preschool to High School

In general, the evaluation tool can guide the classroom teaching and evaluation of physical teachers. Specifically, physical teachers can not only use the evaluation tool to conduct self-assessment, such as recording a lesson with a video tape and comparing their own courses with the evaluation tools, but also use the evaluation tool as a reference to study and distinguish the teaching content, so as to strengthen the research on specific focus. Furthermore, physical teachers can use the evaluation tool to conduct peer review, such as asking a colleague to visit a class, and evaluating the course by taking the evaluation tool as a reference.

2.2.4 For Education Plan of Physical Teachers in Universities and Colleges

In general, the universities and colleges can not only develop certain key instructional skills of pre-service teachers according to the indicator system of evaluation tools, but also guide pre-service teachers to conduct teaching reflection and self-assessment according to the evaluation tools. In addition, the universities and colleges can take the evaluation tools as the teaching content of education programs of pre-service teachers.

3. Operation Procedure and Evaluation Method of Evaluation Tools

According to the operation situation of the evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers, the evaluation is generally divided into four stages of self-assessment, external assessment, result processing, and supervising the improvement.

3.1 Stage of Self-Assessment

In the stage of self-assessment, physical teachers should first conduct the self-assessment based on the evaluation indicator system, and then give the results to external specialists organized by the association for sport and physical education. And then, the external specialists notify the evaluated physical teachers of the evaluation objectives, evaluation content and evaluation methods 10 days before the implementation of the evaluation to ensure that the teachers have enough time to prepare accordingly.

3.2 Stage of External Assessment

In the stage of external assessment, external specialists organized by the association for sport and physical education will enter the school and conduct on-site evaluation based on the evaluation indicator system. On the one hand, formal and informal observations are conducted for the classroom teaching of physical teachers and professional seminars to evaluate the teaching efficiency, organization management and professional belief level; on the other hand, the teaching records of physical teachers are accessed, such as curriculum standards, instructional design, and evidence of student learning to analyze the non-work performance of physical teachers, such as social services.

3.3 Stage of Result Processing

In the stage of result processing, external specialists hold a post-evaluation meeting based on the evaluation results. The meeting topics mainly include providing evaluation feedback, confirming specific problems in the instruction, providing special suggestions accordingly, and making final decisions. The discussion results of the meeting will be provided to the evaluated physical teachers, the school and the district Office of Staff Relations (OSR) in writing or in the form of interview.

3.4 Stage of Supervising the Improvement

Through the evaluation, some physical teachers may be identified as potential unsatisfactory employees. The district OSR will design a specific counseling plan for these physical teachers. In order to design a relevant counseling plan, firstly, the district OSR holds an initial planning meeting to identify the items of a potential unsatisfactory employee for the improvement in instruction based on the written and oral reports of external specialists; secondly, the district OSR conducts formal and informal classroom observation to further define the teaching defects; thirdly, the post-conference is held to design specific counseling plans; finally, the guidance is given for the items where special assistance is needed in classroom teaching based on the counseling plans. In supervising the improvement, the district OSR repeats the
counseling plans according to the improvement of instruction. On condition that there is still no improvement, the mid-year assessment conference will be held to announce that the teacher’s evaluation result is lower than the average. In the event that specific counseling measures are taken with the specified time but fail to take effect, the teacher will no longer be able to undertake the work of physical teaching.

4. Indicator System of Evaluation Tools

The indicator system of evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers consists of instruction, evidence of student learning, management/organization, learning climate and professionalism.

4.1 Instruction

The instruction dimension is composed of 19 evaluation indicators, which mainly involves the positioning of physical teaching, the design of teaching objectives and content, and the interaction in the class period.

In terms of the positioning of physical teaching, the primary consideration is whether the instruction of physical teachers is based on the local, state or national standards for physical education, whether it can support the reform plan of the school, and whether it can effectively complete the physical education curriculum goals. In terms of the design of teaching objectives and content, it mainly examines whether the teaching objectives and content are accurate and contemporary, whether they can be clearly stated in concise language, and whether they can be adjusted based on student performance or formal evaluation information. In terms of the interaction in the class period, it mainly decides whether the teachers can present the expectations of student learning or teaching objectives through appropriate course introductions, whether various forms are adopted to guide students to participate in teaching, and whether meaningful and real-time feedback is made to students.

4.2 Evidence of Student Learning

The dimension of evidence of student learning mainly includes 11 evaluation indicators, focusing on the standards, methods and effects adopted by physical teachers to evaluate student’s learning achievement. This dimension mainly includes whether the teacher’s evaluation of student’s learning achievement is related to local, state and national standards for physical education, whether the teachers introduce the evaluation content and marking standards of learning achievement to students, whether the teachers adopt the diversified evaluation method, which includes sustainability assessment, self-assessment, off-campus learning outcomes and progress, whether the teachers’ evaluation of student’s learning achievement promotes the development of students’ innovative and critical abilities, whether the application of students’ skills in sports is considered, and whether the progress and achievements of students are regularly presented to stakeholders.

4.3 Management/Organization

The dimension of management/organization is composed of 16 evaluation indicators, which mainly includes the management and organization of curriculum, instruction, students and time. In terms of the management and organization of curriculum, it mainly observes whether the curriculum plan and content of physical teachers are consistent with the local, state and national standards; in terms of the management and organization of instruction, it mainly observes the safety, controllability and supportability of the physical teaching activity area, and the suitability and practicability of sports equipment; in terms of the management and organization of students, it mainly observes students’ familiarity with class rules, teaching norms and expected learning outcomes, students’ self-control and cooperation in the group during the learning process, and smoothness of students’ learning results; in terms of the management and organization of time, it mainly observes whether the time for meaningful learning can account for 60% of the total teaching time, and whether the teaching time is allocated to the main teaching objectives.

4.4 Learning Climate

The dimension of learning climate is composed of nine evaluation indicators, which mainly evaluates teacher’s ability to create a learning climate from the aspects of the nature and value of learning climate and student performance in the climate. In terms of the nature of learning climate, it mainly analyzes whether the learning climate created by the teachers can stimulate students’ motivation to learn. In terms of the value of learning climate, it mainly analyzes whether the learning climate created by the teachers can support the long-term physical activities and technical movement learning of students, and whether the teachers can create a learning climate to promote the success,
appropriate risk management and positive self-expression. In terms of the student performance, it focuses on whether the students can respect and appreciate others’ personality, support others’ learning and have a positive cognition of teaching awards in the learning climate created by the teachers.

4.5 Professionalism

The dimension of professionalism is composed of 12 evaluation indicators, which focuses on the professional loyalty, professional development and professional services of the teachers. In terms of professional loyalty, it mainly studies whether the teachers advocate and persist in sports learning for a long time, and whether they can adhere to the professional ethics standards. In terms of professional development, it mainly observes whether the teachers can choose suitable opportunities according to their professional development status, whether they can actively participate in the professional development community, and whether they can design annual professional development goals. In terms of professional services, it mainly concerns whether the teachers can apply what they have learned to social practice activities, including sharing resources and information and actively participating in community services.

5. Enlightenment of Evaluation Tool for the Professional Development of Physical Teachers

In general, the evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers designed by the American NASPE can not only improve the teaching quality of physical teachers to a certain degree, but also promote the professional development of physical teachers. From the current situation of the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers in primary and secondary schools in China, the evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers designed by the American NASPE has the following enlightenment to us.

5.1 In Terms of the Evaluation Conception, the Evaluation for the Professional Development of Teachers Shall Adhere to the Concept of Negotiated Evaluation.

The negotiated evaluation is the core concept advocated by the Fourth Generation Evaluation. E. G. Guba from the School of Education of Indiana University and Y. S. Lincoln from Wiederbult University pointed out in the Fourth Generation Evaluation that “the assessment processes should be a psychological construct through consultation... the evaluation conclusion is obtained through the mutual negotiation between the participants-stakeholders and evaluatees” [3]. From this point of view, the evaluation should be the consultation between the parties involved in the evaluation, including the evaluators and the evaluatees.

From the previous description of the operation procedures and evaluation methods of the evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers, the evaluation procedures are carried out in the consultation between the participants, including the stakeholders and the evaluated physical teachers. Specifically, in the evaluation, there is the consultation between the evaluated physical teachers and external specialists, that between external specialists and the district OSR, and that between the external specialists and school leaders, school superintendents, peers, and school curriculum specialists.

From the formation of the evaluation conclusions for the professional development of physical teachers, the evaluation conclusions are formed by the participants through mutual negotiation. Specifically, external specialists form specific evaluation conclusions through mutual negotiations in the post-evaluation meeting, which are provided to the evaluated physical teachers, the school and the district OSR in writing or in the form of interview.

According to the current situation of the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers in primary and secondary schools in China, the evaluations are mostly carried out according to a top-down mechanism, with strong administrative and bureaucratic tendencies. Due to this, there is a lack of equal consultations between the evaluated physical teachers and the evaluators, and it is difficult for evaluators to achieve the internal consultation. Specifically, “education administrative sectors often regard evaluation as a routine administrative management activity and a means of managing and controlling teachers”[4]. Under the guidance of this evaluation thought, physical teachers can only accept the evaluation, but not conduct self-assessment. Even though the self-assessment is conducted, the results are difficult to be accepted by the evaluators, which makes it difficult to achieve a consultation between the evaluated physical teachers and the evaluators. “Generally speaking, the evaluators include experts or school teaching and research councilors, leaders at all levels and teachers of the same discipline”[5]. In this organizational structure, the evaluators receive absolutely the leader’s instruction and do not dare to rebut, even though the leader is a layman, or even makes a wrong judgment. It thus appears that it is difficult to achieve equal consultation among the evaluators.

In view of the current situation of the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers in primary and secondary schools in China, it is necessary to learn from the American NASPE to take the concept of negotiated
evaluation into the operation procedures and evaluation methods of the evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers. On the one hand, it shall make sure that the evaluated physical teachers participate in the evaluation, have the right to self-assessment, and fully trust the conclusions of the self-assessment, so as to realize the democratic consultation between the evaluated physical teachers and the evaluators. On the other hand, it shall make sure that the evaluators break through the existing concepts, demonstrate the diversification of values, and comprehensively evaluate the professional development of physical teachers through a common psychological construct.

5.2 In Terms of the Evaluative Orientation, the Orientation of Pedagogical Assessment Should Be Adhered to in the Evaluation for the Professional Development of Physical Teachers.

Early in 1988, the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation determined the purpose of evaluating education staff, that is, the evaluation of educators should promote the improvement of educational principles, the realization of teaching missions, and the fulfillment of teaching responsibilities, thus meeting the requirements of students, communities and society. At the beginning of the 21st century, G. Wiggins, an American education evaluation expert, officially put forward the idea of pedagogical assessment. He believes that “the pedagogical assessment means that the evaluation procedures and conclusions are educational for the evaluatees, and useful feedback must be provided to students, teachers, managers, and decision makers. In addition, this feedback is designed for the development of the evaluatees, namely, for improving the performance of the evaluatees.”[6].

According to the result processing of the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers, external specialists not only hold a post-evaluation meeting based on the evaluation processes, but also provide the meeting results to the evaluated physical teachers, the school and OSR in writing or in the form of interview. “This is not to prove, but to improve”[7]. According to the description of G. Wiggins for pedagogical assessment, the result processing of the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers is a reflection of the orientation of pedagogical assessment.

The pedagogical assessment is more significant in those potential unsatisfactory employees. According to the supervision for the improvement of potential unsatisfactory employees as described above, the district OSR will design and assist them to implement special counseling plans. The counseling plans are designed based on the written and oral reports of external specialists, especially the items that need to be improved in teaching. Meanwhile, the district OSR provides targeted guidance to the teachers who need assistance in teaching to improve their instruction, even constantly repeat the counseling plans according to the improvement.

According to the current situation of the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers in primary and secondary schools in China, the evaluation results are mainly to “provide a personnel decision-making basis for the retention, promotion, salary increase, and layoff of physical teachers”[8]. Specifically, the evaluation results are generally taken as the basis for grade assessment such as promotion and awards, which not only do not point out the success or failure of physical teachers in teaching, but also do not provide specific and accurate guidance for the professional development of physical teachers. Meanwhile, the evaluation results are basically summative decisions, and will not formulate specific professional development plans for physical teachers, especially those with poor performance.

In view of the current situation of the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers in primary and secondary schools in China, it is necessary to learn from the American NASPE to adhere to the orientation of pedagogical assessment in the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers. On the one hand, the evaluation results should include the achievements and shortcomings in the instructional design, instructional operation, student evaluation and professional development of physical teachers, which are fed back to the evaluated physical teachers, so that they can understand their own education and teaching status. On the other hand, specific and feasible professional development programs should be designed for the teachers based on the evaluation results to guide the professional development of teachers.

5.3 In Terms of the Evaluation System, a Complete and Systematic System Structure Should Be Designed for the Evaluation for the Professional Development of Teachers.

P. Perry, an American teacher education researcher, once pointed out that “the professional development of teachers indicates the growth of teachers in their professional life, including the enhancement of confidence, the improvement of skills, and the continuous updating, broadening and deepening of the knowledge of the teaching subjects, and the strengthening of the awareness for the actions in class”[9]. According to Perry’s definition, the teacher’s professional development is a systematic program which is composed of multiple dimensions. Therefore, a comprehensive and holistic perspective should be established in evaluating the teacher’s professional development, so that the systematic
program can be evaluated from all aspects. Only in this way, can comprehensive policy suggestions and guidance be provided for the professional development of teachers.

According to the description for the indicator system of the evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers as described above, the evaluation tool for the professional development of physical teachers is composed of 67 evaluation indicators in five dimensions of instruction, evidence of student learning, management/organization, learning climate and professionalism. Among them, the instruction dimension mainly involves the positioning of physical teaching, the design of teaching objectives and content, and the interaction in the class period; the dimension of evidence of student learning focuses on the standards, methods and effects adopted by physical teachers to evaluate student’s learning achievement; the dimension of management/organization mainly includes the management and organization of curriculum, instruction, student and time; the dimension of learning climate focuses on evaluating teachers’ ability to create a learning climate; the dimension of professionalism focuses on evaluating from the professional loyalty, professional development and professional services of teachers. This evaluation system of five dimensions covers the instructional design and instructional operation of teacher, teachers' evaluation, organization and management of students, and the professional loyalty, professional development and professional services of teachers. These dimensions interact with each other and together form an organic whole.

Some researchers have analyzed the content of the current evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers in China. LI et al. pointed out that the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers is mainly a comprehensive assessment for the professional qualities of teachers and the classroom teaching. Among them, the evaluation for the professional qualities of physical teachers focuses on the development potential of teachers, which mainly includes the political attainments, cultural quality and professional ability of teachers. The evaluation for classroom teaching mainly includes the teaching attitude, teaching content, teaching skill and teaching result, and so on [10]. RAO pointed out that the evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers mainly includes the professional ability (professional quality, teaching ability, research ability and teaching workload of teachers and the classroom teaching. Among them, the teaching ability of teachers is the focus of the evaluation, which mainly includes the comprehension and mastery of teaching content, the mastery and application of theories and methods of modern physical teaching, the basic skills necessary for physical teaching, the ability to stimulate and maintain students’ interest in sports and to promote students to form the habit of physical exercise, the ability of using computer and multimedia to assist teaching and the development and application of curriculum resources.[11] It was found from the research that the current evaluation for the professional development of physical teachers in China mainly focuses on two dimensions of professional quality and classroom teaching, but ignores the evaluation for other dimensions such as the instructional design and professional services. This undoubtedly exerts an influence on the integrality and systematicness of the evaluation system for teacher’s professional development to a certain extent.

In view of the shortcomings of the evaluation system for the professional development of physical teachers in China, it is necessary to learn from the American NASPE to design a complete and systematic evaluation system for physical teacher’s professional development. On the one hand, dimensions, such as instructional design, instructional operation, teachers’ evaluation, organization and management of students, the professional loyalty, professional development and professional services of teachers, should be set in the evaluation system to ensure the integrality of the system; on the other hand, above dimensions should be further divided to form specific and feasible evaluation indicators, and the interior connection between the evaluation indicators and the dimensions should be established to ensure the systematicness of the system.

References


