



Enhancing Faculty PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*A Quest to Empower Lecturers in Collaborative
Active Learning*

Chan Chang-Tik

Enhancing Faculty Professional Development

Enhancing Faculty Professional Development: A Quest to Empower Lecturers in Collaborative Active Learning by Dr Chan Chang-Tik takes a research-based yet highly practical approach to designing and delivering professional development for teachers. Endorsing a constructivist view of learning, each chapter provides foundational knowledge for professional developers and a well-developed workshop plan for actively engaging teachers in meaningful professional learning experiences and practice activities. Written in first-person makes reading this chapter-by-chapter professional development guide feel less like a book and more like a close conversation with a master teacher.

—**Dr Jana Hunzicker, Professor and Associate
Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Education
and Health Sciences, Bradley University**

In *Enhancing Faculty Professional Development: A Quest to Empower Lecturers in Collaborative Active Learning*, Dr Chan Chang-Tik skillfully integrates research-based best practices for learning and teaching in a lively, practical way that addresses instructors' perennial question: "I taught it. Why didn't they learn it?"

Drawing upon social constructivist theory, Social Interdependence Theory (SIT), the Framework of Participation (FP), and rich personal experience, Dr Chang-Tik takes us through a series of workshop activities designed to build deep professional peer learning communities among instructors in service to their own and their students' learning. These workshops include co-regulated group participation, assessment and feedback, and are applicable in face-to-face or online learning environments incorporating current 21st-century technologies.

Because it so thoroughly and clearly presents theoretical foundations and concrete applications, this book will be a rich resource for instructor professional development in any educational setting.

—**Dr Marcella Bullmaster-Day, Associate Professor,
Touro University Graduate School of Education**

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**A Quest to Empower Lecturers
in Collaborative Active Learning**

By

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In loving memory of my mum Gim Boon and dad Koon Huat, whose guidance and teaching live on in this book.

To my brother Chin Wah and sister Saw Hoon for their unwavering support.

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PREFACE

In order to achieve the benefits of active learning, lecturers must focus more on student learning and less on teaching, and venture into the process of engaging students in collaborative community-based critical thinking and discourse. In this regard, this book aims to empower lecturers in collaborative active learning (CAL) through faculty professional development (PD) which is a hands-on practice-based training in a blended mode. Specifically, in the areas of theoretical frameworks, assessment and feedback practices, design of learning activities suitable for appropriate learning spaces aided by technologies.

In today's active learning scenario, the focus is on student learning and less on teaching. If so, there is a pedagogical gap that modern day lecturers have to accomplish, that is, to draw in learning from students in both the physical and virtual environments. As a result, lecturers need training to fulfil their new role but time and workload are some of the constraints they face. Therefore, this book attempts to address these challenges with flexible PD supported by research-based essential topics of CAL that have been implemented in real-world learning spaces aided by technologies. This approach may lay a bridge between research findings and their practicalities in the learning and teaching settings.

This book focuses on PD in a blended mode where interactive learning activities are used to strengthen participant collaboration in a group-based engagement. It includes carefully designed assessment and feedback as learning activities to support peer and self-learning. The training recognises the importance of social media and digital technologies that include artificial intelligence (AI) to support engagement and interaction in formal and informal learning spaces which are hospitable for learning.

There are six chapters arranged to draw out distinctive perspectives of CAL in PD. One unique feature of the book is the specially designed workshops for each chapter to provide supplementary learning capabilities to enhance hands-on practice-based training in a blended mode. There is

a need for this book because it addresses some problems highlighted as follows

- In order to adopt a student-centred approach, lecturers need to adjust to their **new role of facilitating learning** rather than delivering knowledge. In this book through experiential learning and participation in blended learning workshops, lecturers will experience first-hand the facilitation skills.
- In a blended learning and teaching environment, there is a greater need to address **personal and professional changes** of lecturers. The community-based approach practised in this book emphasises the key role played by social interaction in shaping professional and personal changes.
- This book approaches faculty PD as collaborative, community work within universities in order to meet **individual and institutional needs** in educational theory, instructional methodology, and educational technology in a blended environment.

This book focuses on the problems mentioned using specially designed workshops in each chapter to provide supplementary learning capabilities to enhance hands-on practice-based training. The workshops allow participants to collaboratively engage in purposeful critical discourse and reflection over the depth and breadth of the training content of their own unique needs; they even have more control over the pace of training. This arrangement allows participants to sign up for the training at any time convenient to them according to their availability and workload. The need for a solid understanding of CAL is often noted, therefore, the aim of this book is to develop an effective faculty PD to ensure and support active learning.

Participants normally complain of irrelevant modules in training and time constraint. The training programme in this book allows participants to choose the category of materials (basic, intermediate or advanced) needed based on their individual needs to avoid participants feeling overwhelmed by the materials provided. According to the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), participants are more likely to develop in proximity to his/her current status of learning. To address the issue of time constraint, participants can sign up for the training at any time convenient to them according to their availability and workload. A break in the training is allowed, but they have to complete all the six modules within nine months. On top of that, the training is in a blended mode (combination of online and offline).

I started my career as a government secondary school teacher from 1983 to 1992. Thereafter I moved on to be a lecturer at the Royal Military College and subsequently to other private colleges and universities. At the universities, I designed and conducted faculty PD for more than 10 years that catered for among others, participants from the Medical and Culinary Schools.

CHAPTER 1

FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – FRAMEWORK, PERCEPTIONS AND DIGITAL

Professors who do not have an understanding of pedagogy may think about the content students should learn, but not the cognitive capabilities they should develop

—Dan Berrett (2012)

“I have knowledge and my job as a lecturer is to deliver that knowledge to my students ... stop talking about faculty professional development, I don’t have time for training.”

Generally, lecturers do not place much emphasis on faculty professional development (PD) due to academic promotion priority, quality of PD and of course, time constraint. As a PD facilitator, I have received feedback and even complaints from lecturers regarding faculty PD. They are as follows:

Look at lecturer A, he can’t teach at all but he is promoted squarely based on his publications in Tier One journals.

I want to make my teaching more engaging but I don’t have anybody to assist me in developing learning activities. I can’t do it alone as it is too time consuming.

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The duration of training is too lengthy – 5 consecutive days from 9 to 5 – some modules may not even be applicable in this campus.

I empathise with the lecturers and to ameliorate the situations to a win-win outcome for lecturers, students and universities, I propose a flexible, community-based faculty PD in a blended mode (Chapter 6, this volume). In this training, lecturers can choose the pace of their training according to their availability and workload and even choose the training materials needed based on their individual current knowledge and comfort. A break in the training is allowed, but they have to complete all the modules within a stipulated time. In this manner, it will help to mitigate the time constraint problem and also improve the quality of PD to the lecturers' satisfaction. As for academic promotion, universities may have to give adequate attention to learning and teaching. It is not enough to recognise the best teaching and learning endeavour through yearly awards, universities have to support lecturers in their daily attempts to design engaging learning activities, to provide suitable learning and teaching software, and to create an environment favourable for lecturers to attend PD.

A glance at the literature reveals that PD is an integral part of teaching at universities in the United States, Australia, and the UK for more than 30 years (Jones et al., 2017) but it is disregarded in many European countries (Berendt, 1998). Nevertheless, in Malaysia, PD is somewhat compulsory in private universities because it is not strictly enforced. Still, Maaranen et al. (2022) propose that PD should not be mandated from the top management. It would be better to provide incentives for participants to attend the programmes, such as promotion or salary implications (Popova et al., 2022). In what follows, in certain universities lecturers are required to attend the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education course which is linked to an academic degree while others may attend in-house PD programmes such as the Community Lecturer e-Training Programme (CLeP; Chapter 6, this volume). Among the objectives of the PD programmes, the focus is oriented towards improving student learning rather than towards improving teaching, that is, to provide an alternative teaching culture which is more Student Focused and less Teacher Focused. Specifically, participants are introduced to collaborative active learning (CAL) approaches such as using assessment and feedback practices to support student learning (Chapter 3, this volume), designing learning activities to facilitate CAL (Chapter 4, this volume) and revealing the possibilities of conducting CAL in informal spaces outside the classrooms aided by technologies (Chapter 5, this volume).

In this book, student learning is taken to mean group-based collaborative interaction to construct shared meanings through arguments, deliberations, elaborations, and negotiations (Chapter 2, this volume). I tailor the focus of PD to empower participants in CAL which is in line with the socio-constructivist and inquiry-based approaches. The modality of PD is blended which

is getting more popular post-pandemic. It is fast replacing the traditional mode of face-to-face training that requires physical presence of participants at all times. Fully online professional development (OPD) is the only option during COVID-19 lockdown but now it is gradually being substituted by blended PD due to social isolation and some technical problems. Less common forms of PD are the peer review of teaching (PRT) and the professional learning networks (PLN) that require participants to have a strong digital competency.

Framework for PD of Lecturers

Professional Characteristics

Among the frameworks for PD, the conceptual framework suggested by [Sancar et al. \(2021\)](#) as ‘third-generation framework’ or PD 3.0 can serve the focus of this book quite well. This framework looks at PD holistically where participants’ personal characteristics, professional characteristics and process-related characteristics are interrelated to reinforce participants’ values and motivations to try new innovative approaches in their teaching. With respect to collaboration in the professional characteristics, participants are drawn into CAL ideas and applications that they can apply to support their professional teaching experience using student-centred approaches. To illustrate, in PD sessions I conducted, participants were allowed to group themselves, usually four to six per group. Subsequently, each group was provided a different set of activities to discuss and eventually to share their responses with the other group members for their inputs and feedback. To this end, the PD sessions bring out the professional characteristics of the PD 3.0 framework where participants embrace peer communication and constructive dialogue. For instance, a social science lecturer explained how her students debated and argued in class and a science lecturer interrupted her and said his students were ‘dead silence’ in class. At this moment, another lecturer offered her thought, ‘It could be in science, both lecturers and students are seeking correct answers, therefore, students remain quiet if they are not sure they have the correct answers’. All these interactions among participants would strengthen their social bonds and cultivate a learning community. It also brings out each participant’s professional characteristics like teaching experience, role perception and professional sensitivity. Importantly, PD facilitators should link theory with practice to help create a learning environment that encourages higher level of learning. To this end, it is also important to emphasise collaboration with peers in a learning community for joint reflection of learning processes, and a good understanding of how research and teaching might be interrelated.

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With regard to the situation above, I assure them that correct answers are important but the process leading to it is equally important because it supports learning. For example, students may want to know how you arrive at the answers. By telling them to apply, say Theory A, may not be enough. The next questions may be why Theory A and not Theory B? How do you apply the theory? Why apply it in this manner? The answers to these questions constitute the learning process. It leads to heavy deliberations and counterarguments which are actually CAL activities supported by the socio-constructivist theory. Therefore, do not just provide students with correct answers, give them the process leading to the answers. This is because the process supports a higher level of learning and correct answers cannot deliver. And the process builds social bonds as well as learning community and correct answers are incapable of doing. My response to the situation mentioned has highlighted two more professional characteristics such as expertise and professional awareness.

Each participant is an expert in his/her discipline but not necessarily in education. That is why participants are strongly encouraged to attend faculty PD and be committed to it willingly in line with PD 3.0 framework, professional characteristics. In this regard, PD attendance is voluntary as it helps to enhance participants' expertise and collaboration with peers in the spirit of CAL. Nevertheless, there are still cases where participants are asked to attend PD by their superiors due to teaching weaknesses and students' complaints. They are the ones who openly demonstrate unwillingness to commit and to collaborate. What I do to participants of this nature is to understand their situations by talking to them privately. I offer my assistance and propose actions for them to consider. Usually, these are extra actions tailored to their pedagogical needs and to ameliorate their emotional or mental wounds that result from students' complaints.

Process-Related Characteristics

Further, participants' belief and trust of the process in the process-related characteristics of PD 3.0 play an essential role in encouraging take up of PD. [Michael \(2007\)](#) concurs that lecturers' belief about teaching and their teaching experiences can influence their interest in PD. According to [Gerde et al. \(2019\)](#), the alignment between participants' belief, personal and practical knowledge and the information provided in the PD process is crucial for the implementation of newly acquired approaches in their practices. A glance at my experience in conducting PD in a medical school setting reveals that process-related characteristics of PD 3.0 is central for

the acceptance of any new approaches. For instance, in a clinical school, teaching takes place in the ward such as bedside teaching and ward round and not in a lecture theatre. Lecturers use the Objective Structured Clinical Examination for teaching, learning, assessment and feedback. Therefore, I adjusted all the activities to adapt to the requirements of the school. I learned that the lecturers were initially quite sceptical on how they could benefit from this workshop that had nothing to do with medicine. As such, during the workshop, I did not lecture them but managed to get them to share their teaching problems with me and their peers. This is because the social constructivist theory states that learning is a social phenomenon that requires sharing with and teaching to others (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Therefore, instructors should guide rather than lecture. Using that as a catalyst I zeroed in to suggest ideas to mitigate their problems of making a theoretical lesson more engaging. In this regard, my feedback to them was to draw in their work experiences and to relate them to real-life cases in the hospital. I told them theoretical lessons are best taught through applications, that is, start the lesson with applications before finally drawing in the theory. I was glad I managed to provide them with useful teaching and learning strategies and by using highly interactive workshop activities I believed I had won them over.

Another important feature of the process-related characteristics of PD 3.0 is belief and trust in the process. In order to gain participants' trust, one effective method is to get their peers to share experiences in the process with them – their ups and downs – including recommendations on how to avoid pitfalls. I also invite small groups of students to talk to participants, sharing what they like and dislike. Participants are welcome to clarify any doubts they have with the students. Finally, I usually remind participants that no matter how well we prepare there will be unexpected problems when we launch any new innovative methods. Try to solve the problems, if possible, with the involvement of students because they are certainly part of the solutions.

With regard to another process-related characteristic – expectation – I always spelled out clearly my expectations of participants' performance in my programme's training outcomes. The question is what are participants' expectations of training? Are they aligned with the programme outcomes? If yes, it is likely to have voluntary and effective participation from them. If not, there may be issues of dissatisfaction and self-fulfilling prophecies such as 'I told you so, it's a waste of time'. To this end, the first duty of every PD facilitator is to find out what participants wish to achieve upon attending training. Consequently, PD facilitators will design the training programme to fulfil the requirements of the participants. In other words, the mismatch discussed should not have happened. Otherwise, it is a failure even before the programme is launched.

Personal Characteristics

According to [Rodgers et al. \(2022\)](#), it is advisable to make the association between student progress and new instructional practices a catalyst for lecturers' changing beliefs with the intervention. Given the insight above, PD should not be a one-off activity but a continuous interactive process between lecturers and PD facilitators supported by regular feedback on students' progress to aid in the adjustments of the instructional practices and the PD process. Indeed, lecturers constantly feedback to me on their students' reactions to new practices and we work together to make necessary adjustments. For instance, in a group-based learning in informal learning spaces outside a classroom without the physical presence of lecturers, students appreciate the 'freedom' away from lecturers' influence. When they are asked to elaborate on what they mean by influence, the responses are, 'We can ask our friends anything; we don't feel confined to a classroom culture of always being careful on what we can say; we are of equal status in a group, no hierarchy like teacher and student'. In this approach to learning, it is not necessary for lecturers to make a round to check on students' learning in informal spaces spread across the campus. But due to their personal characteristics such as commitment and leadership, they insist on doing so.

Importantly, when lecturers feel that the main purpose of the PD process is to value and reinforce their personal characteristics, then they will be more motivated and enthusiastic to try any new applications from PD in the classroom ([Hunzicker, 2011](#)). Therefore, in order to reinforce lecturers' personal characteristics like self-efficacy, confidence and competence in learning and teaching, particularly in the new applications, I maintain contact with them even after CLeP. A simple email like 'Hello, how is everything?' will indicate to them that my door is always open for discussion if they have any learning and teaching problems. I want to build their confidence in teaching by letting them know that I will assist them when they run into pedagogical problems. Subsequently, it will develop their self-efficacy in teaching like, 'Yes, I can do it', and also their competency in the new applications as well as knowledge and skills in teaching.

But lecturers' thoughts, potentials, inspirations, and goals are different and it may systematically affect the PD process and outcomes. In addition, facilities in which PD is practised such as the content, delivery and technologies used in the process may affect the outcomes too. I have come across a science lecturer who believes that in his discipline there is no grey area, it is either black or white. So, according to him, CAL does not apply. Due to his belief, his lessons are very teacher-focused and even when he asks questions, he expects correct answers only. However, in the training we discuss a variety of topics including genetics and climate change. We question the underlying

assumptions of theories and principles. As a result, he begins to reflect on his delivery of science subjects and eventually make some adjustments. In doing so, it draws out his delivery potential and changes his thoughts on how science should be taught.

To this end, my PD programme discussed in Chapter 6 takes into consideration these differences. Lecturers who are undecided or reluctant to pursue the education professions or professionally inadequate are provided different treatments in the PD programme. This is because according to the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), participants are more likely to develop in proximity to his/her current status of learning. In a situation as described, I provide additional assistance to lecturers who have a change of mind and are interested. In other words, upon lecturers' request I adjust their training materials to match their progress and willingness to upgrade their status of learning. Importantly, lecturers' personal characteristics including their own individual and professional qualities will have some impact on the PD process.

In Support of Framework PD 3.0

Learning Outcomes

In the context of student-centred learning, satisfaction shown by students in the learning process is not captured by existing learning outcomes (Hinojosa-Pareja & García-Cano, 2020). As such, I propose to consider these factors when reflecting on the learning process, that is, (1) willingness to participate in discussion, (2) use of ideas and concepts learned in applications, and (3) dissemination of feedback among peers. Incidentally, these factors are related to the process-related characteristics of PD 3.0. To illustrate, the framework used in CLeP will enable lecturers to advocate the proposed factors in the learning outcomes. Take for example, willingness to participate in discussion, this factor is close to voluntary and effective participation of the process-related characteristics. Having experienced the said characteristic in training will enable lecturers to have better insights into the proposed factor in the learning outcome, particularly, regarding 'willingness'. As for another factor such as use of ideas in application, again with reference to open to innovation in the process-related characteristic, lecturers will appreciate the proposed factor better if they themselves are open to innovations and changes in the training. Lastly, regarding the third factor – peer feedback – to be included in the learning outcomes, it is related to openness to innovations and possibly lecturers' expectations in the process-related characteristics. Therefore, the proposed three factors for learning outcomes are in support of the framework PD 3.0.

Social Presence

In addition, I would like to engage lecturers through the PD process the concepts of knowledge construction and assessment *for learning* – two basic elements of CAL – in the dissemination of learning. Investigating the attributes, challenges, and strengths of CAL, [Chang-Tik \(2022\)](#) further argues that social presence is crucial for the success of active learning, particularly, in knowledge construction and assessment *for learning*. Furthermore, according to [Ratan et al. \(2022\)](#), lecturers' social presence is positively associated with class enjoyment in both synchronous and asynchronous environments. If so, students who feel more positively connected to others may invest more effort into their studies. Therefore, I propose that lecturers experience social interactions and acceptance during the PD process and are introduced to social anxiety too. In doing so, they will have first-hand experience of these social phenomena that will place them in a better position to advise their students when they implement CAL. Based on my observation during PD workshops, lecturers who are new to the teaching profession usually keep to themselves and they are quite reluctant to engage with the activities for fear of negative reactions from their peers. One way to reduce social anxiety is to build trust among group members. Usually before a workshop begins, I allow participants to mingle and socialise in their own way. I only step in for groups that are rather quiet. I randomly pick on one participant in the group and say, 'Artificial intelligence (AI) is applied in mobile phones, how is it applicable in education?' A question like this will start a conversation and the other members usually join in. As a result, there are social interactions and trust gradually develops.

In a training, they were told collective responsibility is required for collaboration and therefore, they were encouraged to critique one another's responses to arrive at a group consensus. Importantly, they were told that every view is an opportunity to enhance learning – do not discard them without deliberations. In doing so, participants progressively accept each other's ideas and value differences in opinions and views. They have more open conversations with each other and experience social acceptance. One participant commented, 'I am afraid they may not accept my thoughts as I am new to teaching. I am glad they do discuss my contributions. It gives me confidence to speak up'. Therefore, through experience gained in this training lecturers have a better appreciation of how his/her students, especially the shy ones, experience social anxiety and acceptance in a group-based learning. Both anxiety and boredom can challenge group-based learning such as knowledge construction and collaboration and it warrants emotion regulation to restore active participation through cognitive strategies to focus on task execution ([Törmänen et al., 2021](#)).