

Being a Teacher in Higher Education: Techne or Praxis

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Abstract : This study investigates the construction of higher education teachers' roles from the perspectives of participants in a compulsory teachers' professional development for Vietnamese higher education teachers. Constructivist grounded theory was used as methodology and analysis of the study. Fifteen program participants were semi-structured interviewed before they started the professional development program for higher education teachers. Five trainers of the program were interviewed and documents related to teachers' standards in Vietnam were analysed to supplement participants' perspectives. Standards and roles of higher education teachers emerged as two categories grounded from data. Standard category involves moral and professional criteria, whereas roles of higher education teachers category consists of specific roles related to guiding student learning, and advising their academic, moral and social activities. A model of higher education teachers' conceptions of their roles in a Vietnamese context addressing both professional (techne) and moral (praxis) responsibilities is constructed from this study. A discussion on teachers' roles in higher education is put forward and insightful implications for the design and possible restructure of teachers' professional development for early career higher education teachers is suggested.

Keywords : higher education teachers' roles and standards, moral roles, teachers' professional development, teachers' conceptions of their roles

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