

# The Use of Practitioners as Part-Time Faculty in Postsecondary Professional Education

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## Abstract

Donald Schon's theory of reflective learning (1983, 1987) has been the model of professional education for decades. Yet little research is done to examine the role of practitioners as part-time teachers in professional education in light of his ideas. This research investigated four programmes of professional education in Hong Kong: (a) a master degree in journalism, (b) a top-up degree in architecture, (c) a professional diploma in architecture, and (d) a higher diploma in visual communication (design). Interviews were conducted with teachers and students. The results confirm Schon's (1983, 1987) concepts about the experiential and artistic nature of professional education, in which coaching and mentoring in practicum are the most effective pedagogy. As development of Schon's theory, the role of practitioner-educators, in the use of professional experience and knowledge rather than textbook in helping students to develop reflective practice, is critical in bridging the gap between the academic and professional worlds. These findings indicated the importance of a restructuring of curriculum and pedagogy and the institutionalization of the role of practitioners as part-time teachers, in order to improve professional education.

**Keywords:** Staff development, Reflective practice, Teacher education

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the employment of part-time teachers is popular in postsecondary institutions around the world today, including Hong Kong, mainly as a result of education funding cuts and unpredictable enrollment numbers. But in the west, the practice has been under attack (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Hudd, Apgar, Bronson, & Lee, 2009; Pope, 2008; Schmidt, 2008) for causing a decline in academic standards and exploitation of new academic members. Despite the criticisms, among the part-time faculty, a group of practitioner-part-time-teachers for professional education, due to the nature of professional knowledge and their expertise, have been invaluable to professional education.

The popularity of practitioner-part-time-teachers employment is the result of not only financial reason, but also their relevant experience and wisdom.

### 1.1 Model of Professional Education

The theory of Donald Schon, on which this research was based, has its prototypical model of teaching and learning in professional education as the post-technocratic model (Bines & Watson, 1992). It describes knowledge for practice, or professional expertise, as the knowledge to be acquired in professional education. It emphasizes the acquisition of professional competence and the need to use reflection to improve practice. Practicum is the key module where competence to practice is developed through practice. Practicum dominates the curriculum, and it is organized in different ways in different professions.

The present study has examined the nature of professional knowledge and the pedagogical model of professional education of four postsecondary programmes in three different professions: (a) journalism, (b) architecture, and (c) design. Data have been collected by interviews with the teachers and students in these programmes, in a reconstruction of reality by weaving their perceptions of and experiences in the educational process.

## 2. Review of Literature

There is broad consensus among scholars and researchers (e.g., Argyris & Schon, 1974; Bines & Watson, 1992; Burns, 2004; Cavanaugh, 1993; Christiaans & Venselaar, 2005; Curry, Wergin, & Associates, 1993; Drew, 2000; Eraut, 1994; Jacoby, 2006; Maudsley & Strivens, 2000; Steinemann, A. 2003) about the nature of professional knowledge and its pedagogies (both for professional education and specific professions): That is, practical experiences are indispensable for professional education, and experiential teaching and learning are the best ways for providing students with professional expertise.

On the other hand, most of the studies (e.g., Altbach, 1998; Benjamin 2003; Hudd, Apgar, Bronson, & Lee, 2009;

Jacobs, 1998; Leslie, 1998) that examine the teaching of part-time teachers are negative. The few studies that have examined practitioners as part-time teachers have produced mixed assessment results: The results of two studies (i.e., Allison-Jones & Hirt, 2004; Klein, Weisman, & Smith, 1996) about the teaching of part-time teachers are negative, and the results of another two studies (i.e., Fairbrother & Mathers, 2004; Levinson, Kaufman, & Bickel, 1993) that examined part-time teachers' characteristics and roles in education (not their teaching) are slightly positive.

### *2.1 Nature of Professional Knowledge*

The value of the practitioner-part-time-teachers is a logical consequence of the nature of professional knowledge, the major concern of Schon's theory. His theory is grounded in, and could be traced to some important philosophical concepts, especially Dewey's conceptions of knowledge and learning (Dewey, 1974) and the epistemologies of practice developed by Polanyi (1967) and Ryle (1949) and their ideas about tacit knowledge.

According to Schon (1983, 1987), professional knowledge or professional practice is more an art than a trade because professionals use their experience to handle problems in uncertain, messy situations for which there are no definite answers. As a result, Schon did not think there were many theories that professionals could apply mechanically in reality.

In Schon's (1983, 1987) thinking, during professional practice, professionals are engaged in reflection, using their knowledge and experience to analyze the problems they encounter and arrive at the most probable solutions. He called this process reflective practice and suggested it involved either reflection-in-action or reflection-on-action.

Given the nature of professional knowledge, the passing on of it by individual coaching and the experiences of the teachers become the key in professional education. Professional education cannot be offered like the usual education with codified knowledge; instead, it must be implemented through personal contact and practical experiences (Schon, 1983, 1987). In professional education, people learn in the acts of design, performance, and production, and they are helped to do so by experienced practitioners (Schon, 1987).

The emphasis of professional education is not only on experience, but also on reflection about this experience and learning from it (Kennedy, 1987). The professional school's responsibility is to change students into people with the ability of deliberation and critical reflection on their own actions and their consequences (Kennedy, 1987). A professional school, or programme, is engaged in the task of preparing professionals to meet the needs of a complex society for practitioners in that field.

Given the assumption that professional knowledge prepares students for the real world of their chosen profession and the importance of experience and reflection, the significant role of practitioners as part-time teachers follows naturally.

### *2.2 Gap between Education and Practice*

This interpretation of professional knowledge was not the norm before the modern age. Hazel Bines (Bines & Watson, 1992) summarized professional education in three main models: (a) the pre-technocratic or apprenticeship model, (b) the technocratic model, and (c) the post-technocratic model. Before professional education was part of university education, there was the pre-technocratic or apprenticeship model, which put emphasis on the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge through on-the-job training from instructions provided by experienced practitioners.

In the modern age, the technocratic model stresses the "development and transmission of a systematic knowledge base, largely, though not exclusively, based on contributing academic disciplines" (Bines & Watson, 1992, p.12). This model, according to Bines, is adopted in many professional schools.

In contrast, the post-technocratic model emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge for practice (i.e., professional competences). The place to develop professional competences is practicum organized in different ways in different professions.

Although the collaboration of professions and universities in training professional expertise is beneficial to both sides, professional bodies and postsecondary institutions have engaged in many negotiations about licensing and curriculum. Higher education has won the battle over curriculum. This stress on the academic side of the equation has produced many unintended consequences detrimental to professional education.

This vigorous definition of professional knowledge is good on paper and fits well with academic standards; however, it is far from the reality of professional practice. The technocratic model of professional education does not address the realities of practice, and students trained using this model are bewildered and lost in practice. The

wide gap between school and practice has prompted persistent complaints from employers or professional bodies about the deficiency of professional education and the performance of students (Cavanaugh, 1993; Schon, 1987).

Professional practice is featured by complexity, uniqueness, uncertainty, and conflicting values (Schon, 1983). In such cases, the central question is the search for the most appropriate decision. It is the practical knowledge produced by experience that enables professionals to make informed decisions. It involves “knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection-about-action” (Curry, et al, 1993, p.27) and the use of examples and experiences from the past to interpret and provide solutions. The process is a complex recall of past experiences to analyze present situations and make informed decisions. This knowledge is best learned through practice and reflection on practice in the indeterminate zones of practice (Cervero, 1989; Harris, 1989).

### *2.3 Pedagogy: Problem-based Learning*

To foster the learning of knowledge for practice and to train for professional competences, the instruction method of problem-based learning is commonly used. It trains students to think in action, constantly adjusting their strategies for analysis and seeking solutions in different professional situations. To learn from experience, just having the experience is not enough. The learning occurs when raw experience is turned into learning through the process of reflection (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985). Kolb (1984) put it succinctly when stressing the role of reflection in understanding, stating that reflection is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. As Schon (1983) said, in learning a professional practice, the practitioner becomes part of a tradition and a member of a community. The practitioner absorbs all the conventions, constraints, languages, and cultural forms of the profession.

According to Schon (1987), architectural design is a form of artistry in professional practice, a type of professional knowledge or expertise students need to acquire in order to become a competent professional. The pedagogy in a design studio is usually a form of dialogue between the student and the teacher (or coach) about the different perspectives that could be taken about the project, definitions of the design problem, discussion about possible solutions and value conflicts, possible outcomes if implemented, and the problems needed to be solved. It is an exploration of an area filled with uncertainties and ambiguities, such as those in real-world settings, by the student and teacher, searching for the best possible solution.

Burns (2004) proposed critical reflection as the bridge between theory and practice in journalism. By critical reflection, she meant the ability to seek for solutions in complex social, philosophical, and economic contexts. She agreed that learning by doing (i.e., experiential learning) is the common model in journalism education, but just doing is not enough. There must be a process of reflection in which students make use of their past experiences and the knowledge they acquired from formal education to change their strategies. In journalism school, students turn this experience into knowledge by reflection learned through scenarios (Burns, 2004). She conceptualized journalism as a practice of decision-making about the value or ethics of news. The pedagogical model she proposed is problem-based learning in which students are confronted with problems and forced to learn how to solve them.

Architectural and design education often use a project-based learning approach, which is similar to problem-based learning. Design education is concerned with the design process, and it is an integration of many perspectives. It involves the integration of theoretical knowledge in the application and realization of a design idea. As a result, the project-based learning approach is the most widely-adopted teaching and learning strategy in design schools (Christiaans & Venselaar, 2005).

Project-based learning is conducted in small groups or in one-on-one teaching, and it includes public critique, studio-based teaching, and a final show. Among them, the teaching method relies very heavily on the one-on-one tutorial in the studio, which is viewed as ideal mode for teaching design students. It is generally conducted in the form of discussion between the teacher and the student with focus on a particular project. Studio-based teaching promotes reflection and appears to be the best way to develop students' skills and conceptions in the context of professional practice.

### *2.4 Practitioners as Part-time Teachers*

Practitioners as part-time faculty members are in better position to coach students and teach them the process knowledge, professional artistry, or tacit knowledge that Schon (1987) believed constitutes professional knowledge because they are still in practice and have a wealth of practical experience. Academics who are full-time faculty members, on the other hand, are relatively out of touch with practice; however, they may be better suited for teaching students content than practitioners.

Practitioners as part-time teachers are full-time practitioners who teach part time. Howard Tuckman (1978), in

his groundbreaking study, described practitioners who are part-time teachers as “full-mooners” (p.304): individuals who hold a primary job for at least 35 hours a week. It is the same group of individuals that Gappa and Leslie (1993) called the “specialist, expert, or professional” (pp.50-54). They are from different fields and teach for the love of it. Some of them are teachers of their own specialist disciplines; some are specialists who are becoming teachers of general subjects.

In Hong Kong, there are part-time teachers who are professionals working the fields while coming to teach in a university for a course or two because they possess the expertise. While the use of part-time teachers in continuing educational institutions is common in Hong Kong, the participants in the present study are teaching postsecondary degree programmes in both the university and the university’s continuing education unit.

Quite a few studies (Altbach, 1998; Benjamin, 2003; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Hudd, Apgar, Bronson, & Lee, 2009; Jacobs, 1998; Leslie, 1998; Rajagopal, 2002) have examined part-time faculty members in general, but few studies have examined part-time teachers in professional education. The most complete studies were conducted by Gappa and Leslie (1993) and Rajagopal (2002).

The studies are mostly about the general situation of part-time teachers, and these researchers claimed that part-time teachers are hired as a result of funding cuts to education and the marketization of higher education.

But Gappa and Leslie (1993) pointed out the popularity of part-time teachers for professional education and suggested that these specialists and professionals are full of experience and wisdom in the practice of their trade, and they could easily relate theory to their practice.

Part-time faculty members are often the people who connect students to the cutting edge ideas and practice of the professions, whether it is the latest generation of computer technology, new concepts in the art and design fields, or clinical internships in professional settings, where things are moving much faster than in the academe (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

Gappa and Leslie made use of a groundbreaking study by Tuckman (1978) and reclassified part-time teachers into seven categories (p.307-308). The practitioner-part-time-teachers in this study are of the Full-mooners category, basically people belonging to the group of D (specialists, expert or professional). Gappa and Leslie believed that they contribute more to professional education than the other types of part-time teachers.

Rajagopal (2002) made similar categorization of part-time teachers: (a) contemporaries and (b) classics. The contemporaries are the academically career-oriented part-timers without a full-time non-academic job. They were a group of part-time-only academics emerged in the 1970s when universities had to accommodate increasing numbers of students with shrinking budgets. The phenomenon continued into 1980s and 1990s. On the other hand, classics are professionals from the non-academic world who come to universities to teach a course in their spare time because they possess the special expertise needed by a postsecondary institution. The classics are called practitioners as part-time teachers in the present study.

### 3. Methods

In the present study, a qualitative research method was chosen in the belief that it would provide a more complete picture and deeper understanding of the issue.

The interview, one of the important means of qualitative research to collect data, is an effort to understand the experience of others and the meaning they make of the experience (Seidman, 1998). A qualitative research based on interviews is an attempt to have a phenomenological description of the lived world and experience of the researched subject. It is an understanding of social phenomena from the actors’ own perspectives, describing the world as experienced by the subjects, with the assumption that the important reality is what people perceive it to be.

The study has chosen four programmes of three different professions, all from the University of Hong Kong. Besides the three administrators, this study interviewed four teachers (three part-timers) in journalism, five faculty members (three teaching as part-time instructors) in architecture and four lecturers (three part-time instructors) in design. All interviews were conducted one on one, mostly in their offices or classrooms after class. Each session took one to one and a half hours.

The nine journalism students and graduates were all respondents to e-mail requests for research interview, which was sent out by the JMSC of HKU. Although the message did not generate a large pool of respondents to choose from, the interviewees were pretty evenly divided between graduates and current students (with ratio of four to five), and between part-time and full-time students (ratio of two to three). All the interviews were done one to one, each taking one to one and a half hours, in the HKU campus with the current students, in coffee shops

outside with the graduates.

The students and graduates interviewed for the architecture and design programmes were introduced through their teachers. They were all interviewed in focus groups, each group from two to six, with sessions of about one and a half hours each, mostly in either studios or classrooms in between classes.

For the four education programmes of journalism, architecture and design, this research has completed a total of 24 individual interviews and seven group interviews.

Teachers and students were asked about the course quality, teaching skills, teachers' availability, and preparation for practice. On professional preparation, students' learning in the areas of theories, practical skills, and professional judgment was investigated. The data collected in the present study were the participants' interpretation of their learning experiences, and any generalizations are grounded in their situations.

Part-time and full-time faculty members were asked similar questions about part-time faculty members. Administrators were asked a somewhat different set of questions that explored the importance of introducing contemporary practice, enriching programmes, teaching skills, and preparation for practice.

After the interviews were done, the researcher turned the recordings into textual transcripts, with the help of the written notes. The next step was taken to carry out the tasks of meaning condensation and meaning categorization. The transcripts were read and reviewed many times to generate meanings and classifying categories. In the interviews with students of teachers of journalism, categories were created to organize the data.

The researcher then took the task of linking all the categories around the theories and concepts of professional education developed by Donald Schon and others.

#### **4. Analysis of the Data**

The data revealed that professional education in these programmes emphasize the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills, and teachers who are practitioners in touch with their profession are important for teaching this type of curriculum. These match very well with the Post-technocratic model of professional education, developed by Bines following Schon's theory of professional knowledge.

##### *4.1 Professional Competence*

The acquisition of professional competence has not always been the main objective of professional education. The new theory of professional knowledge developed by Schon has changed all that. The new shift to practical knowledge as objective of professional education has enhanced the significance of practicality, in education and learning.

Diane, the practitioner-part-time teacher of architecture, said she tried to train her architecture students to adopt a practical mind. The sense of practicality, with support from serious research and deliberation, is important for any architecture idea; otherwise, it is just empty talk. Ben, another graduate of a UK higher education institution and proprietor of a small advertising company, is a staunch supporter of teaching design students in Hong Kong practical knowledge and skills. He said designers should be more than artists and technicians. They should have presentation, publication, and marketing skills, and they should know how to collaborate with other professionals, such as interior designer and marketing executive, to produce the right product for the market.

Compared to architecture and design, journalism education does not focus as much attention on creativity as practicality, a normal view shared in the profession. To the recent graduates and students from Mainland China, however, the sense of practicality could be liberating. According to Carmen, it has brought out the contrast between the journalism education in Mainland China and Hong Kong. Only one or two out of 40 to 50 faculty members at her previous university's communication school in Mainland China had any journalistic experience, and that experience was years out of date.

##### *4.2 The Technological and Knowledge Explosion*

The recent explosion of knowledge and technology has made it imperative for professional education to catch up with the reality of a profession. Robin, part-time television production teacher, said journalism teachers have to stay on top of the constant technological changes prompted by the digital revolution, a difficult task except for practicing professionals.

Bennett, the architecture administrator, said architecture education also needs to keep up with new knowledge and technology. Simon, a part-time architecture teacher, conceded that knowledge about technology could be outdated if a teacher is not practicing. The same is true for building regulations and rules. Bennett and Monica, the full-time architecture instructor, said it was the main reason for hiring practitioners as part-time teachers as

specialists to teach certain areas.

#### *4.3 Critical Analysis with a Professional Perspective*

In Kennedy's study (1987) of various theories of expertise, one definition of it is "expertise as critical analysis" (p.143). Many professional schools, Kennedy said, put emphasis on analytic thinking. Professional education, through familiarizing students with the paradigm of a particular profession, makes an attempt to transform their thinking into that of a professional, like a journalist, an architect or a designer. John, a journalism student, said one of the benefits of going through the programme was learning to think like a journalist, a process he characterized as "mental gymnastics before you start writing." The architecture students in the Curtin top-up degree programme said they gradually came to adopt the perspective, culture, and mindset of an architect after some struggles.

The definition of reflection and critical thinking is similar but slightly different in each profession. Diane, the part-time architecture teacher, wanted to teach students a deeper type of thinking, or reflection, and she required her students to reflect on their decisions and solutions to problems. She was trying to teach students to view issues from different angles and leave no factor untouched. To produce this reflection, she consistently challenged students during their presentations.

#### *4.4 Adoption of a New Paradigm*

The architecture students said they adjusted slowly to the programmes' experiential teaching and learning approaches because these approaches contrasted with the approaches they encountered in secondary school. Students said these approaches involved self-learning and initiatives, and they had difficulty with this type of learning because there were no definite answers. Teachers are facilitators who provide students with directions about how to search for solutions to problems. This approach forces students to explore different possibilities. Slowly but gradually they build up their confidence and become more independent and gradually assimilate the perspective, culture, and mindset of an architect.

Critical thinking was mentioned by three of the nine journalism students who participated in the present study as one key skill they learned during the programme. Vincent, an officer with a health-related government body, noted that he had learned critical thinking and how to take a multi-perspective view of problems. For Vicky, a recent graduate of a Canadian university, a journalist needs critical thinking skills in order to evaluate a large amount of information in a short period of time.

#### *4.5 The Artistry of Professional Practice*

Professional competence, in the concepts of Schon, is defined as the artistry that professional practitioners make use of in handling the indeterminate zones of practice. It is the art of problem solving in uncertain and messy situations of professional practice.

Artistry implies the training of creative thinking to come up with a solution. Design education puts more emphasis on creativity, integration, and aesthetic sense. In proposing solutions to design problems, Ben said there should be a process of intense research, with a certain level of reflection.

The teaching that occurs in architectural design studios involves a discussion between the teacher and students that promotes critical thinking. Ben, the teacher of advertising design, stressed the importance of analytical ability and problem-solving knowledge for design professionals.

Diane, a practitioner who is a part-time architecture teacher, stressed the importance of creative thinking and integration and expected her students to do basic research, know the benefits of a project and what approach to take, and ponder every factor in a situation.

#### *4.6 Deliberation and Integration*

Schon, according to Kennedy, conceptualized professional expertise as the ability to deliberate action.

Diane, the teacher for Curtin architecture programme, said the design project should be a synthesis of theories and technical knowledge, problem based and contextual. She talked about how, as a practitioner, she had to weigh different factors and demands and make decisions everyday in practice. The process of decision-making is more like the ability of integration.

Bennett, the architecture programme administrator and an architect, said architectural design is affected by factors such as the market, environment, technology, artistic sense, and view of stakeholders, and architects need to be able to integrate all these factors to produce successful projects. Ben, a practitioner who was a part-time design teacher, said that in professional practice a designer should be more than an artist or technician who

knows art and craft; a designer should also know about business and marketing, how to meet the clients' demands, and how to come up with different solutions to a problem. A designer should be able to integrate skills, concepts, creativity, and marketing savvy in order to produce a design that makes aesthetic and business sense.

The journalism teachers and students did not talk about integration, but in actual practice, journalists are asked to make news decisions after taking various factors into consideration in their daily work. According to Burns, a news decision is always an integration of different considerations, even though the process is carried out subconsciously. Burns (2004) proposed critical reflection as the bridge between theory and practice in journalism, the ability to seek for solutions in complex social, philosophical, and economic contexts. Journalism is a practice of decision-making about the value or ethics of news.

#### *4.7 Pedagogies: the Central Role of Practicum*

The teaching pedagogies of professional education shared by the three subject areas of journalism, architecture and design, as indicated in the study and interviews, are many. True to the theory of Schon and the post-technocratic model of professional education, they all put emphasis on the idea of practicum.

A practicum is a college course, often in a specialized field of study, designed to give students supervised practical application of a previously studied theory. For the four programmes studied, there are a number of practicums, named workshop, project or practice, sometimes without such course titles. They are mostly focused on the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills in different areas.

Schon (1983) advocated "reflective practicum" (p.18) as the best pedagogical approach for professional education because it helps students acquire the expertise they need to handle practical problems in professional practice. A practicum is a designed form of practice for the purpose of teaching and learning.

Schon said students learn in the practicum by practicing interactions with the teacher and other students and through a process of background learning. This background learning is interactive and very much like coaching.

#### *4.8 Problem-based and Project-based Experiential Learning*

All of them are problem or project-based, and characterized by an interval of practicum, case studies, and teaching conducted as coaching.

The basic approach or model used in professional education is problem-based or project-based and involves experiential (i.e., learning by doing) teaching that includes discussion and feedback. In this approach, teachers serve as coaches or facilitators and share their knowledge and experiences.

The architecture programmes examined in the present study used a project-based approach to teaching, and most of the classes were conducted in a design studio environment. In the design studio, students engaged in actions while teachers take turns with each student in individual sessions. During these one-on-one sessions, students learn to critically examine options and consequences and are given feedback that pointed out problems and suggest different concepts, scenarios, or perspectives that would reframe the problem. Design teaching is mainly project-based (Christiaans & Venselaar, 2005). The main teaching occurs in conferences between the teacher and students, either in groups or individually, about the students' projects.

#### *4.9 Learning from Case Studies*

Professional education in the present study is largely experiential learning and teaching, and the usual ways of teaching, such as the use of textbooks and lecturing, is often not an effective way to teach knowledge and skills. This type of pedagogical approach relies on the experiences of students and teachers, but experience is, in general, ill structured. Therefore, the teaching of cases is extremely important. Spiro et al. (1987) said personal experience is ill structured, not pedagogically and epistemologically neat. The traditional way of teaching systematic and propositional knowledge, therefore, fails to impart experiential knowledge (Spiro et al., 1987, p.185).

Carmen, one of the students from Mainland China, said she learned about the importance of visual images in television from a story about an interview with a Nobel Prize laureate. Max, the veteran journalist, did not use textbooks; instead, he taught by sharing his experience and providing students with real examples from personal encounters and the Internet.

In architecture, Nigel, who taught full-time, said practitioners as part-time teachers had a wealth of cases because they dealt with clients and the government almost everyday. In his teaching approach, he provided students with scenarios and cases, and he did not teach from textbook or provide any definite answers. In design, Ben and Dora, who taught advertising design and basic design concepts, respectively, both used many cases to teach students knowledge and skills.

#### 4.10 Teaching as Coaching

In the teaching and learning model of professional education used in the programmes examined in the present study, teachers are more like coaches than like traditional teachers. Dan said his role as a teacher is similar to the role of an editor in a newsroom because an editor is a mentor, teacher, and assessor. Bart provided students with large amounts of feedback in order to teach them how to organize their thoughts and improve their use of English. Simon, a part-time teacher of architecture, said he was a coach who helped students develop their abilities by giving them directions for solving their problems rather than answers. Diane said she challenged students, and the teacher's role was more like a facilitator of knowledge. The ultimate discovery of knowledge or understanding would have to be made by the students, with the help of teachers. The other teachers all touched on the importance of offering feedback to students, which included "demonstrating, advising, questioning and criticizing" (Schon, 1987, p.38), all the work of a coach.

Students perceive part-time teachers as more practical and in tune with trends and market. Some full-time teachers also have practical experience and try to keep up with the current market situation and new technology by reading journals and magazines, but it is not the same as practicing practitioners.

The Chinese journalism student Carmen learned the priority of visual element and consideration of market needs in television news production, and the trick of wrapping the cord attached to a microphone stick in the shortest possible time after completing a recording to strive to beat the competition in reporting a news story.

#### 4.11 The Coaching of Practical Knowledge

The transfer of experience demands teachers to have the professional practice concurrently, requirement only practitioner-teachers can meet.

As people in current professional practice, the practitioner-teachers will be in the best position to teach with all these pedagogies. They are practitioners who could promote a link between the university and the profession. Part-time teachers not only know the latest knowledge in the profession, but they also served as a bridge that enabled the school to arrange internships and provide employment opportunities for students.

### 5. Conclusion of the Study

The results of the present study supported Schon's (1983, 1987) theory about professional knowledge and professional education and establish, to a certain extent, that practitioners who are part-time teachers play an important role in professional education. Schon considered professional practice to be reflective practice, and this view is still valid 30 years after he first discussed this theory. He thought practicum is the key method for providing students with professional knowledge and experience, and this idea is accepted by most of the professional education programmes examined in the present study and included in their curriculum.

The results of the present study showed that practitioners who are part-time teachers have the professional knowledge and experience and coaching ability needed to deliver professional education.

Practitioners as part-time teachers, however, are not supported in professional education. Jarvis (1983) suggested this situation reflects the traditional idea that practical professional skills are not as important as academic skills. The results of the present study showed that practitioners as part-time teachers' role may be more important than the curriculum and pedagogy of professional education.

Given the constant changes of professional practice, the explosion of practical knowledge, and the increasing importance of the practical dimension of professional education, universities should and have to recruit more practitioners to be academics, even on part-time basis, to raise the level of teaching.

The academy is a storehouse of professional knowledge, but professional knowledge cannot be produced without practice, and the field does not promote reflection and research. Practitioners implement knowledge, theories, and concepts, and they also generate questions. Universities analyze practical experiences and turn them into knowledge. In order to produce the most effective professional education, there must be a closer relationship between the professions and postsecondary institutions, and practitioners as part-time teachers are ideal candidates to help bridge the gap between professional practice and professional education.

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