# Professional Development of Teachers and Teacher Educators

## Abstract

Professional Development is based on constructivism rather than on a transmission oriented model. A teacher is conceived of as a reflective practitioner, someone who enters the profession with a certain knowledge base, and who will acquire new knowledge and experiences based on that prior knowledge. The role of professional development is to aid teachers in building in new pedagogical theory and practices. It refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement. Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conference and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. There are a number of modals that have been developed and implemented in different countries to promote and support teachers' professional development.

**Keywords:** Professional Development, Teacher, Teacher Educators.

## Introduction

Professional Development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement. Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conference and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. More specifically," Teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (**Glatthorn,1995, p.41**). For years the only form of Professional development' available to teachers was staff development or' in service training', usually consisting of workshops or short-term courses that would offer teachers new information on a particular aspect of their work. The professional development of teachers has been considered a long term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession.

## Aim of the Study

1. To understand the concept of professional development of teachers and teacher educators
2. To give significance of teachers's professional development.
3. To understand the factors affecting professional develpoment.
4. To promote diffrent models/approaches of teacher professiional development.

## Characteristics of Professional Development

1. It is based on constructivism rather than on a transmission oriented model. Teachers are treated as active learners (Lieberman, 1994; McLaughlin and Zarrow, 2001) who are engaged in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection.
2. It is perceived as a long term process as it acknowledges the fact that teachers learn over time. As a result, a series of related experience is seen to be the most effective as it allows teachers to relate prior knowledge to new experiences (Cohen, 1990).
3. It is perceived as a process that takes place within a particular context. Contrary to the traditional staff development opportunities that did not relate' training to actual classroom experiences, the most effective form of professional development is that which is based in schools and is related to the daily activities of teachers and learners.
4. It is intimately liked to school reform as professional development is a process of culture building and not of mere skill training which is affected by the coherence of the school programme (King and Newman, 2000).
5. A teacher is conceived of as a reflective practitioner, someone who enters the profession with a certain knowledge base, and who will

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6. acquire new knowledge and experiences based on that prior knowledge.
7. The role of professional development is to aid teachers in building in new pedagogical theory and practices.
8. Professional development of as a collaborative process (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995).
9. Professional development may look and be very different in diverse setting, and even within a single setting it can have a variety of dimensions (**Scribner, 1999**).

**Variable Contributed to the Success of Teacher's Professional Development**

Corcoran (1995) has proposed the following guiding principles for experts and organization that are designing and implementing professional development programme:
1. stimulate and support site-based initiatives (schools', districts and teachers initiatives);
2. Grounded in knowledge about teaching
3. Model constructivist teaching.
4. Intellectual, social and emotional engagement with ideas, materials and colleagues.
5. Demonstrate respect for teachers as professionals and as adult learners;
6. provide sufficient time and follow up;
7. Be assessable and exclusives.
8. To think big, but start small.
9. To include procedures for feedback on results.

**Significance of Teacher's Professional Development**

The process of professional development has a significant positive impact on teachers' beliefs and practices, students' learning, and on the implementation of educational reforms.
1. The professional development has an impact on teachers' belief behavior. The relationship between teacahers' belief and their practice is not straight forward or simple; on the contrary, it is dialectic," moving back and forth between change. (Frank et al., 1997).
2. Professional development plays and important role in changing teachers' teaching methods, and that these changes have a positive impact on students' learning.
3. Teachers who participated in sustained curriculum-based professional development reported changes in practice that, in turn, were associated with significantly higher student achievement scores on state assessment" (Darling-Hammond, 1999, p.32).

**Relationship between Teacher educator (TE), Teacher Professional Development (TPD) and Educational Reform (ER)**
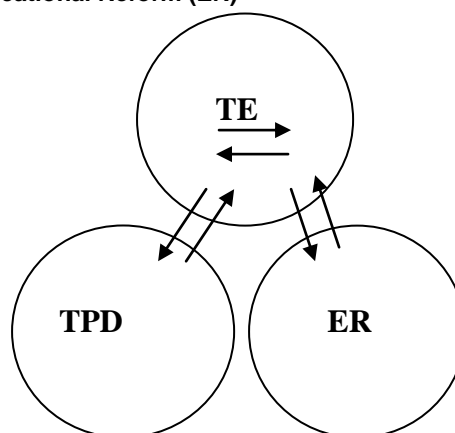


1. Most of societeies are engaged in some form of educational reform. Some of these reforms are at the national level while others are implemented at the local level (at state or district level, or even in only one school). Regardless of the scope of the reform, the relationship between educational reform and teachers' professional development is a two ways, or reciprocal, relationship.
2. Professional- development experiences and opportunities that are not embedded in some form of major reform of structures, policies and organizations have not been successful rarely creates a significant change (Darling- Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995). In other words, educational reforms and teacher professional development must go hand in hand for either or both to work well, they share a symbolic relationship.

**Factors Affecting Relationship between Educational Reforms, Teacher Educators and Teacher Educator Developments**
1. Local focus;
2. Significant funding;
3. Local leadership;
4. Long-range planning;
5. Including teachers and their professional development as part of the reform; Collegiality;
6. Time.

**What do teachers need to know?**

Different authors have proposed different kinds of skills, knowledge, dispositions, and values in which effective teachers must be proficient. They include:
1. **General pedagogical knowledge** (i.e. knowledge of learning environments and instructional strategies; classroom management; and knowledge of learner and learning).
2. **Subject-matter knowledge** (i.e. knowledge of content and substantive structures; and syntactic structures).
3. **Pedagogical content- knowledge** (i.e. How to teach a subject, knowledge of students understanding and potential misunderstandings; knowledge of instructional strategies and representations).

4. **Knowledge of student context and a disposition** to find out more about students, their families and their schools.
5. **A repertoire of metaphors** (to be able to bridge theory and practice).
6. **External valuating of learning.**
7. **Clinical training.**
8. **Knowledge of strategies, and techniques and tools** to create and sustain a learning environment/ community, and the ability to use them effectively.
9. **Knowledge, skills and dispositions** to work with children of diverse culture, social and linguistic backgrounds.
10. **Knowledge and attitudes** that support political and social justice, as social realities make teachers very important agents of social change.
11. **Knowledge and skills** on how to implement technology in the curriculum.

## Models/ Approaches of Teacher Professional Development

There are a number of modals that have been developed and implemented in different countries to promote and support teachers' professional development from the beginning of their career they retire. The modals are classified into two categories i.e. first category modals require and imply certain organizational or inter-institutional partnerships in order to be effective and second category modals are those that can be implemented on a smaller scale (a school, a classroom, etc.).

| Organizational Partnership Models | Small Group or Individual Models |
|---|---|
| 1. Professional-development schools<br>2. Other University-school partnership<br>3. Other inter-institutional collaborations<br>4. Schools networks<br>5. Teachers' networks<br>6. Distance education | 1. Supervision: traditional or clinical<br>2. Students' performance assessment<br>3. Workshops, seminars, courses, etc.<br>4. Case-base study<br>5. Self- directed development<br>6. Co-operative or collegial development<br>7. Observation of excellent practice<br>8. Teachers' participation in new roles<br>9. Skills-development model<br>10. Reflective models<br>11. Project-based models<br>12. Portfolios<br>13. Action Research<br>14. Use of teachers' narratives<br>15. Generational or cascade model<br>16. Coaching/mentoring |

## Factors to be consider while planning, implementing and assessing the professional development of teachers

### A culture of support

### The role of school and education leaders

Liebermann (1994) describes in detail five factors that are necessary to build such a culture in schools and education systems i.e.
1. Developing norms of collegially, openness and trust.
2. Creating opportunities and time for disciplined inquiry.
3. Providing opportunities for teachers' learning content in context.
4. Re-thinking the functions of leadership, and redefining leadership in schools to include teachers.
5. Creating and supporting networks, collaborations and coalitions.

### The role of context

#### Multiple setting/ multiple professional communities

The contexts wherein teachers teach and professional development occurs are usually varied, and they have a serious impact on teachers, their work and their professional development. Therefore, there should be multiple strategic sites for professional growth within the education- policy system: district, department, school and professional organization. (McLaughlin, 1994).

### Stage of development of a school system

The stage of development of a school system, or even of a national education system, must be taken into account when developing professional – development strategies and opportunities. Monk and Hodges (2000), describe four stages of development of education systems i.e. unskilled fashion stage; mechanical stage; teaching in a routine way; and professional stage respectively.

### Time

Teachers need time both to make professional development an ongoing part of their work on a daily basis and to see the results of their efforts (**Dorph and Holtz, 2000**).

### Financial resources

Funding is essential in any reform or effective professional development, but at the same time funding alone is not enough to provide effective professional- development opportunities for teachers.

### Stages in professional development

There are five stages of professional development i.e. career entry stage; Stabilization stage (4-6 yrs); divergent period (7-18 yrs); second divergent period (19-30 yrs); disengagement (41-50 yrs of experience). These stages must be consideration, As the teachers' need and dispositions may vary between one stage and the next.

### Steps of professional development

Teachers undergo different changes between the completions of a professional development. The stages included in the model are: Survival; Exploration and bridging; Adaptation; Conceptual change; Invention and experimentation.

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**Role of ICT for the professional development of teacher and teacher educators**

The recent implementation of technology in the classroom is probably one of the most challenging innovations that many teachers have to confront in the world today. ICT and other new technology should be explored in developing, designing and implement professional- development opportunities.

**The role of Unions in teachers' professional development**

Despite the common belief that Union are more concerned with the salary, compensation and benefits of its members that their growth in the profession, several National  and local teachers' Union are working to change this perspective.

**The role of teacher- educators**

For the professional development of teacher educators they need to be educated in pedagogy, practical issues related to the day- to- day work in the classroom, research work, national educational system, etc.

1. Policy implications and recommendations: Teachers' professional development must be systematically planned, supported, funded and researched to guarantee the effectiveness of this process.
2. Teachers must be encouraged to design and implement experiences and opportunities that help in their growth as teacher and professionals.
3. The programmes and activities must be design in accordance to their professional needs, personal and professional interests, etc.

**Professional ethics and accountability**

The central elements of teacher professionalism are: professional autonomy; accountability; knowledge; and professional ethics. The professional development of teachers and teacher educators will not be possible unless they have the knowledge of professional ethics and accountability.

**Conclusion**

Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conference and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. There are a number of modals that have been developed and implemented in different countries to promote and support teachers' professional development. Different factors should be consider while planning, implementing and assessing the professional development of teachers and teacher educators like the role of school and education leaders, the role of multiple setting/ multiple professional communities, time, financial resources, stages of professional development, Role of ICT for the professional development of teacher and teacher educators, professional ethics and accountability, etc.

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