

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS: METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Education refers to the process of learning and acquiring information. Generally, education is important for learning basic life skills, as well as learning advanced skills that can make a person more attractive in his profession. Education opened the doors to our minds and made us receptive to the very idea of broadening our horizons and learning new things

Globally there is an overwhelming concern over the quality and relevance of education. It is clear that education will never suffice until and unless we give it a practical shape. This can be possible only through qualified and noble teachers. Teachers can perform their changing roles efficiently and effectively only if they continue to update and upgrade their professional competence. Today when we are accepting teaching as profession then professional development of teachers is very necessary.

Professional development is the skills and knowledge a teacher gains to optimize her\his personal development and job growth.. In other words Professional development is the skills, knowledge and ongoing learning opportunities undertaken to improve teacher's ability to do their job and grow as a professional. In the modern Emerging Indian Society teacher is the fortune maker not only of an individual but also of the nation as a whole. It means professional development is not a onetime activity but it represents a well-planned lifelong learning process. Professional Development includes learning opportunities, such as college degrees and coursework, or attending conferences or training sessions, workshops, coursework, , online classes, discussion boards.

The importance of professional development is overemphasized because the quality of education reflects more than any other single factor the quality of teachers. A teacher's personal qualities, educational qualifications, professional training and the place he \she occupies in the school, college and in community contributes to the quality of his teaching. Pre-service education is only the first stage in the professional growth of a teacher. The education of a teacher is a continuous process. A teacher must be prepared again and again to keep abreast of the latest developments and innovations. This article explains the methods and techniques through which a teacher can grow professionally.

Keywords: Teaching as a profession, Why Professional Development, Professional Development of Teachers, Methods and Techniques.

Education refers to the process of learning and acquiring information. Education opened the doors to our minds and made us receptive to the very idea of broadening our horizons and learning new things.

Generally, education is important for learning basic life skills, as well as learning advanced skills that can make a person more attractive in his profession. Education is a powerful tool to build knowledge-based society. It is considered one of the important instrument for the development of any country. Though not enlisted as one of the three basic human needs, education is equally important. For the progress of a nation, for the enrichment of society in general, education is necessary and important. A country's literate population is its asset. The number of institutes offering vocational courses and colleges offering online education is increasing by the day. Vocational courses help earn specialized education. Online degree programs help the working class and adults in general, to pursue education even while working. Distance education has proven to be of help for those who are unable to attend classes. In today's competitive world, it won't be wise to neglect the importance of education. And most countries have realized this. This has led to many government-aided educational programs and government grants to schools and colleges.

The motive behind this is fostering education in society. Globally there is an overwhelming concern over the quality and relevance of education. It is clear that education will never suffice until and unless we give it a practical shape. This can be possible only through qualified and noble teachers. Teachers can perform their changing roles efficiently and effectively only if they continue to update and upgrade their professional competence. Today when we are accepting teaching as profession then professional development of teachers is very necessary.

TEACHING AS A PROFESSION

In our secular state the teacher should be fair, kind sympathetic and co-operative. Teachers can be

popular just because they are friendly and helpful, but to be truly professional and effective they need other qualities. All the teacher should be innovative, diligent, sincere, non-megalomaniac while performing his/her duties. A professional teacher needs to be confident without being arrogant. Proper preparation is another crucial requirement of professionalism. Today teachers have to develop internationally and interculturally competent human resources to make them fit to survive in the competitive world. When we consider teaching as a profession then there are so many points come in our mind-

- The teacher should be able to create and sustain an academic environment.
- The teacher should continue his studies so that he may be proficient in the subject he is teaching.
- The teacher should not be restricted to teaching only but should take part in extension activities.
- A teacher must strictly follow the code of teaching ethics which requires proficiency, sincerity to the pupil.
- The teacher should encourage students to participate in the learning process willingly.
- A teacher should be conscious of his roles in terms of teaching, training, consultancy and research
- A teacher is expected to dedicate his/her efforts and energy towards the development of the institution they are working for and in the process develop themselves as professional.
- A teacher should be very sincere to his students.

Thus it is clear that if the teacher is not inspired by the ideals of teaching profession and not dedicated to the pupils and society, he/she cannot mould the future citizens.

WHY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The concept of professional development is an important aspect that should be, in one way or another, involved in all our lives. Professional development is a process of continually progressing and refining our character and qualities as a parent, a teacher, a secretary, a doctor, a lawyer- as whatever or whoever we are. It is about life-long learning and growing as an individual. Professional development means the skills required for handling job requirements.

As part of the development process, a person has to undertake all types of learning opportunities. It is to be noted that professional development includes a wide variety of interests and approaches. The basic idea of professional development is how a person can enhance their skills and knowledge base. It should be noted that professional development is a continuous process and that it is a collaborative one, upon completion of which an evaluation is done on progress achieved so far. The importance of professional development is overemphasized because the quality of education reflects more than any other single factor the quality of teachers. A teacher's personal qualities, educational qualifications, professional training and the place he \she occupies in the school, college and in community contributes to the quality of his teaching. Pre-service education is only the first stage in the professional growth of a teacher. The education of a teacher is a continuous process. A teacher must be prepared again and again to keep abreast of the latest developments and innovations. Today's teaching environment is such type, where it is necessary to undertake as many different teaching skills and methods as possible to carry out various teaching activities. Professional Development helps to enhance job skills and task skills through which a teacher can not only make his teaching effective but can also groom his academics.

METHODS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum Framework For Quality Teacher Education noted that 'Professional Development of teachers begins with pre-service and gets renewed through in-service programmes.' Professional development may be in the form of pre-service or in-service professional development programmes. These programmes can be formal or informal, group or individualized. Individuals may pursue professional development independently, or programs may be offered by human resource departments. TDP programmes should be assessed on the basis of personality development, motivation and commitment, awareness of social realities, communication skills. These programmes can be very much helpful to enable teachers to become receptive, perceptive, reflective, innovative and dynamic.

Professional development opportunities can range from a single workshop to a semester-long academic course, to services offered by a medley of different professional development providers and varying widely with respect to the philosophy, content, and format of the learning experiences. We can use different methods and approaches for teacher's professional development-

- **Case Study Method** - The case study method is a teaching approach that consists in presenting the students with a case, putting them in the role of a decision maker facing a problem.
- **Consultation** - to assist an individual or group of individuals to clarify and address immediate concerns by following a systematic problem-solving process.
- **Coaching** - to enhance a person's competencies in a specific skill area by providing a process of observation, reflection, and action.
- **Communities of Practice** - to improve professional practice by engaging in shared inquiry and learning with people who have a common goal.

- **Lesson Study** - to solve practical dilemmas related to intervention or instruction through participation with other professionals in systematically examining practice.
- **Mentoring** - to promote an individual's awareness and refinement of his or her own professional development by providing and recommending structured opportunities for reflection and observation.
- **Reflective Supervision** - to support, develop, and ultimately evaluate the performance of employees through a process of inquiry that encourages their understanding and articulation of the rationale for their own practices.
- **Technical Assistance** - to assist individuals and their organization to improve by offering resources and information, supporting networking and change efforts
- **Teacher Networks**– Networks provide teachers with a supportive professional community beyond the school building. They typically are organized around specific subject-matter, and seek to deepen teachers' understanding of content as well as their facility with new teaching strategies. Some networks are national in scope, while others cover only one state or region. Members stay in touch via electronic bulletin boards.
- **Joint Work**– Joint work refers to shared responsibility for tasks such as team teaching, curriculum writing, assessment development, or other jobs that create interdependence and cooperation among teachers. Joint work promotes on-the-job learning because it facilitates productive exchanges among teachers and reflection about practice.
- **Collaborations Between Schools and Colleges**– A number of organizations are actively promoting partnerships between

colleges and schools. These cooperative programs not only help teachers to gain access to new knowledge, they enable professors to develop new understandings of how to teach their students.

- **Teacher Research Projects**– Increasing numbers of teachers are conducting research in their classrooms and schools in cooperation with their colleagues and university faculty. While some of these research projects are defined by academic interests, many are directed at problems identified by teachers themselves. The major activity in teacher research is the collection and analysis of data for the purpose of understanding and improving practice.

Professional development is a broad term, encompassing a range of people, interests and approaches. Those who engage in professional development share a common purpose of enhancing their ability to do their work. At the heart of professional development is the individual's interest in lifelong learning and increasing their own skills and knowledge.

TECHNIQUES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development is about improving the teaching and learning of the students. Quality professional development for the teachers is one of the most effective ways to improve student's learning. If any school or college trying to maintain quality of education, then professional development should be a major component of every school improvement plan. Almost every school improvement plan template has a section on professional development. Unfortunately, it is a section that frequently misses out on the thoughtfulness and organization it deserves. Quality professional development requires time and effort in planning, implementation and evaluation. Planning these sessions for teachers should be developed

the same way we expect teachers prepare to teach their students.

There should be a plan of professional development that includes:

- ❖ what teaching should look like in the school/college.
- ❖ what professional development is needed to get there,
- ❖ how to follow up on what is learned.
- ❖ how to integrate new skills into the classroom.
- ❖ how to evaluate the changes made and their effect on the learning in the classroom.

Specific topics for professional development based on this plan should be organized in Professional development sessions. Research shows that students learn, remember, and utilize information that they think about. This is true of all learning.

In the past, professional development has been provided by experts who lecture to teachers on what to do in their classroom. This style of training, like lectures in the classroom, puts teachers in the role of passive learners. Like the move to making students active learners, we need to move to making professional development a participatory activity. Teachers need to think about what they are learning and discuss how to incorporate it in their class. Professional development should be about finding what works and building on it. Preparing professional development sessions should be done with the same thoughtful planning as developing lessons for the classroom. If we want the session to be led by someone on your staff, be willing to give them extra time to prepare. Make sure they know the goals and objectives you want covered in the session and how it fits into the school plan. Give them time to design activities that lead the teachers to think about what you want them to learn and how to utilize it. Make sure there will be time and resources to follow up on the session and assist teachers in the integration of the new ideas into their teaching lessons. Give the presenter time to develop a handout or book to be copied for each

participant. The handout should include everything that is covered in the session, with step by step instructions on how to accomplish the session's objectives. Hearing the information once in a session is not enough to make participants familiar with the material. Having a plan to provide support and resources for the teachers, as they implement new ideas, is an essential component of the professional development process.

PROGRAMS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The education of teacher is never complete. The teacher is prepared for his profession before he enters it, but he must also be prepared again and again to keep abreast of the latest knowledge. In-service or continuing education is helpful to gain knowledge and to develop teaching skills, through which a teacher can improve his teaching. In-service education in broad sense includes all experiences and activities provided for teachers and designed to promote personal and professional growth. In-service programs help teachers to understand the needs, interests and behavioral patterns of students. Continuing education not only improves communication skills but also helps to use educational technology devices in classroom according to students need. In-service programs enable teacher to provide guidance to students in their learning programs such as consulting library, reference work, self study and preparing for exams. In-service programs introduces new techniques through which a teacher can handle effectively the particular problems that may arise in his own classes.

In-service programs playing important role in professional development of teachers. Every teacher needs to be aware of the rapid change in culture and society, advancement in science and technology, educational methodologies, and practices, increase in student enrolment and range in the interests and abilities of students. Human knowledge in various fields expand rapidly. In this changing scenario in-service programs or continuing

education can enlighten the teacher. This can be possible through the organization of different educational activities and programmes. These educational organizations and bodies like I.A.S.E., D.I.E.T, S.C.E.R.T, N.C.E.R.T, N.C.T.E, U.G.C, should organize and coordinate in-service programmes and activities at regular intervals. So that teachers will get proper acquaintance with the latest developments in the educational process with their theoretical and practical perspectives. These in-service programs can be varied on the basis of purpose for which it is conducted, the resources and infrastructure availability and the duration of the course. Here are some in-service programs which are organized by different educational bodies for the professional growth of teachers -

- **Content course** are carried out to upgrade the teachers in their subject in terms of knowledge of the latest developments, current issues, and trends, their application and their relevance. These courses are organized with the help of competent resource person in a particular area of discipline. The duration of these courses are 4-6 weeks.
 - **Refresher courses** are conducted to give an opportunity to teachers to refresh and improve their knowledge of the subjects they teach and widen their experiences in the methodology of teaching. The duration of refresher course is 4-6 weeks.
 - **Summer Institutes** can be on one specific topic or area, covering invariably all aspects of teaching learning process such as content , methodology, educational technology evaluation including practical aspect of laboratory work, fieldtrips and experimentation. U.G.C, ICSSR, ICMR, provides financial assistance to conduct summer institutes.
 - **Short-Term Courses** could be for orientation purposes, upgrading of subject knowledge or improving pedagogical skills.
- The duration of these programs is 3 to 5 days
- **Workshops'** essential features of the workshop are the intensive consideration of practical problems of classroom teaching, informal working conditions, sharing of experiences with the peer group and availability of resource persons, books, journals, learning aids. The core of the workshop is in the area of group thinking and joint planning. The participants evaluate the workshop themselves. The goal of the workshop is the professional growth of the participants as well as the development of the program.
 - **Study Circles** are voluntary, self-organizing adult education groups of 5-20 people who meet three to six times to explore a subject, often a critical social issue. Each meeting commonly lasts 2-3 hours and is directed by a moderator whose role is to aid a lively but focused dialogue. Between meetings participants read materials they were given at the end of the last meeting. These materials are used as springboards for dialogue, not as authoritative conclusions. The materials are usually compiled by the sponsor or organizer of the particular study circle; but groups who want to form a study circle on a particular topic can create their own materials.
 - **Faculty Councils** allow the student body to engage meaningfully with the working life of the faculty in which they study and to influence the future direction and development of that faculty to improve the quality of the learning experience for present and future students.
 - **Correspondence Course** is an academic class that is taken — and taught — across some geographical distance. The original correspondence courses were carried out through the postal service. Professors would mail assignments and lecture notes

to students, who would return essays and projects for grading. Most correspondence courses today take place over the Internet, but the concept is the same: students anywhere can take classes without having to physically be present at the school.

Summing Up-In the light of the above views and illustrations it is clear that professional development of teacher refers to the process that enables them to acquire the set of knowledge, skills, values and behavior, which are essential for them to perform their various expected professional qualities. Ideally teachers' professional development program starts with pre-service programs and it goes on because a teacher is always a learner. Professional development of teachers means broadening the professional competence of teachers i.e. acquiring new knowledge or updating the existing knowledge as well as refining their teaching skills and reshaping their attitudes in the light of advancement in knowledge and technology in the present changing scenario.

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