

## **CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

*The impact of teacher professional development and the most effective ways to improve teacher's skills and knowledge have been the subject of new research due to changing learning goals and changes in coursework. What teachers learn is most important. The professional development goal for teachers should be to increase their knowledge of the subjects they are teaching and their comprehension of how students think about those subjects. Only when the activities centre on excellent subject-matter content it makes worth the time teachers spend on professional development. Continuous Professional Development ensures that teachers remain knowledgeable and skilled in their field while giving them access to crucial skills that could advance their careers.*

**Keywords:** *Continuous professional development, Teachers.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The primary influence on how an individual's attitude and behaviour are shaped in life is made by their teachers. Teachers must instil the values of continuing professional development before they can begin to shape the lives of their students. Continuous professional development (CPD) broadly refers to a professional's ongoing development after entering their field. The NEP strongly emphasises continuous professional development to help teachers improve their skills and learn about the most recent advancements in their fields through various mediums, including online teacher development modules and workshops at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels. Teachers should use professional development opportunities to update and expand their subject-specific knowledge and discover innovative ways to support student learning.

### **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Narrow and broad perspectives on Continuous Professional Development exist. According to the narrow perspective, CPD refers to teaching or acquiring skill sets and knowledge to address new requirements. In the broad perspective, CPD is a much more extensive, longer-lasting

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process that allows professionals to improve their thinking, comprehension, and maturity continuously. So, continuous professional development refers to the strategies used by educational institutions to make sure that their staff members constantly advance throughout their careers. CPD encompasses all forms of learning experiences, whether formal or informal, that help people improve their knowledge, skills, and attitude to keep up with current standards. The primary focuses of a teacher's continuing professional development programme include all related roles like classroom management, ICT integration into the teaching and learning process, new pedagogical approaches, capacity building and administration, needs of children with special needs, guidance and counselling, emerging trends, etc.

The following are possible pathways for CPD initiatives: being active academics, attending short- or long-term courses, joining various national and international organisations, establishing networks and groups, reading books, writing books and research articles for publication in reputable journals, participating and presenting papers at seminars, conferences, workshops, symposiums, etc., learning or developing new skills, etc.

### **TYPES OF TEACHERS' CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Gaible and Burns (2005) state that there are primarily three types of CPD for organising at various levels, which are as follows:

- **Standardised Professional Development of teacher's**

It represents a centralised strategy relating the knowledge, instruction, and workshops widely given to teachers. Standardised programmes typically strongly emphasise developing new pedagogies, skills, and innovations. Standardised teacher development programmes are under the direction of subject-matter experts.

- **Site based Professional Development of teacher's**

It refers to the courses provided at the local level by teacher education institutions, schools, and colleges from time to time. Teachers receive training from local educators and authorities to connect with new pedagogical techniques, technological advancements, learning resources, etc. Site-based TPD frequently focuses on the situational issues that individual teachers encounter when incorporating new practices into their classrooms.

- **Self-Initiated or self-directed Professional Development of teachers**

Here, teachers make plans for their professional growth. They consider their needs, work to meet them by starting their proposal, and gather resource information.

## **THE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CYCLE**

The best way to conceptualise professional development is as a loop of interconnected activities. The steps in the process are determining your development needs; planning and executing your learning activities; reflecting on your learning; and then putting what you have learned to use and sharing it with others. Being a professional involves taking responsibility for one's abilities and recognising when one needs to develop them.

### **1. Identifying the needs**

First, we must comprehend our current situation. From here, it is possible to determine which areas of one's skills and abilities will most likely benefit from improvement. Being aware of one's deficiencies allows one to take steps to address them. It is, therefore, critical to cultivate habits of introspection and self-awareness.

### **2. Planning and carrying out Development activities**

The activities can be either formal or informal. Formal includes undergoing training courses or attaining additional qualifications. This might be expensive. Therefore, one can rely upon online resources that may be cheaper or free. Also, authorities may need to think about alternative funding. Informal learning includes learning side by side, watching videos, tutoring, or reading about the subject.

### **3. Reflecting on ones learning**

Reflective practise necessitates conscious effort to consider activities which one may find useful or not useful and gain understanding from them. Using reflective practise regularly will help one decide what to change for the future.

### **4. Applying ones learning**

Depending on how much practice one has had, one will fall somewhere between conscious incompetence and conscious competence after participating in training or another activity for personal growth. Therefore, to advance to a stage of unconscious competence, one must spend time applying their learning and practice.

## **5. Sharing ones learning with others**

Undoubtedly, one of the most crucial aspects of ensuring that one has fully internalised learning is being able to express and share it. Sharing with others what you have learned will be a useful tool for personal growth. In addition, it will help one identify new areas for improvement or generate ideas for other development activities.

### **HOW WILL CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BENEFIT TEACHERS?**

Teachers can use it to develop and update their professional knowledge and skills as well as to reflect on, review, and document one's learning. Teachers are reminded of their accomplishments and how far they have come, and it helps to steer their careers by keeping them focused on their objectives. To identify areas for further development, it aids teachers in identifying gaps in their knowledge and abilities. Teachers can refresh their knowledge through professional development, which can be especially helpful when supporting students with disabilities and special needs. When CPD is carried out properly, teachers gain a better insight of what is needed, and better learning outcomes can be ensured. Teachers can improve their organisational skills through CPD, which will help them better schedule their time and carry out their duties. CPD equips teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to keep up with shifting priorities. CPD assist pre-service and in-service teachers in dealing with the issues and instils the best perceptions, attitudes, and motivation. CPD enables professionals to stay up to date with the most recent developments in knowledge and technology. The development of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills through CPD is crucial for fostering the enthusiasm and resolve needed to implement changes and produce positive results. CPD helps teachers stay up with a creative approach and is essential for changing teachers' attitudes and beliefs, which affects their practise and students' excellence. CPD greatly helps in their personal empowerment and the growth of their organisation and students.

### **WHY IS THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IMPORTANT FOR PUPILS?**

In CPD many different strategies involve teams of teachers working together to solve problems and determine the best way to provide effective student outcomes. CPD enables the teachers to perform at their highest level in the classroom, which ultimately enhances students learning and raises students' achievement levels. Students perform better when teachers receive professional development aimed at enhancing teachers' comprehension of child's learning process. Student

achievement can be significantly impacted by professional development that is grounded in subject matter and centred on student learning. Studies revealed that pupils of teachers who participated in curriculum-focused professional development performed well on tests. It is more crucial than ever to stay up to date with trends, as failing to do so could cause teachers skills to become outdated. Teachers can stay current with all the various technological changes by participating in CPD. Teachers who participate in CPD can broaden their horizons and learn new things, increasing their productivity and efficiency.

### **HURDLES IN THE WAY OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

When teachers are under time constraints and have very different professional development needs, it can be difficult to decide how to best provide a service for them. Teachers' participation in these activities is also influenced by psychological variables such as their attitude, aptitude, interest, sense of self-worth, and level of motivation. It was found that financial assistance acts as a barrier for teachers to participate in more professional development programmes. A major issue in CPD was the lack of prerequisites to carry out the desired development. Teachers who claim that they do not participate in more professional development often cite "Conflict with work schedule" as their excuse. Infrastructural challenges like the institution's library not subscribing to adequate e-journals / Journals and teachers having no access to institutional internet facility is a challenge. Institutional challenges add to the barrier, including not granting leave to attend CPD activities, not providing spare time to go to the library and study, and the institution not arranging CPD activities. Psychological Challenges like teachers being satisfied with present position and not needing to get engaged in CPD, feeling useless because they do not help in salary increment and promotion and thinking that spending time with the family is more important than CPD cramps teacher's professional development. Time Management Challenges include time constraints to practice CPD, conflict between ones work schedule and CPD activities, do not having spare time at home for CPD due to family responsibilities, and inability to practice CPD due to extra workload given by institution is another challenge for continuous professional development. Lack of Opportunities like the unavailability of CPD opportunities in nearby places and unavailability of Professional development activities for teachers other than those of government institution delays the continuous professional development. Financial Challenges like teachers not providing any travel allowances to attend different CPD activities in other places block continuous professional development.

## **SUGGESTIONS TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Participate in webinars
- Speak with online communities
- Informal conversations with co-workers about progress
- Read, listen to, and watch online resources
- Research to stay up to date on trends
- Enrol in and participate in blended learning courses
- Participate actively in your professional organisation
- Reading articles from journals and magazines will keep teachers up to date and in monitoring work by the leading experts in the field.

## **CONCLUSION**

Continuing professional development is both a cycle and an ongoing process. CPD is crucial because both requirements and the surrounding world are constantly changing. Throughout one's career, one should keep learning. Making sure CPD fits around teachers' already busy schedules and commitments is essential to its success. Lack of teacher initiatives efforts and an unfavourable environment will impact CPD. Teachers and institutions must devote more time to collaborative teaching and career development. As part of their professional development, all teachers should have access to a common forum where they can assemble, share their research, and raise awareness of teaching methods and the value of personal and professional growth. We can therefore conclude that CPD is an essential element in the workplace.

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