

**A DESIGN FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS - NEED FOR  
NEW POLICY FRAMEWORK**

**Vasumathi, T**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Teachers' professional development is not exclusively concerned with supporting teaching and knowledge. Support is required for teachers to reflect on their existing practice and adapt new knowledge and beliefs to their own teaching milieu. Therefore, design policies that support teachers are very vital for professional development. Knowledge on the environment through which teachers' attainment and use of new knowledge and skills helps to develop effective models for teachers' professional development. The responsibility of teacher as learners and teachers, effective design for professional development, culture and the relation with the critical inquiry and aspects of curriculum frame work are the key factors that help to design and promote learner centered professional development. Success of professional development depends on how teachers are able to learn the new skills and recognize the disadvantages of previous beliefs and practices. Teachers must be in a position to see the methods from the pupils' perspective and therefore existing pre-packed trainings are not always helpful. The effective professional development require engaging the teachers in practical tasks and provide opportunities to observe, assess and reflect on the new practices, participant driven and grounded in enquiry, reflection, experimentation, collaborate and associate in sharing of knowledge, connect provide support through modeling, coaching as well as collective solving of problems and has to connect other aspects of the change. The professional development programme also have to focus on the physical and mental well being of teachers. New policy framework exploring above aspects involving teacher as both learner and teacher for professional development are discussed in this paper.

## **Introduction**

The traditional teacher's professional activities were restricted on instantaneous responsibilities and classroom concerns, called as restricted professionalism. However, the outline of the teacher's role is now shifting to the extent that it raises new questions about the teacher's autonomy, control and professionalism (Pollard *et al.*,1994). These changes are due to changes in curriculum, pedagogy, organization of teaching, learning, as well as changes in socio-political pattern in the society (Hoyle, 1974). Therefore , the teacher's role is no longer limited to the classroom. Instead, the teacher's responsibilities are more wide extending beyond the classroom. The teacher now needs to acquire a wide range of knowledge and skills to deal with new demands of increasing responsibilities or extended professionalism (Hoyle, 1974). In extended professionalism, the teacher acquires skills from mediation between professional experience and educational theory. Teaching is considered a rational activity in which classroom events are perceived in relation to policies and goals. The teacher, as an extended professional, is supposed to improve his/her professional knowledge constantly. There is also elevated involvement in non-teaching duties such as research, extra-curricular activities, and sometimes, community services. Hence, the extended professional perceives education in a broader social context. Thus extensive responsibilities to be undertaken by teachers these days have made them accountable. Therefore the professional development programme have to be designed considering the extended role of teachers.

## **New design for professional development**

Our society is passing through a technology revolution during the past many years with the advent of modern technologies and hence many changes occurred in every field of life which largely contributed towards the change of human psyche according to the rapid changing world. The rapid diffusion of these technologies also altered the attitudes and approaches of the students and teachers in diverse ways and influenced the teaching learning process. Therefore, importance of role of the teachers as catalyst agent has become more significant. In the context of these rapid changes, it is imperative that teachers must update their knowledge and skills and be familiar with the latest

developments in the field. Therefore, professional development of teachers according to the changing need is very vital. The professional development of teachers entail his growth in knowledge of his subject, in pedagogy and training techniques, affection to students and for his institution, in moral and ethical values and growth of his desire to contribute best to the world of learning and society. No profession can grow unless its members are prepared to grow professionally and sincerely. Though Academic Staff Orientation Scheme greatly helps in professional growth of teachers as many past (Gupta, 1995; Mavi, 1995; Rai and Rai; 1995) and recent studies (Sharma and Jain, 2006; Pawar and Mouli, 2008; Behera 2009; Ramalingam, 2009; Goswami, 2010) reported, we have to evaluate whether a teacher achieve professional competitiveness the teachers should have in the changing scenerio by attending these programmes. Rather, as a stereotypic programmes teachers attending as a formality to get higher posts. Further, in the changing world, with the expansion of activities the teachers are exposed to various other works apart from the academic aspects. Therefore the teachers are frequently working in stress. However the present day professional development programmes are not looking in to the physical, mental and psychological well-being of the teachers which should have an important position in the professional evelopment programmes. The professional development programmes should therefore include three broad aspects.

- 1) Academic and knowledge development of the teachers
- 2) Physical well being of the teachers
- 3) The mental and psychological well-being of the teachers

**The features of best professional development programmes are:**

### **1.Academic**

1. Focus on teachers as fundamental to student learning
2. Function on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement.
3. Respect and nurture the intellectual and leadership capacities of teachers.
4. Reflect the best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership.
5. Enable teachers to develop expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to higher standards.
6. Require considerable time and resources.

7. Driven by a consistent and long-term plan.
8. Have evaluated eventually on the basis of their impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning.

## **2.The physical and health aspects**

1. Focus on health of the teachers thereby enabling teachers to lead a healthy life.

## **3. The mental and psychological aspects**

1. Understand and manage stress and burn out of teachers through and address them.

## **The key component of a good model for professional development**

### **1.Academic components**

#### *i. Teacher as learners and teachers*

Teachers are highly influenced by what goes on in their lives, their priorities and lives are therefore important. Each teacher experiences their own individual career pattern that influences their desire and readiness to engage in improvement activities. Individuals' perceptions and actions about changing and developing their teaching are highly influenced by what they believe, as well as by their knowledge. Some people believe that ability is inherited a teacher may resist learning a new technique because the teacher believes that teaching using this method does not work. whereas valuing individuals as people and valuing their contributions enhances teachers' self-esteem and builds trust. Another influence is the detailed and deep knowledge a teacher has on general pedagogy and pedagogical content, as well as their subject disciplines. This incorporates knowledge about each students' strengths, weaknesses, home background, cultural experiences, and learning styles. It also includes teachers' understanding of how their extensive knowledge interacts with the classroom context and a self-awareness, that enables them to be conscious of their own thoughts, feelings, intentions and behaviours, and of other's values. The professional development strategies should therefore have to focus on creating awareness on the teachers role to deliver the best.

***ii. Identify the gap between the perfect and the existent***

Design of a practical professional development program, should articulate what are demands and needs in college and then compare this ideal to actual practices. While designing a professional development programme, it is vital to consider the skills and abilities, dispositions of educated persons should have, what educated persons can able to do in their thinking, what is an ideal college, what is an ideal learning environment, what intellectual skills, abilities and traits would we like to see students should have when they leave the college.

***iii. Observe assess and evaluate the new practices***

Individual teachers are influenced by the extent of their teaching strategies and their ability to experiment with their own practice, by working through a learning cycle of: activity, reflection and evaluation, extracting meaning and planning how to use the learning in future. In particular, when teachers plan for students' learning, includes tasks and processes to promote active learning, collaborative learning, learner responsibility and learning about learning, and skills related to handling relationships. Motivation is the starting point for learning. For a busy and often overworked teacher to devote effort to change and new learning, there has to be a good reason for the change: Also, faced with a new teaching strategy, the teacher needs to know it is practical and useful, relevant to the teacher his classroom. Without confidence in the likelihood of being successful, motivation is insufficient. While many teachers may express individuality and choose, at times, to work and learn alone, some also see the potential within groups, and know their work benefit from collaboration. So that Teachers need to rethink their own practice and teach in ways they have never contemplated before. Success depends on how teachers are able to learn the new skills and unlearn previous beliefs and practices. Teachers must be in a position to see the new methods from the pupils' perspectives and therefore pre-packaged training is not always effective.

#### *iv. Reflective practices*

Professional development today is not solely concerned with supporting teaching and knowledge. Support is also needed for teachers to reflect on their current practices and adapt new knowledge and beliefs to their own teaching contexts. The primary benefit of reflective practice for teachers is a deeper understanding of their own teaching style and ultimately, greater effectiveness as a teacher. Other specific benefits are validation of teacher's ideals, beneficial challenges to tradition, the recognition of teaching as artistry, and respect for diversity in applying theory to classroom practices. The opportunity for exploration through reflection enables the teachers to acknowledge and validate what the teacher is learning. Research on effective teaching over the past two decades has shown that effective practice is linked to inquiry, reflection, and continuous professional growth. Reflective practice can be a beneficial form of professional development at both the pre-service and in-service levels of teaching. By gaining a better understanding of their own individual teaching styles through reflective practice, teachers can improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Support through modeling, training and the cooperative resolving of problems

#### *v. Promote critical thinking*

Create an atmosphere that places critical thinking as the focal point of the college's philosophy, mission and goals. Provide support for faculty to learn the foundations of critical thinking, so that they can begin to integrate it into their teaching. Connect assessment of the faculty and the college as a whole to promote critical thinking within and throughout the curriculum.

#### *vi. Long-term approach*

A professional development program can succeed only through a long-term approach. The fact is that a commitment to critical thinking is a commitment to continuous improvement. Improve how we teach. Do a better job of fostering intellectual discipline, improve abilities to reason through problems and issues within

various work dimensions. A quality professional development program is never ending and ever evolving from a deep base in foundational insights.

***vii. Staff workshops***

Introduce workshops for self development of faculties conducted by the experts systematically, emphasising the aspects such as learning, how to analyze thinking within any discipline, understanding the traits of the disciplined mind and how to foster them in students, ethical reasoning, scientific reasoning, reasoning within the social sciences, historical reasoning, mathematical reasoning, professional reasoning in a various fields, how to detect bias and propaganda, how to read closely, how to write substantively, teaching students to assess their own reasoning, teaching students to take command of their emotional lives. This will enable faculty to continually to up-grade their knowledge and success in the classroom. Moreover, it will foster the faculty's ability to take critical thinking and contextualize it, more and more successfully, in multiple domains.

***viii. Provide activities and opportunities***

Provide faculty and staff with opportunities to share ideas they are learning and testing in the classroom. The plan for these activities should take into account insights so an effective plan can be established. Regularly scheduled discussions, pre-designed foundational seminars facilitated by the leadership team, access to publications and other resources with their subjects and interests are to be facilitated.

The intent of the Model is to encourage individuals to pursue professional development experiences that are relevant. These experiences may be self-directed, structured, and/or field-based. They may include, but are not limited to:

**2. Physical and health components**

With the changing life style and many other factors, the individuals are prone to number of health problems. Many teachers try to work through illness and yet doing so



may in fact be detrimental to their health, as well as the health of their students and co-workers. The health awareness for the teachers is therefore very important. The health programmes can be integrated with the professional development programmes and basic training, workshops on various aspect of health can be conducted by inviting experts of various fields related to health. Some studies have demonstrated that more specific physical disorders prevalence is clearly higher for teachers. Impaired phonation represents the most characteristic teachers' physical disorder because it is directly related to their specific occupational demands when teaching. According to a number of studies aimed at identifying which occupational groups were at an increased risk of suffering from occupational voice disorders, teachers were found to be particularly vulnerable to developing such problems. Teachers generally face sleep- deprivation so that their teaching skills are significantly impacted., Sleepy teachers are at a higher risk of providing insufficient supervision and inferior classroom instruction. They also report more mood swings, and are at a higher risk of serious personal health problems.

### **3. Mental and psychological components**

Teachers, in general, experience high levels of job-related stress compared to professionals in other fields. The question of teacher motivation is of paramount concern for educational leaders and managers. Both the commonly observed deficiency in teacher motivation and the abundance of teacher stress are serious problems that can be mitigated through teacher education. Sharing professional experiences with colleagues, identifying specific stress factors and possible coping strategies, replacing irrational beliefs with more appropriate beliefs, analysing strategies for dealing with student discipline and motivation problems in the classroom, and practising assertiveness and relaxation for decrease in their irrational beliefs and professional distress, as well as an increase in professional motivation and the perception of well-being.

When a potentially threatening event is encountered, a reflexive, cognitive balancing act ensues, weighing the perceived demands of the event against one's perceived ability to deal with them (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Events perceived as potential threats trigger the stress response, a series of physiological and psychological

changes that occur when coping capacities are seriously challenged. The most typical trigger to the stress response is the perception that ones' coping resources are inadequate for handling life demands. Symptoms of stress in teachers can include anxiety and frustration, impaired performance, and ruptured interpersonal relationships at work and home (Kyriacou, 2001). Researchers (Lecompte & Dworkin, 1991; Farber, 1998; Troman & Woods, 2001) note that teachers who experience stress over long periods of time may experience what is known as burnout. Organizational practices that prevent teacher burnout are generally those that allow teachers some control over their daily challenges. At the individual level, self-efficacy and the ability to maintain perspective with regard to daily events have been described as anxiety-buffers (Greenberg, 1999). At the institutional level, other factors may help mitigate teacher stress. Therefore stress management practices such as yoga, meditation, aroma therapy, and various other stress management techniques can be integrated with the professional development programme to understand and cope with the situation. Workshops, short term courses and class by experts in the field should be conducted, to identifying current personal and professional stressors, physiological, psychological and behavioural symptoms, understanding personal coping style and emotion regulation skills

Further, provide adequate resources and facilities to support teachers in instructional practice, provide clear job descriptions and expectations in an effort to address role ambiguity and conflict. Establish and maintain open lines of communication between teachers and administrators to provide administrative support and performance feedback that may act as a buffer against stress. Allow for and encourage professional development activities such as mentoring and networking, which may engender a sense of accomplishment and a more fully developed professional identity for teachers.

### **Need for new policy frame work**

The Universities have to identify organisational goals and priorities, and develop and implement a range of strategies and programs to enhance and build the capacity, skills and professionalism of employees to enable them to contribute effectively to the

University's mission and strategic directions. The Universities should commit to provide employees with:

- The opportunity to develop capabilities that complement organisational and work unit goals.
- The opportunity to develop a career plan and participate in career development activities that extend and enhance their capabilities and capacity for advancement within the Universities.
- Equity of access to professional development opportunities.
- Acknowledge continuing professional development as a framework to support and encourage opportunities for continuous learning.
- Ensure equity of access to professional development programs, resources and support for particular groups and individuals.
- Recognise that responsibility for professional development is shared between employees, supervisors and managers for the planning and undertaking of professional development relevant to their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure the provision of training and development that meet the core requirements of the University's and employees' roles and responsibilities and that comply with statutory obligations and policies.
- Use performance planning and career development processes as the primary means of ensuring alignment between individual, unit, and organisational plans and priorities and identify individual and work unit learning and development needs of employees.
- Engage in planning, development and continuous improvement of internal professional development programmes.
- Evaluate employee participation, outcomes and the relevance and quality of professional development programs on an ongoing basis.
- Integrate physical and mental health of the employees as a part of professional development.

- Understand and manage the stress and burn out of the teachers and include the stress anagement as an important aspect of professional development programme.

## **Conclusion**

Simply training teachers will not permanently change their practice unless the environment in which the work allows this. Changing the environment will enable teachers who have the appropriate pedagogical content knowledge to use different teaching strategies. Teachers often know far more pedagogic strategies than they actually use. Therefore a teacher's classroom practice might be considered as selection from a wide range of pedagogical content knowledge rather than an expression of the sum total. The selection of actual classroom practice is constrained by the resources and the normative behavior of the teachers works. Such constraints determine which of the teacher's potential practices will be used. New practices will only survive if they fit with the working environment. Novel practices that do not fit the environment will not be repeated, even if tried. Creativity in practice is not precluded by this proposed interactive viewpoint. Some faculty will go further than others in fostering intellectual skills. The extent to which critical thinking is a pervasive philosophy of any college depends on many interrelated and dynamic variables. Nevertheless, through an effective professional development program, we can create a learning college that fosters intellectual discipline. This can only be done with a well-designed plan that evolves as it is carried out, a plan that presupposes a substantive concept of critical thinking, with true and lasting administrative commitment and support, and a sufficient dose of intellectual humility. The effective practice is linked to inquiry, reflection, and continuous professional growth. Efforts should be made to develop more strategies for mental participation. Enough scope should be provided for interactive sessions among the participants for exchanging their experiences on curriculum construction, teaching methodology, evaluation system etc. Organization of seminars on Educational Technology, Communication Technology, Innovate Techniques, Health awareness and various stress management

techniques should form an integral component of professional development programme.

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