

Professional Development: An Important Part of Teacher's Behaviour and Beliefs

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Abstract

With the changing world Education system has also changed which in turn has changed teacher's role in society. Teacher are not a only considered as pivot of society but has brought many challenges of teaching students of 21st centaury in front of them which has made Professional development an important part of teacher's behaviour and beliefs. Professional development of teachers requires to get knowledge in pedagogy, subject matter , pedagogical content, student disposition and context and knowledge of techniques, tools and strategies for creating conducive learning environment. Various steps are followed in Professional development but the initial step of professional preparation begins at professional colleges. Success of professional development at this initial stage depends on the culture of support which is experienced over there

Keywords: Professional development, teacher

Introduction

Educators are consider as significant agents of new education system which has made the professional development a challenging area for them. In the recent years, potent reforms have been hit by schools. Evaluation of teacher includes extensive adoption of advanced academic standards, student test scores and the expansion of high stake standardized tests aligned with these new standards. Every reform demands systematic and continuous improvement of student's performance and measurement of their progress at every step to bring significant changes in the modern classroom. It is found that students' attainment is positively correlated with teacher quality which is of utmost importance in explaining student performance within the school aspect. The effects of financial conditions and school organization are not more than its effects (Hattie 2009, 2012; Meiers and Ingvarson 2005; Veen et al. 2010).

New Standards have already been adopted by different states and district of India which is based on new style of student centred teaching learning process to fosters problem solving and critical thinking among young learners as schools hold the accountability of doing so. If teachers want to achieve the new standards, they should update their teaching learning process which shows that the matter is not of teachers professional development only but is of effective teachers professional development.

The concept of professional development processing and its importance in education must be understood by the teachers. A set of nine standards as given by the National Staff Development Council (2007) which are required to be followed by all professional development program include effective teaching, research-basis, content knowledge, varied learning needs, collaboration, family involvement, learners learning environment, data-driven design, evaluation, and teacher learning.

The development of an individual in his profession is professional development. With increase in teaching experience teachers systematically gain their experience in professional development by examining their ability in teaching at regular intervals. The professional development experience also includes formal meetings and professional workshops for teachers. Formal settings like formal mentoring programmes, teaching research groups and professional development programmes are helpful in professional learning (Timperley, [2011](#)). The broader scope of professional development refers to the growth which occurs during the professional cycle of an educator. Learning of teacher can also occur through informal interactions among them while collaborative planning, peer teaching and mentoring between colleagues (Little, [2012](#)). Likewise in-service programs and professional development programs are designed to advance teachers' growth for their higher development. The content of those experiences content through which the process takes place must be examined. It has been found that for improved schools, changed classroom practice and ameliorated students' learning outcomes professional development of teachers is essential (Borko, 2004)

“Intellectual tools” must be made available for modern teachers to reflect, inquire and develop effective strategies continuously which can help teachers in further understanding of the subject matter required to teach children. But before this the current practice must be assessed for its strength and weaknesses in the light of today's demands.

In this high demanding modern society of higher standards teacher evaluations are based on students' achievement so a laser-light focus must be given to teacher professional development keeping in consideration student learning. Smylie et.al. found that some conditions like professional trust, perceived autonomy helps in flourishing teacher leadership among them. Scribner et. al. ([2007](#)), found perceived autonomy, supportive administrators, and time and resources, such as structural and organizational assets along with space and time as helpful condition for teachers professional development. (Birky et.al. [2006](#)). However, many professional development programs miss the spot. For professional development program one-time workshops are the most widespread model. An appalling track record of these workshops have been recorded in changing student achievement and teacher practice. Development of a new approach for teacher learning is the demand of the hour to create remarkable changes in student's achievement through teacher practice. Therefore, the actual challenge in front of schools is the creation of effective professional development programs for teacher's growth and implementation of the same in classrooms to help student developing knowledge and ability of critical thinking so that they can grow in all aspects.

The most important step is the recognition of the problem which is not related to the non participation of teachers but is actually the ineffective professional development program for them as above 90 percent teachers reported their participation in professional development program in the previous years, but many of them also reported its ineffectiveness. Reason behind this is it's model which is workshop style as mentioned above most of the professional development programs for teachers are conducted in workshop style which shows little impact on teacher practice and student learning.

Evidently this one-time workshop model is an inadequate approach of teacher professional development in building teacher's competence to foster higher order skills among them. Characteristics of effective professional development programs are identified by considerable body of research which can be followed by school leaders for providing meaningful opportunities of learning to the teachers. Professional development program's duration must be sufficient for ongoing learning program for teachers so that they can learn effective strategies and come to grips with the problem of the implementation of these learnt strategies. The professional development programs which are longer in duration show greater impact on promoting teacher practice and pupil learning. This is because longer teacher professional development sessions provide time to practice activities. Support must be provided to the teachers at the time of implementation of learnt principles so that specific challenges of modern classrooms can be addressed. It is found that for effective changes in classroom practices the important education is professional learning in framework (Fullan [2007](#)).

In professional development programs teachers should be engaged with variety of new approaches and activities so that initial exposure to the concept can be made active for them rather than passive. Highly

effective method found in this is modelling which is proving helpful in understanding a new practice. Modelling — when demonstrated by an expert for the new practice shows high level of success in understanding and application of the new practice and they remain open to adopt it. Moreover the presented content should be discipline specific like for middle, high and higher secondary school teachers or grade-level like for primary school teachers instead of generic. Darling-Hammond et.al.(2009) has found strong evidence of best result of professional development's when embedded in the teachers' specific subject areas.

Conclusion

Most important characteristics of teachers development include content development , dynamic learning and rationality in staff development which ultimately spotlight the implementation of the material learnt by educators. Coherence, on the whole, here means integrated whole staff development program and use of different development activities on a consecutive path. However, the professional development activities which do not have effective application in real sense would prove ineffective in changing teacher's behaviour actually required for meeting the highest standards of teaching.

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