

Staff Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

Development at all level is reality of today's life. Whether, academic / administrative or spiritual ones upliftment or enlightenment could be attributed to one knowledge gained through education or experience. In any profession, self-development is of utmost importance or the growth of the organization and the society in which a person is involved. Various aspects of professional development from the academic point of view are learning through teaching and teaching through learning. A full-fledged development can be achieved through training, observation and experimentation. It is an attitude which makes one realises potentiality to achieve the best.

Keywords: Staff professional development, staff development

COMMENTS:

1. Consider revising the title to reflect the focus of the study
2. Tate the objectives of the paper clearly – meaning what exactly you want to convey?
3. Need to structure the paper by organizing the same into different sections (eg. Section 1, 2, 3..., Introduction, Literature Review,) and subsections, etc.
4. Give proper references to the literature within the text of the manuscript....
5. Try to reorganize your abstract in line with your conclusions.

Enrichment and Skill Development of Education Professionals

“Quality teaching requires strong professional learning communities. Collegial interchange, not isolation, must become the norm for staff”

Professional development

Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. It has been described as intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating an evaluative stage. It is an enrichment of skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement.

It refers to "activities to enhance professional career growth." such as consultation, coaching, communities of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision and technical assistance.

Professional development for staff

"Professional development goes beyond the term 'training' with its implications of learning skills, and encompasses a definition that includes formal and informal means of helping staff not only learn new skills but also develop new insights into pedagogy and their own practice, and explore new or advanced understandings of content and resources.

Life-long learning is a process of development either professional or personal. In fact, ongoing education is a requirement for staff of every level, usually in variety of forms, such as through workshops, seminars and training courses. These professional development programmes (PDPs) help staff stay up to date with new trends and learn new strategies, techniques and methods that will help them face the classroom challenges.

The overriding idea behind PDPs is that increased knowledge helps staff to improve students achievement. That's because professional development focuses on what each staff needs to fine-tune his or her classroom practice.

In to-days world of technology, a nation that has a hold over knowledge is reckoned as the nation of the future, where the people and the society work ship knowledge

The five commandments of effective staff development

Thou Shalt Be A Visible Learner
Thou Shalt Treat All Individuals Individually
Thou Shalt Find Your Own Voice
Thou Shalt See Things As They Ought To Be
Thou Shalt Model The Model

Accumulation of knowledge and skill development is the two pillars of professional development which in turn helps in developing ones personality and career. In *per se* it enhances the basic professional activities like individual development, continuing education, in service education, curriculum writing, study groups etc.,.

Among educators especially, just talking may not be enough. The kind of talking needed to educate ourselves cannot rise spontaneously and unaided from just talking. It needs to be carefully planned and scaffold.

In a broader platform, Professional development is beyond the concept “*Training*”, it is a development of learning skills and also develop new insights into pedagogy with an idea to explore new and advanced understandings of content and resources. Teaching is a course of life long learning. Activities such as workshops, seminars and training courses help the education professionals in achieving these skills / tasks.

Pedagogy is basically the science or art of teaching. It is a strategy of instruction or style of instruction techniques.

The various pedagogical methods are – project method – learning through active involvement and assignments, the role of teacher being a guide and a leader.

Problem solving – The main objective is to develop the attitude of problem solving and the various approaches are inductive approach, deductive approach, analytical approach etc.,

Observation method – learning by seeing and experiencing

Laboratory method – is learning through experimentation

Social learning – through cooperation and group and collectivism. This could be achieved through Seminars, debates, discussions, symposiums, workshops etc.,

The educators as teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of the above, therefore preparation is vital for continuing professional development. Competent educators apply broad, deep and integrated sets of knowledge and skills. Technology proficiency is one dimension of teacher's competence. To put it simply an effective educator develops the skills and behaviour.

Traditional view

Traditionally the educators are viewed as the deliverer of ideas and curriculum planning. Therefore the decision is left with the higher authorities, where the professional development does not fit into the purview. This gives a limited scope for the educators to develop, learn and share the successful methods of teaching and implement high standards efficiently.

Professional development can no longer be viewed as an event that occurs on a particular day of the institution year; rather, it must become part of the daily work life of educators. Staff, administrators and other education system employees need time to work in study groups, conduct action research, coach one another, plan lessons together and meet for other purposes. However there are several other factors which

hamper the above, because the general view is that staff work only when they are with the students, which results in providing very limited resources for them to adopt to newer changes.

Higher education is the reservoir of meritorious learning, teaching and research. The ambience of academia can be created through sustained learning and realization. A well defined education system coupled with the initiative would promote for the quality development in the professional attitude. We are at the cross roads of knowledge revolution.

To create a knowledgeable society it is pertinent that pursuit on the following is eminent for staff professional development, they are

- Exploration
- Innovation
- Discovery
- Creation
- Social Responsibility
- Scientific attitudes

Defining quality in education and specialization is difficult. In the post modern era, the education system has moved towards a pluralistic system,, it is now viewed as a tool to prosper in one personal life as well as in the society to achieve a higher standard of living. Therefore the definition of professional development is more relevant rather than a theoretical version.

The professional development thus, can be achieved by various measures like quality, with a good bit of work on selecting evidences, making provision for acquisition and analysis of data, setting up appropriate standard for performance, setting up a mechanism to exercise judgment on the performance.

Education and Being a Lifetime Learner

Gaining knowledge isn't just for the young, but for all ages. One should always be a life time learner and continue to increase the talent, skill, and knowledge. Continue to seek opportunities for education throughout the life. This will help stay up-to-date in the chosen profession and in other skills and interests. In this rapidly changing world, one must make time to educate themselves for the present and the future.

Independent or self-directed learning can be defined as "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others" to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes.

The seven action imperatives are needed to implement for Personal Development

- Create continuous learning opportunities.
- Promote inquiry and dialogue.
- Encourage collaboration and team learning.
- Create systems to capture and share learning.
- Empower people toward collective vision.
- Connect the organization to its environment.
- Provide strategic leadership for learning.

Be yourself as learner

Join and create study groups within the institution or district to discuss teaching strategies and issues. Share your learning with colleagues. Go in teams to workshops or courses and return to teach mini-classes to others.

Find a partner on your staff or grade level who is interested in professional learning and get together to share information.

Find local or online resources that will support individual interests and connect with professional needs. Share curriculum-related Web sites. Then discuss how Web sites are used in the classroom. Not every staff has the desire to complete the national certification process, but all staff can set learning goals for themselves and then spend 15 minutes a day working toward those goals. In Pathways to Institution Improvement's it is suggested that staff can "demonstrate personal standards of excellence so that students are learning from the best".

Help other learners in your institution develop positive attitudes and motivation for independent learning in an atmosphere of openness and trust. Present at conferences and give mini presentations at staff meetings.

- Share articles from professional journals or educational Web sites with other staff.
- Submit findings from action research to journals or online educational Web sites.
- Write a summary after attending a workshop or taking a course, and submit it to your administrator and board members.

Evaluation of a professional development program

Evaluation of a professional development program has two important goals:

- to improve the quality of the program
- to determine its overall effectiveness.

Formative evaluation: Evaluation that is used to modify or improve a professional development program is called formative evaluation. Formative evaluation is done at intervals during a professional development program. Participants are asked for feedback and comments, which enable the staff developers to make mid-course corrections and do fine-tuning to improve the quality of the program. Formative evaluation helps ensure that each professional development program meets the participants' needs and expectations, is a meaningful experience, and can be translated into action in the classroom. Some staff developers use formative evaluation on a daily basis during their programs.

Summative evaluation: Evaluation to determine the overall effectiveness of a professional development program is called summative evaluation. Summative evaluation is done at the conclusion of the program. It is collected at three levels: educator practices, organizational changes, and student outcomes.

The first level of summative evaluation is to assess the changes in the educators as a result of participating in the professional development program. Participants are asked to describe changes in how they think, what they believe, and what they do in the classroom. They describe their own professional growth and evaluate the program in meeting their personal and professional goals. Such changes in participants can be determined through questionnaires, observations, interviews, self-assessment instruments, and analysis of records such as minutes of faculty meetings.

The second level of summative evaluation is to assess the ways in which the institution organization has changed. This assessment is critical because research shows that organizational climate and culture strongly influence both initial and continued use of innovation. Professional development efforts will have a greater impact on student outcomes if the organizational culture provides ongoing support for such efforts.

Effective professional development

Effective professional development is intensive enough to allow people to develop new knowledge and skills. And it has a component in the workplace as well as in the training environment. Somehow there's a support system that follows staff into the workplace and either provides continuing training or some kind of structure enabling staff to continue solving problems in the workplace.

Change in the institution organization can be determined through interviews, questionnaires, observations, analysis of documents (such as budgets and policies), and minutes of meetings. To assess this level of change, evaluators can look for increased collaboration, an improved relationship between administration and staffs, and general changes in the culture of the institution.

Most institution-improvement efforts are intended to influence student achievement, the evaluation ultimately must consider the effectiveness of professional development in that area. Procedures for feedback on results provide staffs with evidence of the effectiveness of their efforts on student learning. Staffs are more likely to proceed with new practices if they see positive results in their students. Student scores on standardized tests should not be the only measure of effectiveness. Staff-developed achievement tests, student portfolios, and grades can be used to evaluate the effect of professional development.

GOALS

Effective professional development accomplishes the following goals:

- Professional development enriches teaching and improves learning for all students. It is an essential link to higher student achievement.
- Professional development supports staff development, both as individuals and as educators.
- Professional development is considered a central part of teaching--as vital as classroom instruction.
- Professional development is considered an ongoing process and is conducted in a long-term, sustained manner.
- Professional development is job-embedded and inquiry-based.
- Professional development supports current beliefs about teaching and learning.
- Professional development is based on a growth model rather than a deficit model.
- Professional development addresses goals for institution improvement and is clearly related to reform efforts.
- Professional development is modeled after learning experiences considered valuable for adults.
- Professional development supports systemic change.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

An institution may begin a development program by asking the *what*, *where*, *who*, and *how* questions. In addition, these questions must be revisited as the institutional environment, mission, goals, objectives, and resources change.

What? - There is consensus that a development program should enhance attitudes, skills, knowledge and performance of employees. However, every program must face the "person vs. role" issue. Does the program enhance the person as a whole or as a player in a particular role? To what degree are resources available for both?

Where? - If the program is to serve all employee categories it must be seen as a "neutral" office. To the degree possible, it should be perceived as independent of the major divisions within the organization (e.g., academic affairs or administration and finance).

Who? - Who is to be served by the development program? At HCCC (Hudson County Community College) there is a comprehensive program that includes all development activities and serves all employee categories. To reflect the latter point, the original title of the advisory committee was changed from "Staff Development Committee" to "Faculty and Staff Development Council." "Staff" was meant to be inclusive. However, faculty representatives suggested that a number of their colleagues did not feel that this term included them. Therefore, they recommended that the title be changed. This may appear to be a minor point. However, if members of a group feel that they have not been included, the program will not achieve its potential. In addition, meaningful programs for staff, adjunct faculty, and contracted personnel present serious challenges for comprehensive development programs at community colleges.

How? - Burnstad, Hoss, and McHargue (1993) provide sage advice on this important question: "Several campus colleagues should advise you and your program.... The committee members will contribute good ideas of their own and help you solicit other ones. They will also provide you with more credibility and increase the sense of 'ownership' by your campus colleagues," (p. 23). The development program/officer must also have the strong public support of the president.

In addition to these four questions, each institution must confront the issue of faculty and staff participation. Efforts to increase participation range from reliance on internalized professional and career norms and values concerning development to formal requirements written into individual development plans and collective bargaining agreements. Monetary incentives also have proven quite successful. For instance, adjunct faculty at HCCC is paid a \$25.00 stipend for each in-house faculty workshop they attend.

Creating a Global Mindset

London Business School recently published a study that identified the knowledge, skills and attributes young leaders / educators should possess in order to succeed. The issue is to inculcate a global mindset. A research in 20 countries have brought out a view the need for the constant development and a new approach to teaching and learning, which should be elevated on a platform of practicality and action oriented.

Globalization is an art – an art of human relations that, like other arts is presented through insights gleaned from teaching and from experience, day in and day out. This means that one must pick the place he intends to compete, creating a differentiated mix of teaching and training opportunities drawn from the day to day activities.

The skills requisite for the new global capabilities can be streamlined as below:

- Managing diverse cultures
- Dealing with ambiguity, uncertainty and paradox
- Decision making
- Accountability
- Managing performance
- Project management
- Ability to make complex simple
- Presentation skills
- Listening and observation
- Networking and collaboration
- Teambuilding and teamwork
- Talent assessment
- Interpersonal skills / giving feedback

However to achieve above the elements that should be focused can be classified as follows:

- Unyielding integrity
- Worldly awareness
- Thrive on change
- Judgment and intuition
- Demanding excellence
- Perseverance and tenacity
- Adaptability & responsiveness
- Curiosity and creativity
- Self-awareness
- Self-confidence to involve others
- Boundless energy to motivate and energize
- Judging performance
- Capacity and desire to learn, coach able

CONCLUSION

Examples of successful faculty and staff development programs and activities are found throughout the community / college sector. The challenge facing each organisation is to implement and integrate programs that cross divisional lines and are responsive to its mission and all of its employee groups. The approach of the professional development should be holistic in character – to education the whole-some for the educators to meet the responsibilities and challenges of the future. This can be achieved through effective environment and beyond class room activities.

It is also essential that every individual educator make the choice each time they read a professional book or take a course for the benefit teaching and discuss among the colleagues on education topics and engage to fuel lifelong learning and grow independent learning.

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