Professional Development of In -Service Teachers

DR. CHANDANA DEY
Associate Prof. & Incharge
Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti
Urdu, Arabi-Farsi, University, Lucknow

Abstract:
The area of professional development of teachers, is of growing interest internationally. However, while an increasing range focuses on particular models there is a paucity of literature addressing the spectrum of challenges in professional development of teachers. This paper therefore considers a wide range of international literature along with some specific suggestions and models to face the challenges. Teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of education. The more effective teachers are , the better would be student outcomes. It is necessary to keep a track of the long term effects of continuing professional development (CPD) models in order to assess their worth. The movement towards evidence based practice in education can only be good if professional training is linked to practice. It will have direct effect on students' and teachers' progress. In order to investigate the areas associated with teacher professional development, one has to consider recruitment, preparation or pre-service training. ICT integration, models for professional development and teacher motivation. The framework outlined in this paper is offered as a way of supporting such investigation.

Keywords: *Professional development, In service teachers*

Introduction

Professional development of teachers when based on academic research and sustained training allows teachers to "unlock the barriers to learning." Teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of education. The more effective teachers are, the better would be student outcomes. Teacher professional development is most non-existent in the unaided institutions with only a negligible percentage of teachers reported to have any training. One of the most common reasons cited for this is the lack of institutional management incentives to invest in activities not directly visible to parents. If high-quality teacher development programs can be made available at affordable prices, more institutions may be interested in developing their internal capacities In order to investigate the challenges associated with teacher professional development, one has to consider, recruitment, preparation or pre-service training professional development, teacher motivation, models for professional development and the role of ICT.

Recruitment

Often teaching is not the most preferred profession, making it difficult to attract and retain the top talent. Few countries like Finland, Singapore and South Korea are able to recruit 100 percent of their teachers from the top one- third of the academic class. Attracting top talent in teaching would require creating better pathways, working conditions and rebranding the teaching profession.

Professional Development or In- service training:

Recognising this as a need, the government has made efforts for nits teachers to receive upto twenty annual training days under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan. However there are many challenges in professional training of teachers like-

- Top driven nature of training does not account for needs of teachers making it undesirable for them to actively participate.
- Very little transformations in teachers' actions inside the classrooms.
- Fixed nature of training days and locations restricts flexibility of access.
- Cascade model without standardised training practices dilutes knowledge dissemination.
- Insufficient training and tools for cluster level resource, institutional or peer level support leads to erratic academic support or mentoring.
- Non- transparent data and communication systems result in ad-hoc and often irrelevant training assignments.

Motivation and Incentives

Various research studies show the impact of employee motivation on their performance. What motivated a teacher to join the profession in the first place, what continues to motivate or demotivate and how we can create teacher incentives to achieve goals of education are some critical questions that we need to deeply deliberate on. We also need to think about the impact of career progression as well as supporting institutional culture on teacher effectiveness. Applying the principles of 'Growth Mindset' to teachers, we need to start with the belief that all teachers can grow in their professional capabilities and performance when right conditions are created.

Twitter-initiated professional development experiences

It brings teachers in touch with research papers, articles, blogs far more than they can come across in their day to day professional life. It becomes easy to converse with teachers from all areas and at all stages of their career. Online networking may lead to mutual face to face CPD.

Follow up on professional sessions

Questionnaires may be filled up to find out how people found professional sessions. A quick feedback session at the beginning of subsequent training can work well and provide the basis for follow-up sessions.

Teachers as organizers of CPD sessions

Development by teachers for teachers may lead to greater investment and raise the chances for follow-up implementation. If senior management addresses the development programmes, teachers feel disconnected.

Models of Teacher Preparation for Technology Integration

Educators concerned with teachers' competency development in ICTs integration have discussed the major models which have been used to train teachers). These models involve the necessary stages of orientation, adoption, evaluation, innovation, and institutional.

Watson's Model

He identified five approaches to in-service training of teachers are the home grown expert, the comfortable shoes' approach, let them struggle, and the Killer application. Home grown experts developed competencies personally, this reduces money to be spent on training of teachers. The comfortable shoe approach involves a lot of demonstration to students which are later replicated by students. As for the let them struggle, students are shown samples and then the teacher steps back to let them struggle to master the skill, while killer application involves some curriculum application which the use of ICT is compelling that teachers cannot help but be excited by it or at least compelled by it.

Fredrickson's Models

Single Course Model-

Using the single course model teacher training institution teach technology using an isolated course method. In such courses students are presented with basic instruction in a one semester three credit hour course. Students are taught basics of productivity or application software (word processing,

database, spreadsheet, etc).This is called traditional computer literacy. In other instances, software evaluation, web uses, electronic presentation, among others, are taught.

Integrated Model

Integrated model involves students being introduced into technology through integration of ICTs in various courses that is ICTs are integrated across the curriculum. Using this approach the teacher models the use of technology.

Combined Model

The final model the combined model which is an eclectic application of the two previous models, this is called the combined model. It involves the combination of the two approaches where basic instructional technology skills and teaching skills are taught generally in one or two credits course, and this is followed by technology integration in other courses the student teacher take. Trainee teachers should be trained using various strategies like field based experience in technology rich environment, cooperative, electronic field trip, guided inquiry, and so on. It is essential that serving and trainee teachers should be given adequate ICTs training using the combined model, particularly in pre-service teacher education programme.

Some Policy Suggestion for Effective Integration of ICT in In-Service Teacher Professional Education

No technology can fix bad educational philosophy, policy or practice, nor can it compensate for a lack of political commitment. The decisions about what to use, how and when, are political and educational decisions that must be made consciously and daringly .

- **Make ICT a Priority**-Success in ensuring that teachers acquire the skills and knowledge they need to use technology effectively opens the door to all kinds of new educational opportunities for both teachers and students, and downstream economic opportunities for graduating youth and their countries. This success is the key to participation in the global knowledge economy. Accordingly, teacher professional development in the use and application of technology must be given the priority and resources it deserves, while still maintaining a constructively critical eye on its costs and methodologies.
- **Modernise Training and the Curricula-**
  The fundamental aim is to give the learners the opportunity to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, information literate citizens, knowledge managers and, finally, team members who are proficient in collaborating with others. Meeting this aim requires a fundamental change in how teachers are trained and in curriculum development approaches.
- **Mainstream ICTs in all Subjects-**
  ICTs should be infused into the entire curriculum. Throughout their teacher education experience and professional development programmes, pre- and in-service teachers should learn how to incorporate ICTs into their own subjects. Restricting technology experiences to a single course or a separate area of teacher education will not prepare students to be technology-using teachers. More attention is needed for this integration into the curricula. The focus seems to be on the classic 'Maths, Science, English' package, giving the dangerously wrong impression that ICTs cannot be integrated in all other subjects. The integration itself tends to be focused on technology rather than on information and communication.

Result of ICT integration in professional development

- They have become more independent learners, who do not consider the lecturers as the sole sources of knowledge anymore.
- They increasingly enjoy learning.
- They enjoy the democratisation process taking place at classroom level.
- They consider their lecturers as students themselves.

- They have stopped spending considerable time and money running around libraries to look for information when given an assignment.
- They are better able to assess educational practices and policies.
- They are proud of being part of the training programme because the college is viewed by outsiders as innovative.
- Students relate with others as they undertake research activities together and assist each other.
- It is essential to include an extensive component that is subject-related so that users can refer to practical examples for ICT-integrated teaching and learning. The modules should refer to the local curriculum in order to be as practical as possible.

Conclusion

Teacher development studies have shown that simply exposing a teacher to a new concept or skill has little or no classroom impact. This is so because most professional development opportunities for educators are still lecture style- telling, showing and explaining how something can be done .After the training is finished the teachers have to return to their classroom, where they do not get support from their authorities .In order to be effective strategic professional development needs to be of a longer duration. It must be less formal and must include ongoing interaction and peer engagement to refine skills. The professional development of teacher educators in the area of ICT integration is essential. Unless teacher educators model effective use of technology in their own classes, it will not be possible to prepare a new generation of teachers who effectively use the new tools for teaching and learning. Many workshops have assisted ICT users with the integration of ICTs in the classroom. Insights and experience gained in the ICT training programme can serve as an entry point in the development of a national/regional training programme.

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