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Viable Strategies for Professional Development among Teachers Community

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Abstract:

Ongoing learning is an essential component of continuous improvement for teachers. This aspect gains increased significance for the purpose of professional development (PD) among teachers. This paper aims to look into viable strategies in order to update individuals' knowledge of a subject in light of recent advances in the chosen area. The author concludes that PD of teachers is the strategy used in schools, colleges and university can be definitely to ensure that educators continue to strengthen their practice throughout their career. This area requires further research and debate at appropriate platforms, like workshops, seminars, and conferences.

Keywords: Strategies, Mechanism, Professional Development (PD), Programmes, Activities, Teachers, and Professional Learning etc.

Introduction:

Teachers' professional learning is of increasing interest as a critical way to support the increasingly complex skills students need to learn in order to succeed in the 21st century. Sophisticated forms of teaching are needed to develop student competencies such as deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction. In turn, effective professional development (PD) is needed to help teachers learn and refine the instructional strategies required to teach these skills. However, research has noted that many professional development initiatives appear ineffective in supporting changes in teachers' practices and student learning.

In many countries, the role and functioning of schools are changing and so is what is expected of teachers. Teachers are asked to teach in increasingly multicultural classrooms; to place greater emphasis on integrating students with special learning needs in their classrooms; to make

more effective use of information and communication technologies for teaching; to engage more in planning within evaluative and accountability frameworks and to do more to involve parents in schools. No matter how good pre-service training for teachers is, it cannot be expected to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. Education systems therefore seek to provide teachers with opportunities for in-service professional development in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and to retain a high-quality teacher workforce. As OECD's comparative review on teachers noted (OECD, 2005)

Objectives:

The author, in this paper, aims to look into mechanism that educational planners can use:

- To update individuals' knowledge of a subject in light of recent advances in the area,
- To update individuals' skills, attitudes and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and new circumstances and new educational research, and
- To exchange information and expertise among teachers and others, e.g. academics, industrialists.

Concepts of Professional Development (PD):

PD development can be recognises that development can be provided in many ways, ranging from the formal to the informal. It can be made available through external expertise in the form of courses, workshops or formal, informal and Non-formal education qualification programmes, through collaboration between schools, colleges and university teachers across the country. In this case, development can be provided through coaching/mentoring, collaborative planning and teaching, and the sharing of the best practices.

Research Methodology:

The researcher has used secondary data. Data have been analysed in descriptive manner in view of objectives, as outlined above. Largely, qualitative data (collected from secondary sources, specified under reference section at the end of the paper) have been used by the author. Also, the author has outlined review of relevant literature with the purpose of orienting the audience to the scientific research work that already has been done in the relevant field by various authors of repute.

Some Important Reviews of Teacher's PD:

Considering the numerous contributions to the topic of teachers' reflection, it is fair to say that it has established itself as a relevant issue in teachers' professional development and seem to be unanimous in perceiving it as vital to the process of teachers' education and further professional development (Boud & Walker, 1998; Cvetek, 2003, 2015; Handal & Lauvås, 1987; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Korthagen et al., 2001; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Loughran, 2002; Polak, 2010; Marentič Požarnik & Lavrič, 2015; Rodgers, 2002; Rupnik Vec, 2006a; Valenčič Zuljan, 2008; Valenčič Zuljan & Bizjak, 2007).

Teachers wish to foster active, meaning-directed, application-directed, self-regulated, and cooperative student learning, their roles become ever more demanding and complex. It no longer suffices to be able to explain the subject-matter well, to regulate their students' learning, and to motivate them to learn; rather, teachers must take on the new roles of diagnostician, challenger, model, activator, monitor, evaluator, and reflector of students' learning processes .Based on her literature overview and emphasises that one of teachers' key competencies is being able to analyse and adapt their teaching to students in specific social, cultural and political contexts, which is especially challenging when teaching those students who are culturally, ethnically, and racially different from the majority of society, an issue that increasingly requires attention in knowledge base society.

Types of PD:

There are various types of professional development programme for teachers, as outlined below:

1. Courses/workshops ,orientation (e.g. on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics)
2. Education conferences or seminars (at which teachers and/or researchers present their research results and discuss education problems)
3. Qualification programme (e.g. a degree programme)
4. observation visits to other schools
5. participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers
6. individual or collaborative research on a topic of professional interest; and
7. Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal and Non -formal school arrangement reading professional literature (e.g. journals, evidence-based papers, thesis papers); and
8. engaging in informal dialogue with peers on how to improve teaching

Basic guidelines for Schools for Effectiveness of Their PD for Teachers:

Following these basic guidelines need to be followed:

1. *Keep it simple.* Each year, identify and focus on one or two instructional priorities-effective instructional practices that the district wants teachers to learn, refine, or improve. Ideally, districts should select the priorities with input from the teachers themselves. They should clearly communicate these priorities and expectations throughout all levels of the organization.
2. *Organize all available district support to help teachers implement these instructional priorities.* Our organization believes that introducing teachers to a new way of teaching

reading or writing without the proper follow-up support only confuses and frustrates the teacher.

3. *School districts should make a deliberate effort to support teacher implementation of instructional priorities through training events, coaching, principal observation, staff and grade-level meetings, and evaluation systems*. But ultimately, the best professional development comes from teachers teaching one another. If schools can establish a collaborative, intellectually stimulating environment for teachers, that's a place where children will learn.

4. *Create a feedback loop to help teachers monitor implementation. Once districts define the outcomes they want to achieve, they should use teacher observations and student data to provide teachers with information about whether changes are having an effect on student achievement*. Teachers may need help learning how to conduct related assessments, analyze and interpret the data, and adapt their instruction in response to the data.

5. *Realize that change takes time*. Too often, districts work on something for a year, then revamp their priorities and launch a whole new set of goals for the next year. Administrators must realize that teachers will still need support when implementing changes the second year.

Elements of Effective PD:

Using the methodology, as outlined above, the author of this paper finds seven widely shared features of effective PD. They are discussed below:

1. Focused on content:

Professional development that focuses on teaching strategies associated with specific curriculum content supports teacher learning within their classroom contexts. Professional development that focuses on teaching strategies associated with specific curriculum content supports teacher learning within their classroom contexts. As one example, the Science Teachers Learning from Lesson Analysis program seeks to strengthen teachers' understanding of how to teach science productively. Its first goal is to deepen teacher understanding of students' science thinking, which helps teachers anticipate and respond to students' ideas and misunderstandings in productive ways

2. Incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory:

Active learning provides teachers with opportunities to get hands-on experience designing and practicing new teaching strategies. In Professional development models featuring active learning, teachers often participate in the same style of learning they are designing for their students, using real examples of curriculum, student work, and instruction. For example, Reading Apprenticeship is an inquiry-based PD model designed to help high school biology teachers integrate

literacy and biology instruction in their classrooms.

3. Supports and work with collaboration:

High-quality professional development creates space for teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning, often in job-embedded contexts that relate new instructional strategies to teachers' students and classrooms. By working collaboratively, teachers can create communities that positively change the culture in the work place.

4. Uses models and it's of effective practice:

Curricular models and it's of effective practice of instruction providing teachers with a clear vision of what best practices look like. Teachers may view models that include lesson plans, unit plans, sample student work, observations of peer teachers, and video or written cases of accomplished with the teaching.

5. Provides remedial and expert support class:

Remedial and expert support class involve the sharing of expertise about content and practice focused directly on teachers' individual needs. Experts may share their specialized knowledge as one-on-one coaches in the classroom, as facilitators of group workshops, or as remote mentors using technology to communicate with educators. They may include master teachers or coaches based in universities or professional development organizations. In one coaching initiative designed to enhance early literacy instruction among Head Start teachers, educators participated in biweekly sessions with a university-based literacy coach following a two-day orientation that introduced them to the literacy concepts.

6. Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection:

Feedback and Reflection High-quality professional learning frequently provides built-in time for teachers to think about, receive input on, and make changes to their practice by facilitating reflection and soliciting feedback. Feedback may be offered as teachers analyze lesson plans, demonstration lessons, or videos of teacher instruction, which also provide opportunities for reflection about what might be refined or retained and reinforced. These activities are frequently undertaken in the context of a coaching session or workshop, but may also occur among peer team.

7. Sustained duration:

Effective professional development provides teachers with adequate time to learn, practice, implement, and reflect upon new strategies that facilitate changes in their practice. As a result, strong Professional Development initiatives typically engage teachers in learning over weeks, months, or even academic years, rather than in short, one-off workshops.

8. Creating environment for Effective PD:

The quality of a Professional Development initiative's implementation has implications for its overall effectiveness in enhancing teacher practice and improving student learning. Researchers

have found that willing teachers are sometimes unable to implement professional development practices due to obstacles that are beyond their control. Even the best-designed professional development may fail to produce desired outcomes if it is poorly implemented due to barriers.

Barriers in PD:

• Inadequate resources, including necessary curriculum materials

• Lack of a shared vision about what high-quality instruction entails

• Lack of time for implementing new instructional approaches during the school day or year

• Failure to align state and local policies toward a coherent set of instructional practices

• Dysfunctional school cultures and

• Inability to track and assess the quality of professional development.

Implications for Policy and Practice:

PD can be help support teachers. Evidence-based PD practices are described below:

1. Policymakers could adopt standards for professional development to guide the design, evaluation, and funding of professional learning provided to educators. These standards might reflect the features of effective professional learning outlined in this report, as well as standards for implementation.

2. Policymakers and administrators could evaluate and redesign the use of time and school schedules to increase opportunities for professional learning and collaboration, including participation in professional learning communities, peer coaching and observations across classrooms, and collaborative planning.

3. States, districts, and schools could regularly conduct needs assessments using data from staff surveys to identify areas of professional learning most needed and desired by educators. Data from these sources can help ensure that professional learning is not disconnected from practice and supports the areas of knowledge and skills educators want to develop.

4. State and district administrators could identify and develop expert teachers as mentors and coaches to support learning in their particular area(s) of expertise for other educators.

5. States and districts can integrate professional learning into their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) school improvement initiatives, such as efforts to implement new learning standards, use student data to inform instruction, improve student literacy, increase student access to advanced coursework, and create a positive and inclusive learning environment

Conclusion:

Professional development of teachers is the strategy for schools, colleges and university use to ensure that educators continue to strengthen their practice throughout their career. The most effective active professional development engages teams of teachers to focus on the needs of their students. They learn and problem solve together in order to ensure all students achieve success. School systems use a variety of schedules to provide this collaborative learning and work time for teachers. When time set aside for professional development is used effectively and parents receive reports about student results, they realize the benefits to teachers and their students. Policymakers, community leaders, and parents have a responsibility to ensure that educators within their schools engage in continuous professional learning and develop knowledge base society.

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