

# Teacher Educators for Teacher Professional Development

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## Abstract

*Professional development refers to the development of a person in his/her professional career. More specifically, teacher development is equated with professional growth. For years, 'staff development' or 'in-service training, workshops, short term training courses' were only considered as the form of professional development. It is only in the past few years that professional development is considered as a long term process. Not only teacher's professional development can reform the education system but also the professional development of teachers-educators has been considered as an important element. The factors needed for professional development are: a culture of support from school and education system, the role of context, stages of development of a school and education system level. Teacher educators need time both for their professional development and daily work. Financial resources are equally important. Recently, the use of technology in classroom has become a challenging practice. The role of teacher-educators has a strong influence not only on the work of teachers but also on research and their institutions, how to work in teams and collaborate in their work.*

## Introduction

These are changing times in education system around the world. With the start of new millennium, many societies are engaging in serious and promising educational reforms. One of the key elements in most of these reforms is the professional development of teachers; societies are finally acknowledging that teachers are not only one of the 'variables' that need to be changed its order to improve their education systems, but they are also the most significant change agents in these reforms. This double role of teachers in education reforms being both subjects and objects of change - makes the field of teacher professional development a growing and challenging area and one that has received major attention during the past few years.

This new emphasis has been welcomed by teachers and educators in general as it represents a much needed appreciation of teachers work and also promotes the concept of teaching as a profession. Unfortunately, others have taken this new emphasis to be a sign that teachers are not providing adequate teaching standards, Guskey and Huberman (1995) reflection this paradox are also report that their work with teachers worldwide Offer little evidence to support this belief. "The vast majority of teachers and school administrators we have encountered are dedicated professionals who work hard under demanding conditions." It is for there had working teachers and educators that professional development opportunities are needed, not because they promote the recognition of their work as professionals but also because - as is the case of all professionals in any field - new opportunities for growth, exploration, learning and development are always welcome.

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In order to contribute to the knowledge base of educator's policy - makers, teacher educators, and administrators who are engaged in process of teacher educations and development and who are committed to planning, implementing and assessing sensible education reforms. The idea that good teaching methods have a significant positive impact on how and what students learn? Learning how to teach and working to be came an excellent teachers a long term process that requires not only the development of very practical and complex skills under the guidance and supervision of experts but also the acquisition of specific knowledge and the promotion of certain ethical values and attitudes. In addition to 'knowing what' and 'knowing how' teacher must also be competent in 'knowing why' and 'knowing when' (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997).

### What is teacher professional development ?

Professional development, in a broad sense referees to the development of a person in his or her professional role. More specifically, "teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (Galtthorn, 1995). Professional development includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops and professional meetings mentoring etc.) and informal experiences (such as reading professional publications watching televisions documentaries related to an academic discipline etc) (Ganser, 2000).

This conception of professional development is, therefore, broader than career development, which is defined as "the growth that occurs as the teacher moves through the professional career cycle" and broader than staff development, Which is "the provision of organized in-service programs designed to foster the growth of groups of teachers; it is only one of the systematic interventions that can be need for teacher development" (Galtthorn, 1995). When looking at professional development, one must examine the content of the experiences the process by which the professional development will occur, and the context in which it will take place.

For years the only form of 'professional development' available to teachers was staff development' or 'in-service training' usually consisting of workshop or short-term courses that would offer teachers new information on a particular aspect of their work. This was often the only type of training teacher would receive and was usually unrelated to the teachers' work. Only in the past few years has the professional development of teachers been considered a long term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession. This shift has been so dramatic that many have referred to it as a 'new image' of teacher learning a 'new model' of teacher education, a 'revolution' in education and even a 'new paradigm' of professional development (Walling and Lewis, 2000).

#### The characteristics of professional development

1. It is based on constructism rather than on a 'transmission - oriented models.
2. It is received as long-tem processes as it acknowledges the fact that teacher learn over time.
3. It is perceived as a process that takes place within a particular context.
4. Many identify this process as one that is intimately linked to school reform.

5. A teacher is conceived of as a reflective practitioner who will acquire new knowledge and experiences base on the prior knowledge and aid teachers in building new pedagogical theories and practices (Dadds, 2001).
6. It is conceived as a collaborative process.
7. Professional development may look and be very different in diverse settings.

### **Factors to consider for the professional development**

There are a number of factors to consider when planning implementing and or assessing teacher's professional development models and systems. They are:

**A culture of support** : Lieberman (1994) describes five factors that are necessary to build such a culture in schools and education system as:

1. Developing norms of collegiality, openness and trust;
2. Creating opportunities and time for disciplined inquiry;
3. Providing opportunities for teacher's learning content in context;
4. Re-thinking the functions of leadership and redefining leadership in schools to include teacher; and
5. Creating and supporting networks collaborations and coalitions.

Bush (1999) adds a sixth factor: preparing teachers to become leaders of their own professional development.

**The role of context:** The contexts wherein teaches teach and professional development occurs are usually varied and they have a serious impact on teachers, their work and their professional development. Multiple strategic sites for professional growth with the education system: ministries, department, district, school and professional organizations. Each of these can make a particular combination in different forms, but all are equally as important.

**Stage of development of a school and education system level:** The stage of development of school system or even the national education system for professional development strategies, the two elements must be compatible with each other. Verspoor & Wu (1990) describe for stage and development as:

1. First is the unskilled fashion where teachers and mainly unprepared and/or unqualified.
2. Second stage as the mechanical stage, where most teachers have received limited training and education.

Third and fourth stages are 'teaching in routine way' and professionals respectively. In both of these stages, teachers are reflective practitioners and they improve their teaching knowledge, skills and practices in a variety of ways. In the education systems teacher traverse in the different 'stages' of their development of different times in their career. Huberman (1989), for example defines five state as : Career entry (one to three years in profession), Stabilization (Forth to six years in the profession), Divergent period ( 7 + 18 years), Second divergent period (19 to 30 years) and Disengagement (41 to 50 yers)

**Time:** Teachers/educators need time both to make professional development an ongoing parts

of their times on a daily basis. But in developing countries, where most schools do not allow sufficient time for professional development. For example china, Germany and Japan where teachers have a significant amount of time to engage in their professional development an average of 30 to 40 of percent of their day out the classroom work. In most European and many Asian countries teachers spend between 15 and 20 hours in their classroom and remaining time for PD:

**Financial resources:** Funding for school improvement and for teacher's professional development is another major challenge faced teachers and educators worldwide. But at the same time, funding alone is not enough to provide effective professional-development opportunities for teachers/educators.

**The use of technology for teaching purposes:** The recent implementation of technology in the classroom is probably one of the most challenging innovations that many teachers have to comfort in the world today. For teachers and schools that do have access to new technology. How can the next generation of citizens and leaders be prepared to function in a technology-driven world, when teachers have no access to that technology and the context in which the school is located is not able to provide it? Therefore, to explore new technology as a factor in developing, designing and implementing professional development opportunities.

**The role of teacher unions:** Despite the common belief that unions are more concerned with the salary, compensation and benefits of its members rather than with their growth in the profession. Unions are working to changes this perspective over the years, teacher unions have provided different types of professional development for their members ( Bascian, 2000).

**The role of teacher educators for teacher's professional development:** The professional development of teacher educators is an aspect that has been neglected despite many reports that show its importance in the improvement of professional development of all teachers. However, the professional development of teacher educators and other educators in higher - education does not differ greatly from that of elementary and high school teacher. They need to acquire professional's knowledge not only of subject matter but also a pedagogy skills and techniques for teaching and must develop attitudes and understanding of ethical principles that underlie teaching (beaty 1998).

These can be accomplished with the aid of similar models including mentoring workshops and seminars, observation of experiences teachers, group discussions, journals, etc. Hernandez (1998) listed a few principles that guide the education of teacher – educators PD. They are:

1. The work of teacher-educators has a strong influence on the work of teachers; they should be model and illustrate a variety of teaching methods, techniques, process and pedagogy.
2. Process to prepare teacher educators must be based on practical issues related to the day-to-day classroom teaching.
3. The work of teacher- educators must include not only teaching but also research directly related to their expertise.
4. Teachers-educators must know and understand the institutions where they works and where their students will work.

5. Teacher educator must know the national education system in depth and must understand the context in which it is implemented.
6. Teacher educators must know how to work in teams and collaborate in their work.
7. Teacher educators must enjoy teaching. This disposition will generate a positive attitude toward teaching in their students.

An interesting model to prepare teacher-educators who function as practicum advisers was implemented on the University of British Columbia, Canada. As practicum advisers they became more reflective of their work with students for action research as a daily opportunity for professional growth and development (Clarke, 2000).

Another successful model of the teacher educators is used in a university of in Costa Rica with three formats: Presence education, distance education and tutorials including reflection, study group, discussions and other techniques of professional development (Hernandez, 1998)

The teacher educators present significant evidence self study (both individually and collaboratively for the improvement of their own practice and their role in the preparation of new teachers and successful teacher professional development. Gaible & Burns (2005) divided TPD in three broad models as:

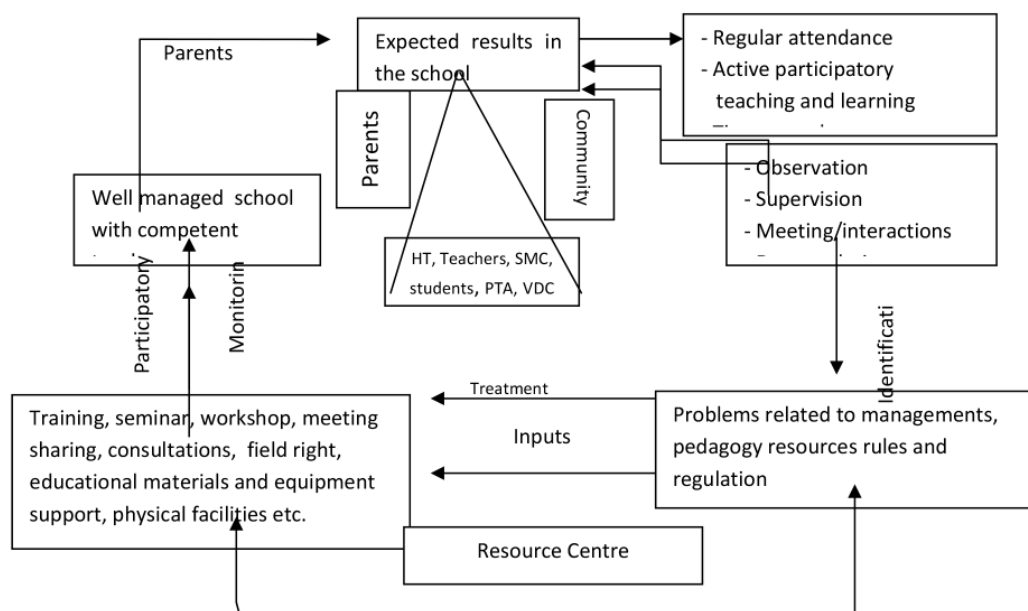
1. **Standardized TPD:** It is the most centralized approach best used to disseminate information and skills among large teacher populations. In this model training provides (teacher educators) are made responsible to ensure the quality of training program.
2. **Site based TPD:** If focused on intensive learning by groups of teachers in a school or region, promoting profound and long term changes in instructional methods through demand driven training approach to develop skills in trainees.
3. **Self-directed TPD:** It is independent learning initiated at the learner's discretion, using available resources that may include computers and the internet. It provides opportunity the share and implements knowledge and theory to develop knowledge, skills, attitude of teachers towards their profession.

Villegas & Reminer (2003) mentioned three models they are: organizational partnership model, small group or individual model, and skill development model. UNESCO has also mentioned three models of PD they are: **Knowledge of practice, knowledge in Practice, Knowledge for practice**. These models are interconnected to develop capacity of teachers and teacher-educators in skill knowledge, and attitude.

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The following charts can assist us to initiate for effective professional development (PD).



Source: NCED, 2069

‘Training’ is used as a part of professional development. It is not sufficient for professional development but necessary. It is passive experience participation is limited with teachers having little or no time to meet. Teachers believe that their professional development activities with their colleagues related to discuss how to apply them to significantly improve their classroom strategies. However, teachers have no input the planning process (Dhami, 2069).

## Nepalese context

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Looking at historical development of professional development of teachers and teacher educators in Nepal, before 1971, all school were established and managed by the local communities with their local initiatives and resources, although they has limited resources and expertise. All teachers were selected, appointed and retired by the local school conduction committees. However, TPD starts from National Education System Plan (NESP) from 1971 to 1975 outlined a long range plan for teacher education. Some of the given links and principles given by the plan are:

1. All schools should recruit trained teachers.
2. All untrained in service teachers should be trained.
3. An intensive training should be provided to teachers to teaching skills.
4. The curriculum of the teacher education should b be revised to meet the current needs

and

5. Research should be conducted to examine the relevancy of the curriculum, effectiveness of teaching methodology and ....tion system (MoE, 1971).

Similarly National Education Commission (NEC, 1992) brought up the need to teacher education system. The report for the first time recommended for the effective system of teacher development through National Centre for Educational Development (NCED). High level national education commission (HLNEC, 1998) recommended the need of training and teaching license for teachers. Most important the report suggested making transparent and competitive selection produced for teachers against the prevailing procedure in which teachers were appointed indiscriminately.

The report also recommended higher education qualification to become head teachers than for class teachers in each level. The recommended points as national policy on teacher training are:

1. Make teacher training obligatory for teaching profession at the school level.
2. Provide training for in-service teachers.
3. Increase the salary of trained teachers.
4. Give preference to women teachers and
5. Revise training programs suitable to teachers at each level.

However, no specific requirements have been suggested for head teacher training. All reports argued that only professionally competent teachers can enhance the overall development of the students and can produce a skilled workforce needed for the economic development of the country. Meanwhile, primary education development project (PEDP, 2049 - 2054) established nine primary teachers training centers (PTTCs) and it strengthened by teachers education project (TEP, 2002-2009). Likewise science education development project (SEDP, 1984) and secondary education development project (SEDP, 1992) and secondary education support program (SESP, 2003) were implemented for the secondary teachers development. These two streams of teacher and teachers educators development and existing three related institutions as: national centre for educational development (NCED) distance education centre (DEC) and secondary education development centre (SEDEC) merged into NCED by making it a single apex training institute.

Under this apex body, nine educational training centers (ETCs, ka grade former PTTCs), 20 ETCs (Kha grade and 5 ETCs (ga grade former SEDUS) were established for teacher development.

A high level task force on school education reform (2001) gave sufficient attention to school management and PD of the head teachers, teachers and teacher educators. NCED is conducting certification and recurrent training programs for primary and secondary level teachers through ETCs located at the different parts of the country and through other allied private training providers. There are 34 ETCs and 46 LRCs are working for teacher professional development under the NCED system. Similarly, Faculty of education/schools of education under different universities are also involved for teacher educators and teachers professional development.

School sector reform plan (SSRP, 2009 - 2015) has envisioned for stages of teachers professional career path as beginner, experienced, master and expert for both basic (grade 1-8) and secondary (9-12) level teachers. Some indicators such as time on task, seniority, qualification training and students' achievement will be used to promote teachers for their respective career path. Besides that teachers who have additional academic qualification will gain eligibility for fast track career progression at the relevant levels.

Furthermore, SSRP proposed a one-year teacher preparation course with qualification to be perspective teachers. The government will remain responsible for teacher development work. In order to keep abreast of new development in teaching and learning practices, teachers must acquire one-month in-service training at least one in every five years.

Provision will be made to accredit the short form training course to like with teacher career development. TPD will be linked to career development made available through both long and short term training programmes. Head teacher's minimum qualification will be BEd and MEd with HT preparation courses for basis secondary schools respectively.

## Conclusion

Teacher educators professional development base significant impact on the success of educational reforms or on student's learning. It must be systematically planned supported funded and researched to guarantee the effectiveness of this process. Alignment is needed also between the content of teacher professional development programs and their delivery. Traditional teaching methods have been proved to less successful in teaching children. Memorization lectures teacher centered classes etc. are less effective than teaching for understanding focusing instruction on the students, making students learn from each other etc. Nevertheless, most in-service teacher Training programs are taught in the traditional way. Without obliging teachers to participate in the classroom, they learn through group discussion, as new pedagogy.

Technology and distance educations should be used as means of supporting teacher educators and teacher professional development. However, not all teachers have access to computers or telephone lines, not all know how to use particular forms of technology, not all teachers attend courses given in very distance locations etc. So, the goals of a teacher educators professional development programs should be in alignment with these of the curriculum. Teacher educator preparation institutions and other related institutions must worth collaboratively on order to ensure the development of teacher educators for the very beginning of their careers. External agencies and must support teacher educators' professional development programs both financially and by offering particular activities and programmes that address the need of teacher educators.

Finally it can be said that teacher educators' professional development must be thought of as a long terms process, which begins with initial preparation and only ends when they retire from the profession. This new approach to the education and development of teacher-educators required a transformation of processes and policies that support teacher educators/ teacher their education, their work and their growth in the profession.

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