

**ASSESSING AND EVALUATING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Dr. T. Jeevan Kumar

Assistant Professor of English,
Government College (UG & PG),
Ananthapuramu. (A.P.)

Abstract

Teaching is the most complex, noblest, and revered profession on this earth. With the advent of technology and with drastic changes in teaching methodologies, it has become much more complex. Today, its effectiveness can best be assessed and evaluated using several techniques to elicit information from various perspectives on different characteristics of teaching. It also requires, apart from the requisite experience and qualification, a flair for assessing and evaluating by himself or by others and for continuing professional development that helps in identifying and achieving career objectives.

The aim of the present paper is to examine the importance of professional development in the teaching career. It also tries to analyze how a teacher can become expertise and grow professionally well through continuous assessment and evaluation of his/her own teaching. In fact, continuing professional development prepares the teacher for great responsibilities, boosts up confidence, strengthens professional credibility, and makes stronger in tackling new challenges. It helps to reflect, review, and document one's own learning and also to develop and update professional skills.

Key Words: Career, Expertise, Assessing, Evaluating, Continuing Professional Development

With the advent of technology, there is a drastic change in teaching and teaching methodologies. Researchers, policy-makers, teacher-educators, and administrators, all over the world, are seriously engaged in identifying the suitable method to teach and also to bring out various reforms in the education. They are of the opinion that the traditional and existing methodologies may not be appropriate at all levels. They strongly believe that the teacher has to keep on updating his knowledge on all the old and latest teaching methodologies to cater the needs of the students. They lay emphasis on the professional development of the teacher who is not only an agent of delivering information to others but also the person who can change and improve the present education system. In order to achieve this, the teacher has to assess and evaluate his own teaching with a view to developing professionally. Glatthorn aptly says thus:

Teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically.¹

The term 'professional development' refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. It means a comprehensive, continuous, sustained, and intensive approach of improving teachers' effectiveness in raising student achievement. It is referred to learning and adapting the appropriate methods and approaches in order to grow professionally. It is described as an intensive, collaborative, and ideally incorporating an evaluative stage.

The professional development of teachers is regarded as an individual and collective process that should be accomplished in the workplace of the teacher. It is perceived as a long-term process as it acknowledges the fact that teachers learn over a period of time. It is based on "constructivism rather than on a transmission-oriented model."² Teachers are treated as "active learners who are engaged in the concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection."³ Furthermore, it is looked upon as a contribution to the development of the teacher's professional skills, by means of a variety of both formal and informal experiences. For the last decade, the concept of professional development has changed as a result of increasing understanding of how the teaching and learning processes are created. Rudduck referred to the professional development of the teacher as

The teacher's ability to maintain the curiosity of the class; to identify significant interests in the teaching and learning processes; to value and seek dialogue with experienced colleagues as a source of support in the analysis of situations.⁴

The professional development of a teacher should be conceived in close connection with a search for professional identity by how he defines himself and others. Whether one is a teacher who started his teaching career or on the verge of retirement, goal setting, both realistic and attainable, will help him in improving professionally and also in disseminating meaningful, better, and creative instruction to the students. In fact, professional development and goal setting should go hand-in-hand.

In the era of globalization and diversity of education, professional development is important in any field. It is most important in the field of teaching to acquire knowledge, to know the latest developments, and to enhance the skills. It is a continuous improvement process lasting from the time an individual decides to enter teaching profession until retirement. It encompasses the processes that the teacher engages into initially prepare himself, continuously update, and review and reflect on his own performance. Just as knowledge and skill requirements are changing with the advent of globalization and the explosive growth of technology, the teacher must also develop professionally and continually acquire new knowledge

and skills. If he wants to prepare the students for their successful future, he must be prepared for the future himself.

Professional development keeps the teacher always motivated, think positively, gain confidence, and gives strength to overcome any obstacles he/she faces in the classroom. It engages the teacher to learn and share best practices, acquire teaching strategies that help them in handling mixed classrooms. It provides the teacher continuous, on-the-job and support needed to improve his teaching skills. It keeps the teacher up-to-date on the emerging trends in research in education and on the emerging technological tools which can be used as aids in the classroom. It even plays “an important role in changing teachers’ teaching methods, and that these changes have a positive impact on students’ learning.”⁵ Through formal experiences such as attending workshops and professional meetings, mentoring, etc., and informal experiences such as reading professional publications, watching programmes related to an academic discipline, he can use current research, best practices, creativity and knowledge while teaching and become successful. These successful professional-development experiences will have a noticeable impact on the teachers’ work both in and out of the classroom. They will have an impact on teachers’ beliefs and behaviour. Other benefits a teacher reaps from continuing education and professional development are learning all about the latest trends in education and discipline, and receiving instruction on how to implement new practices and procedures in a classroom. Though, he can read about practices and procedures in a book or on a web site, but he may need help when it comes to how those things can actually put it into action.

Thus, the professional development of teachers mould their career and makes them best teachers. It is a major factor to improve themselves and also in imparting a better education to the learners. Successful professional-development will have a significant positive effect on students’ performance and learning. If the teacher’s goal is to increase students learning and to improve their performance, he must consider his professional development as a key factor.

The word ‘Assessment’ refers to ‘an opinion or a judgement about somebody or something that has been thought about very carefully.’ It plays a vital role in the professional development. It is used to stimulate growth, change, and improvement in teaching through reflective practice. It is divided into two types namely formative and summative.

Formative assessment implies that the results will be used in the formation and revision process of an educational effort. It is used in the improvement of educational programmes. This type of assessment is the most common form of assessment in higher education. It is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities. Since teachers are “continuously looking for ways to strengthen their learning efforts, this type of constructive feedback is valuable.”⁶

Summative assessment (or summative evaluation) is used as an evaluation technique at the end of a learning activity. Its purpose is to document the outcomes. It is used for providing feedback to instructors about the quality of a subject or programme. It can also be used

to refer to assessment of educational faculty by their respective supervisor, with the object of measuring all teachers on the same criteria to determine the level of their performance. In this context summative assessment is meant to meet the needs for teacher accountability. The evaluation usually takes the shape of a form, and consists of check lists and occasionally narratives. Areas evaluated

include classroom climate, instruction, professionalism, and planning and preparation.⁷

The term 'Evaluation' means 'forming an opinion of something after thinking about it carefully.' Basically, one has to do the evaluation for his/her mental and psychological satisfaction. It is an integral component of the continuing professional development. Its core purpose is to strengthen the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and classroom practices of professional educators. It is only one component of a comprehensive teacher growth and development system. It is used for summative purposes to give an overview of a particular instructor's teaching in a particular course and setting. Assuming that no one is perfect in teaching and therefore everyone has room for improvement, evaluation is the means by which one has to identify which aspects of teaching are good and which need to be changed. So every teacher, should feel responsible and evaluate himself and if at all he/she wants to get fame in the teaching career.

The key questions in the evaluation of teaching are "How well his/her teaching is in the classroom?" "Which method of teaching is more appropriate and how it is to be improved?" The following are some of the sources of information through which one gets the answer to the above raised questions. Perhaps they are the best source for understanding the immediate effects of teaching, i.e., the process of teaching and learning.

- 1. Self-monitoring:** Self-monitoring is one of the most important task that every teacher has to do. Once s/he comes out of the class, after teaching, he must introspect whether he taught the lesson meaningfully and students easily followed it without any difficulty. Then he must think whether he can teach the same lesson more interestingly. This kind of self-monitoring may be done by asking one or two questions to know whether the learners have understood what he taught. If not s/he can think of some other relevant method and teach it more effectively.
- 2. Audiotape and Videotape Recordings:** Modern technology has given much scope for the teacher to teach more impressively. Some of the technological devices like mobile, tape recorder, laptop, etc., are relatively inexpensive and can easily access audio and video recordings while the teacher is teaching. The teacher can put a small audio recorder like mobile on his desk or put a video recorder on the side of the classroom and let it run while teaching. Later s/he can listen or view to it and find out whether the same method and style of teaching can be continued or it needs any improvement or there are some movements which have to be removed.
- 3. Information from Students:** Students play a unique position in helping their teachers in the evaluation process. They are better judges of teachers' evaluation. The teacher can get response from them by finding out whether his explanation of the lesson is clear or they failed to understand it. This information can be obtained in two distinct ways such as questionnaires and interviews. He can ask questions and find out whether the students faced any difficulty in following the lesson. Once they come out with their opinion, s/he can change his method of teaching if necessary. This kind of getting information from the students can be done at the end of the class. The other well-established way of finding out students' reaction is to talk to them personally.

To conclude, teaching is the most complex, noblest, and revered profession on this earth. Its effectiveness can best be assessed and evaluated using several techniques to elicit information

An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

from various perspectives on different characteristics of teaching. It requires, apart from the requisite experience and qualification, a flair for assessing and evaluating by himself or by others and for continuing professional development that helps in identifying and achieving career objectives. Continuing professional development prepares the teacher for great responsibilities, boosts up confidence, strengthens professional credibility, and makes stronger in tackling new challenges. As a result, every teacher ought to feel responsible to keep his skills and knowledge up-to-date. S/He must question, assess, evaluate, and review every activity of learning by using multiple techniques. He should write down or document the insights and learning points and assess them continuously. One may tune with Cochran-Smith and say that continuing assessing and evaluating of himself makes a true professional as

A teacher is conceived of as a reflective practitioner, someone who enters the profession with a certain knowledge base, and who will acquire new knowledge and experiences based on that prior knowledge. In so doing, the role of professional development is to aid teachers in building new pedagogical theories and practices, and to help them develop their expertise in the field.⁸

References

1. A. Glatthorn. "Cooperative Professional Development: Peer Centered Options for Teacher Growth." *Education Leadership*, 45 (3), 31-35. Print.
2. M.W. McLaughlin and Zarrow. "Teachers Engages in Evidence-Based Reform: Trajectories of Teachers' Inquiry, Analysis, and Action." *Teachers caught in the action: Professional Development that Matters*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2001. Print.
3. M. Dadds. "Continuing Professional Development: Nurturing the Expert within." *Teacher Development: Exploring Our Own Practice*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing and the Open University, 2001. Print.
4. J. Rudduck, *Innovation and Change*, Milton Keynes: Open University, 1991. 129.
5. H. Borko and R.T. Putnam, "Expanding a teacher's knowledge base: a cognitive psychological perspective on professional development," *Professional Development in Education: New Paradigms and Practices*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1995. 55. Print.
6. <http://tll.mit.edu/help/types-assessment-and-evaluation>
7. C.D. Glickman, S.P. Gordon, & J.M. Ross-Gordon. *Supervision and instructional leadership: a developmental approach*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 2009. Print.
8. M. Cochran-Smith. "Beyond certainty: taking an inquiry stance on practice." *Teachers caught in the action: professional development that matters*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2001. Print.

Declaration

I, Dr. T. Jeevan Kumar, certify that the article entitled “Assessing and Evaluating Continuing Professional Development” is my own article and that it has not been published before, and it is not under consideration for publication in any other Journal. I have acknowledged all the references and secondary sources which I extracted from Internet and used them in the content of the article. I hereby transfer all rights to *LangLit* to edit, if necessary, and publish.



A Biographical Note

Dr. T. Jeevan Kumar works as an Assistant Professor of English in a Government College (UG & PG), affiliated to Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, India. He won the Smt. Movva Venkata Lakshmi Rama Sarma Memorial Gold Medal and also the Smt. Vasagiri Kamalamma Memorial Prize for securing first rank in post-graduation. He obtained his Doctoral degree from Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur. He has ten years of teaching experience in the institutions of higher learning. He presented many papers in national as well as international seminars on English Literature, English Language Teaching, Communicative English, and on Teacher Development. His areas of interest include Modern British Drama, Commonwealth Literature, Literary Criticism, Indian English Literature, and Communicative English. He has widely published his research articles in several anthologies, refereed and peer-reviewed Journals such as *International Journal of English and Literature*, *New Academia*, *The Challenge*, *Re-Markings*, *International Journal of the Frontiers of English*, *Thematics*, *The Literary Criterion*, *Research Scholar*, *ICFAI University Journal of English Studies*, *The IUP Journal of American Literature*, *MAJELL*, *LangLit*, *Vishwabharati*, and *Triveni* etc.

