



## Professional Development of Teachers And Teacher Educators

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corporate communication, written communication, report writing, tertiary learners

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### Introduction

The 21st century is about the management of all the knowledge and information, we have generated and the value addition we bring to it. But we should continue with life long learning. To day we have the ability through technology to really and truly teach ourselves to become life long learner. This is essential for the professional development of teacher educators.

Tagore in 1923 had written on 'Topsy-Turvy Education'. He stated that "Ants collect grain particles but they also know where, when and how to use them. This means that we come across things we can gather, if we also have come to understand, how it could be used, if we understood its nature and implications of its use, if along with life we have structured its basis then alone it could be called genuine education.

The waves of change are knocking at the doors of educational institutions in the form of strength, weakness; opportunities and threats yet many of us continue to deny their presence wishing they had not come. We continue to deliver the same pill of education whose potency to create holistic powerful newness freshness in the system has come under severe suspicion.

It is disturbing to note that present day system of education has been slowest in innovation. Many teachers- educators comfortable with status-quo continue to be obsessed with old paradigm avoiding at any cost the intrusion of new development and new thinking.

To grow as individuals professionally and to be active contributors, teachers must acquire the kind of resilience that will enable them to accept fully and early the best promises of changing circumstances without losing their sense of continuity or their dedication, commitment and integrity. Educators must stop identifying themselves with the settled way of behaving that they have learnt long ago. The functions of teacher have an added dimension of responsibility and commitment unlike other social functions as they educate the new generation. Lack of professionalism results due to lack of integrity, honesty, sincerity, responsibility besides total absence of competitive outlook.

It is a widely held belief that 'teachers are born, not made'. This statement strengthens the fact that only suitable candidates should be admitted in teaching profession but these suitable candidates also require some professional training. Professional preparation equips the teachers with the knowledge and skills required for a higher level of professional competence.

The teacher education in general has not been able to

come out as a profession like other professions. Therefore, there is yet a debate going on whether teaching is a profession or not. Several seminars have been held and study groups are appointed from time to time to discuss how teacher education can be improved but their recommendations have not been implemented in any large measure.

Professionalisation of teacher education is very important in the present scenario. Only those teachers should come in this profession who have the desire as well as the aptitude to be a teacher. Teacher education needs to be more relevant to the needs of the institution and sufficiently professional in approach. The curricula needs to be redesigned according to the changing scenario. The system needs to prepare teachers who become professionally competent and committed at the completion of initial teacher preparation programme. There is no doubt that prospect for increased degree of professionalisation of

Teaching in India is challenging. The issue of how to make teacher education more professional has become a key concern of the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE). It is trying to develop teacher education courses with definite body of knowledge and related scientific methodology in order to earn a significant place vis-a-vis other disciplines. New structures and approaches are being tried and tested under highly visible educational programmes. It is for the teacher education programmes to change themselves into learning programmes so that the prospective teachers are professionally prolific.

### TEACHING COMPETENCY

'Teaching competencies' mean the attributes such as knowledge, skills & strategies and attitude that are important for the professional efficiency of a teacher.

### Subject Knowledge

A teacher needs to have an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter which he/ she is likely to teach as the content of the subject forms the base of any teaching. Shulman (1987) says, "To teach all students according to today's standards, teachers need to understand subject matter deeply and flexibly so that they can help students create useful cognitive maps, relate one idea to another, and address misconceptions. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across the fields and to everyday life." This kind of understanding will certainly provide a foundation for subject knowledge that enables teachers to make ideas accessible to students in an effective manner. The subject knowledge of a teacher cannot be seen in isolation from the learners. A teacher should have content depth so that, he/she can answer the critical questions posed by the students. Shulman while studying 'Pedagogical Content Knowledge' commented that teachers must possess sub-

ject knowledge different from the knowledge of subject matter experts.

En Gauge of North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (US) has identified as " 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which include digital age literacy ( consisting of functional literacy, visual literacy, scientific literacy, technology literacy, information literacy, cultural literacy and global awareness) inventive thinking, higher order thinking and sound reasoning, effective communication and high productivity."

**Skills needed in the workplace of the future: Digital Age Literacy**

Functional literacy	Ability to decipher and express ideas in a range of media; this includes the use of images, graphics, video, charts and graphs or visual literacy
Scientific literacy	Understanding of both the theoretical and applied aspects of science and mathematics
Technology literacy	Competence in the use of information and communication Technologies
Information literacy	Ability to find, evaluate and make appropriate use of information, Including via the use of ICTs
Cultural literacy	Appreciation of the diversity of cultures
Global awareness	Understanding of how nations, corporations and communities all over the world are inter-related

**Inventive Thinking**

Adaptability	Ability to adapt and manage in a complex, independent world
Curiosity	Desire to know
Creativity	Ability to use imagination to create new things
Risk-taking	Ability to take risks

**Effective Communication**

Teaming	Ability to work in a team
Collaboration and smoothly and work effectively with others	Ability to interact Interpersonal skills
Personal and social	Be accountable for the way they use ICTs and to learn to use ICTs Responsibility for the public good
Interactive communication	Competence in conveying, transmitting, accessing and understanding information
Highly Productivity	Ability to prioritize ,plan and manage programs and projects to achieve the desired results ability to apply what they learn in the classroom to real life contexts to create relevant , high- quality products

**Teaching Skills**

The essence of being an effective teacher lies in knowing what to do to foster pupils learning. Effective teaching is primarily concerned with setting up learning activities for pupils which is successful in bringing about the type of learning the teacher intends. For achieving this, the knowledge of teaching skills is very important. Teaching skills thus, are specific aspects of teaching behaviours that are considered to be effective in facilitating desired learning in the students.

From time to time different institutions and researchers have identified different sets of teaching skills. The first set of teaching skills was prepared by Allen & Ryan (1969) and used at Stanford University. Turney (1973) worked further on it and developed a set of teaching skills which had seven categories– 1. Motivation skills, 2. Communication skills,

3. Questioning skills,
4. Skills of small group activities,
5. Developing students thinking skills,
6. Evaluative skills and,
7. Classroom management and discipline skills.

In India, Centre of Advance Studies in Education (CASE) at Baroda (1975) identified and listed twenty-one skills. These skills were categorized under three main heads namely; (i) pre-instructional, (ii) instructional and (iii) post instructional skills.

**Questioning Skills :**

"Questions-not answers are the heart of education." These could be the words of Socrates, but were in fact spoken by Franklin teacher, Dennis Duncan. The ability to ask and answer questions is central to learning. Questioning is one of the most often used teaching techniques. According to Callahan and Clarke (1988), "The use of questions is one of the most important of all teaching techniques.

Questioning skill is used during a class to stimulate thinking, assess student progress, motivate students to pay attention, maintain classroom control, emphasize key points, and many more things."

William.C. Camp (1996) in his paper, says, "The success of the student in answering the question is more often determined by the teacher's questioning techniques. The way a student is expected to respond to questioning is determined by the levels at which the questions are worded : recall, comprehension, analysis, or evaluation."

**Communication Skills**

According to Cooper and Simonds (1999), communication is one of the most important teaching skills. Right from the time a teacher enters the class till she/he leaves, this skill is being used. Thus, communication skills contribute to teaching practice and have been considered important for teacher education courses. The skills of communication and the ways in which they are used in teaching have been described in depth by a number of writers. Patty Lee (1997) Recognized the importance of communication for effective teaching. She stated, "Teacher is the centre of institution and communication is the foundation. Along with the verbal moves, the skills of effective communication also include non-verbal moves such as gestures, assertiveness, listening, etc."

**Teaching Strategies**

Teacher education often focused on familiarizing prospective teachers with theories of learning and teaching strategies in order to make them practice it while teaching. Gage (1963) gave lot of importance to teaching strategies as compared to the theories of learning. He argued that one may not know how to teach, even if one has a reasonably comprehensive understanding of the theories of learning. He used an agricultural analogy in which he pointed out that farmers must know something about how plants grow, the way they depend on soil, water and sunlight, but they must know about the process of farming. Similarly, teachers must know how children learn and what teaching strategies are required for effective learning. They should particularly know more about the teaching-learning process in practical situations.

Stallings and Stipek (1986) explained that teachers should try different strategies for different subjects and ultimately develop their own variations of what works for their students. Teachers need encouragement to assess the effectiveness of different strategies and then to modify them for

their own classroom settings, students and subjects. This requires reflection on the part of the teacher and the content.

### Attitude of Teacher

The researcher has used the term attitude as 'the attitude of teachers towards their profession'. It may be worth while to understand how different researchers have used the term 'attitude'.

The word attitude (from Latin apt us) is defined within the framework of social psychology as a subjective or mental preparation for action. It defines outward and visible postures and human beliefs. Attitudes determine what each individual will see, hear, think and do. M. Adam (2002) says, "Attitude means the individual's prevailing tendency to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object (person or group of people, institutions or events). Attitudes can be positive (values) or negative (prejudice)." B.B.C. dictionary defines attitude as the way we think and feel, the way we behave when we are dealing with people or situation. Allport (1935) defines attitude as "A mental and natural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related." Lambert (1964) defined attitude as a "Manner of thinking, feeling and reacting with regard to people, groups, social issues or more generally any event in one's environment. Its essential components are thoughts and beliefs, feelings and tendencies to react". For making the teaching effective, it is very important for a teacher to have a positive attitude towards their profession. Kagan's (1992) reviewed 40 studies dealing with the change in attitude toward teaching. It suggested, "Teacher education programmes need to take some measures in order to develop a positive attitude of teachers which in turn help in meeting the diverse needs of learners."

According to the thesaurus database, professional development refers to "activities to enhance professional career growth." Such activities may include individual development, continuing education, and inservice education, as well as curriculum writing, peer collaboration, study groups, and peer coaching or mentoring.

Fullan (1991) expands the definition to include "the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one's career from preservice teacher education to retirement".

Considering the meaning of professional development in the technological age, Grant (n.d.) suggests a broader definition of professional development that includes the use of technology to foster teacher growth

"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 teachers 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. [This] definition of professional development includes support for teachers as they encounter the challenges that come with putting into practice their evolving understandings about the use of technology to support inquiry-based learning.... Current technologies offer resources to meet these challenges and provide teachers with a cluster of supports that help them continue to grow in their professional skills, understandings, and interests."

Institution improvement efforts over the last few decades require teachers not only to study, implement, and assess learner outcomes outlined in local, state, and national educational standards but also to provide meaningful, engaged learning (cognitively, socially, and culturally) for a very diverse student population.

Teachers' professional development in a climate of educational reform must address the additional challenges of implementing educational standards, working with diverse populations, and changing forms of student assessment. Clearly, teachers "need more time to work with colleagues, to critically examine the new standards being proposed, and to revise curriculum. They need opportunities to develop, master, and reflect on new approaches to working with children" (Corcoran, 1995).

McDiarmid (1995) echoes the connection between new expectations for teachers and the element of time: "The changes teachers must make to meet the goals of reform entail much more than learning new techniques. They go to the core of what it means to teach. Because these changes are so momentous, most teachers will require considerable time to achieve them" .

Unfortunately, implementing a professional development plan is often hampered by others' perceptions of teachers' work. According to McDiarmid (1995), "Although reform has changed expectations for teachers, how the public and policymakers perceive teachers' work has not changed. They continue to think teachers are working only when they are with their students. As a result, there is little support for providing the time and resources teachers require for teachers to change their practice". Castle and Watts (1992) explain that "the traditional view of teachers' work is governed by the idea that time with students is of singular value, that teachers are primarily deliverers of content, that curricular planning and decision making rest at higher levels of authority, and that professional development is unrelated to improving instruction" . This limited view of teaching does not allow opportunities for teachers to participate in curriculum development, learn and share successful methods of reaching students, discuss comprehensive and efficient ways to implement standards, and continue their own learning.

Professor Doland Schon develops a system of epistemology of practioners applicable to the rapidly changing learning society and he is recognized as " the great theorist of learning society ( Ranson, 1998,2). The heart of Schon's thinking lies in a distinctive structure of reflection of the practioner teachers. We must learn to understand, guide, influence and manage these transformations for our society as a whole is to learn about learning ( Schon 1973 28-29).Pennington (1992,47) looks reflective teaching as "de-liberating on experience and that of mirroring experience", where "reflection is viewed as the input for development while also reflection is viewed as the out put of development and the teacher development is meta-stable system of context interactive change involving a continual cycle of innovative behavior and adjustment to circumstances. However reflection- in – action has a critical function as it questions the structure of knowledge in action, this promotes deeper understanding of the context and push teachers engage in critical thinking. Knowledge in action is the center of professional development of teachers.

Effective professional development is a process rather than a single event. To this extent, part of the program must in-

involve creating a mechanism for ongoing discussion, clarification, and support.

Many professional development programs focus on telling people what they should believe and how they should behave—providing them with information in the expectation that they will alter their behavior. This is unlikely to produce the desired results without first examining what people presently believe and why they engage in their present behaviors. Focus on Teachers professional development opportunities are not intended to replace other programs. By encouraging educators to identify and examine their present beliefs, values, metaphors, language, and meanings—by asking critical questions rather than providing pre-packaged answers—we “prepare the ground” for new ideas and possibilities.

Although the focus of our work is teachers, the thinking of administrators, curriculum developers, and other decision-making educators is no less important. We pride ourselves on adapting our work to the needs of the participants rather than offering the same programs for all. Therefore, the samples and descriptions we have included are guidelines rather than fixed programs. Although programs may be presented as described, we will make every effort to adapt them to individual needs.

Workshops may be offered singly or in combination, but one does not learn to be a reflective thinker in a single day. A commitment to real change requires follow-up mechanisms, which may be achieved in a variety of ways—with or without our help. We can also design custom programs to correlate with other offerings or to address current goals and/or issues. Our expertise lies in going beneath the surface to the thinking and language through which people conceptualize their work, and identifying how those factors influence current practice.

Teachers who become professionally competent possess an aura of grace, elegance and luster. Professional teacher-educators have been characterized as charismatic inspirational, highly updated, able to stimulate others intellectually. The inspirational teachers create a climate of openness and trust. Intellectual stimulations of such teachers help learners to see new possibilities.

Teacher – educators have a critical role in building competencies of learners through best pedagogic practices. It is the duty of the teacher educators to introspect honestly about their professional attitude and their contribution towards introduction of professionalism in Teacher Education in their respective institutions. That will help teachers learn relearn and also unlearn.

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