

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Teacher Educators in 21st Century

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 7

Issue: 4

Month: September

Year: 2019

P-ISSN: 2320-2653

E-ISSN: 2582-1334

Received: 02.08.2019

Accepted: 21.08.2019

Published: 01.09.2019

Citation:

Srinivasacharlu, A.
“Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Teacher Educators in 21st Century.” *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2019, pp. 29–33.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v7i4.624>



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Abstract

Education is a pre-requisite for the development of a country. The teacher is the backbone of the education system and is the architect of society. The progress of an organization depends upon the quality of its teachers. Today's child is tomorrow's citizen of the country. Teacher educators of the B.Ed. Colleges are the makers of the future teachers who are bound to have a vital influence on the children learning, shaping their attitude, and developing desirable behavior. To prepare efficient teachers in the 21st century, teacher educators need to be constantly topnotch in their profession. It can be possible, only if they can sustain their continuing professional development (CPD). It involves on-going divergent activities (formal, non-formal and informal) that aim at developing the teacher educator's intellectual abilities (cognitive domain), self confidence, attitude, values, and interest (affective domain) and skills and competencies (psychomotor domain) for improving personality and to carry out the responsibilities of the teaching profession properly in accordance with the changing times and needs of the prospective teachers and society.” The present paper comes out with diverse programs and activities for teacher educators to sustain their CPD in the advent of complexities continually arising in the field of teacher education in the 21st century.

Keywords: Teacher Educators, Prospective Teachers, Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and 21st century.

Introduction

Education is a pre-requisite for the development of a country. It is a well-established fact that it is mainly through education that people can be made to develop an in-depth awareness, favorable attitudes, values, participate in effective decision making and develop capabilities which help to contribute the societal welfare. The teacher is the backbone of the education system and is the architect of society. The progress of an organization depends upon the quality of its teachers. Today's child is tomorrow's citizen of the country. Nothing can match and replace the excellent task of the teacher in building the future of the children. B.Ed. student-teachers are the future teachers who are bound to have a vital influence on the children learning, shaping their attitude, and developing desirable behavior. Teacher educators of the B.Ed. Colleges are the makers of these future teachers. They can do justice to their profession, only if they can take up and sustain their continuing professional development (CPD).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)–Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2009), CPD can be defined as “the one which involves those activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher.”

According to Melanie Allen (the UK, 2009), CPD refers to “the process of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge, and experience that teachers gain both formally and informally as they work, beyond any initial training. It’s a record of what they experience, learn, and then apply.”

Thus CPD can be comprehensively defined as the “one involves on-going divergent activities (formal, non-formal and informal) that aim at developing the teacher educator’s intellectual abilities (cognitive domain), self confidence, attitude, values, and interest (affective domain) and skills and competencies (psychomotor domain) for improving personality and to carry out the responsibilities of the teaching profession properly in accordance with the changing times and needs of the prospective teachers and society.”

Need and Importance of CPD

The teaching profession in the 21st century sees a significant sea change thanks to many factors of different hues and advent of digital tools. It will be a grave mistake for teacher educators to ignore these developments and their impact on teaching. Thus to prepare efficient future teachers in the 21st century, the teacher educators are required to continually update and equip themselves with ever-increasing skills and competencies to always remain topnotch in their profession and do justice to society. This can be possible, only if they can take up CPD. Thus CPD ensures the following advantages on the part of teacher educators.

1. CPD prepares the teacher educator, again and again, to keep abreast with the latest developments.
2. The professionalism of teacher educators can be reinforced by continuous further experience and in-service education during their service period.
3. It re-orientes teacher educators with up-to-date knowledge and latest developments in the field of Education.
4. It equips teacher educators with ever-increasing digital skills and competencies to manage hyper-connected, knowledge environment to best prepare future teachers for the 21st Century, a world where the only constant they know is change.

5. It helps teacher educators to acquire skills in using the latest strategies, models, and techniques in teaching.
6. It helps the teacher educators to improve their scientific temper to be followed in their actions and thoughts.
7. It upgrades the knowledge and abilities among teacher educators in organizing seminars, conferences, symposium, workshops, etc.
8. It increases the competency of teacher educators in motivating and providing guidance and counseling for prospective teachers.
9. It enables teacher educators to contribute and participate in the construction and revision work of curriculum construction, preparation, and revision of textbook, etc.
10. It upgrades competencies among teacher educators in doing a continuous and comprehensive evaluation, criterion and norm-referenced evaluation, electronic/on-line evaluation of the students learning.
11. It strengthens and upgrades abilities among teacher educators in playing numerous roles like a guide, educator, trainer, resource person, counselor, facilitator, researcher, community leader to help prospective teachers to become an intellectual, skillful and value-based teacher and citizen in this rapidly changing world.

Programs and Activities for the CPD of Teacher Educators

Following are some of diverse programs and activities suggested for teacher educators to pursue their CPD in the advent of complexities continually arising in the field of teacher education in the 21st century:

Learning at the Institution: Teacher educators at their institution can observe theory class, demonstrations and laboratory work, micro-teaching, etc. conducted by the senior colleagues and experts. They can take an active part in organizing the curricular, co-curricular, and extensions activities undertaken by the institution. They can seek advice and help from the experienced teacher educators and subject experts for bringing improvement in their teaching. They can even take up the responsibilities such as IQAC Coordinator and Programme

In-charge/Assistant Programme In-charge for IGNOU B.Ed. Programs, staff coordinator/advisor.

Orientation Programme and Refresher Courses: The UGC-Human Resource Development Centre (UGC-HRDC) at select universities organizes orientation programs and refresher courses on thrust areas for in-service teachers and also for newly appointed teaching faculty regularly. The orientation program (which is of 28 days) is intended to teach in the young teachers the quality of self-reliance through awareness of the social, intellectual and moral environment as well as to discover self-potential and confidence. It also contributes to the teacher awareness of the problems of the Indian society and the role of education, higher education leaders, and educators in the resolution of these problems to achieve desired goals in national development. The UGC-HRDC also conducts a refresher course (which is of 21 days) in different subjects including Education. It strives to upgrade and update the knowledge of serving teachers in various fields of their specialization. The contents of the courses are objectively selected to enlighten teachers about the contemporary developments in their subjects and also to provide an understanding of the emerging areas of research. The course also provides opportunities for serving teachers to exchange experiences with their peers and mutually learn from each other. Thus it also acts as a forum to abreast of the latest advances in the subjects, technological spin-off, etc.

Content Courses: Content courses are conducted to upgrade the teacher educators in their specialization in terms of knowledge of the latest developments, current issues, and their trends and application and their relevance to teaching. These courses are organized with the help of resource persons in a particular area of discipline.

Seminars and Conferences: Seminars provide a formal platform to teacher educators to present papers, exchange ideas, and discuss on the various aspects of a particular topic and problems along with other teacher educators and resource personnel. Conferences provide a broad formal platform to teacher educators. Beside paper presentation, they also offer for a panel discussion, exhibition, etc. Experienced teacher educators can avail the

opportunity either to chair or act as a rapporteur for technical sessions during seminars and conferences, wherein the paper presentation by various teacher educators can provide new knowledge to them. Also, teacher educators can avail the opportunity as a resource person to speak on the topic of contemporary importance.

Workshops: Teacher educators can attend workshops which provide reliable/practical dimension to the discussion on the various aspects of a particular topic and problems by the group of participants. They adopt a practical approach to formulating solutions for multiple issues. Some of the issues for workshops in education can include Electronic/On-line Evaluation; Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI); Action Research etc.

Symposium: Teacher educators can attend a seminar where they can get exposure to the presentation of papers by experts, discuss issues and trends, and make recommendations for a particular course of action.

Brainstorming Sessions: Teacher educators can attend brainstorming sessions regarding educational issues organized either by government bodies or NGOs. They can attempt to generate new ideas/solutions around a specific area of interest without inhibitions and then build on the ideas raised by others. In the end, the designs can be evaluated, and the relevant one is considered.

Training Programmes: Various educational agencies provide training to the teacher educators concerning the acquisition and practicing the digital skills apart from sophisticated techniques and skills in teaching. It can include the integration of technology in classroom teaching, laboratory skills, etc.

Resource Person: Teacher educators can utilize the opportunities to give talks, demonstration, etc. on topics that are of importance to education at other institutions. It can improve their subject knowledge, communication skills, remove stage fear.

UGC-NET Examination in Education: Teacher educators can take up UGC-NET Examination again at times even if they have cleared it in the past. It can boost the confidence of teacher educators, understand the changes taking place in the field of education, and be updated about the trends in education.

Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral Programme: Teacher educators can pursue a Ph.D. in Education on a part-time basis. It helps the teacher educators get a doctoral award. Further, the research can develop research attitude and skills among them. Also, the course work can significantly orient and refresh the knowledge and skills of teacher educators. Teacher educators also can take up ICSSR post-doctoral fellowship who have the urge to pursue a regular career in teaching and research. These studies enable teacher educators to contribute to theoretical and conceptual advancement in education, help to generate fieldwork-based empirical data, and contribute towards policymaking.

Funded Projects: Projects help the teachers to expand the horizon of their teaching profession. Teacher educators can take up the funded projects from UGC, ICSSR, NGOs, etc. They have to write a proposal about the intended project, send it for scrutiny from the expert committee of the agencies. Once the plan is accepted, they can start doing a project. A project report has to be submitted to the concerned agencies once the project gets over. These research endeavors help to hone their research instinct and meet their requirements for research in specialized areas.

Action Research: Teacher educators very often come across plenty of immediate problems unique to their classroom. With the help of action research, they can find a solution to those local problems. They also can motivate and guide B.Ed. student-teachers in doing action research. They can publish and share the findings of action research with other teacher educators. This gives confidence to them, improve research skills and guidance and communication abilities.

Evaluation Work: Teacher educators can always take up valuation work, can be a paper setter, reviewer, etc. The valuation experience can help the teacher widen their mental horizon on the subject being taught by them. They can see other angles in presenting the ideas.

Further Studies: Teacher educators can take up further studies either through offline or online courses keeping in view emerging trends, which helps them to upgrade their content knowledge and gain mastery over teaching.

Publications: Teacher educators can publish their conceptual and research-based papers in journals, magazines, newspapers, etc. The documents can be on classroom experiments, professional experiences, findings of action research, etc. This can improve their communication ability, gain confidence, and establish a professional network. Also, they can enrich themselves by studying the conceptual papers and research findings published by other teacher educators. Teacher educators can also post the books on contemporary topics and the subjects which they are teaching at the institution. This helps them to be more thorough, and updated about their subject.

Editorial Work: Teacher educators can avail the opportunity to work as a member of the editorial board of journals which can help them to the latest developments in education. They improve their research knowledge and skills by scrutinizing the papers sent by other teacher educators.

Faculty Exchange Visits and Fellowships: As a part of faculty exchange program teacher educators can go for a period of six months to one academic year to an institution at the regional, national and even outside the country, to teach and learn there. Similarly, teacher educators can avail the opportunity to visit and stay at local institutions for a specified period.

Membership in Professional Organizations and Associations: Professional organizations and associations play a significant role in the exchange of ideas, sharing of experiences and trying out innovations and experiments among teacher educators cutting across barriers of the regions. The teacher educators can become members of associations and organizations which from time to time, take up academic activities and organize seminars, conferences, workshops, conventions, and meetings to discuss professionally essential developments. Some of the organizations have their journals which would again serve the purpose of professional development. Some of the examples of professional organizations and associations include All India Association for Educational Research (AIAER), Pondicherry, India; Indian Association of Teacher Educators (IATE), Hyderabad, Telangana, India; Council for Teacher Education (CTE), Jalandhar, Punjab, India.

Attending Public Lectures: Teacher educators can avail the opportunity to participate in public lectures on multi-disciplinary topics that are relevant to education at local places. These lectures are in general, organized by NGOs, government bodies, etc. They can contribute immensely to the knowledge of teacher educators and give rich exposure to them.

Other Programmes and Activities: Teacher educators can also participate in the following activities which contribute to their professional development. They include curriculum development, preparation of textbook and training modules, etc.; acting as members of committees for formulating educational policies; taking an active part in NGO initiatives aimed at community development; Being acquainted with the new schemes and proposals and programs of the State and Central Government in education, etc.

Conclusion

The education of a teacher educator is never complete. They are makers of the future teachers who in turn prepare youngsters as future citizens of the society. The teaching profession in the 21st century sees a significant sea change thanks to many factors of different hues and advent of digital tools. Thus apart from other factors, the complexities of the 21st century require that teacher educators need to pursue continuous professional development to avoid being outdated and alienated. This also helps them to improve their personality continually and do justice to the teaching profession and society.

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