



**THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN  
PROMOTING UNIVERSITY TEACHERS TEACHING PROFESSION –  
A CASE STUDY: KING KHALID UNIVERSITY TEACHERS, COLLEGE  
OF SCIENCE AND ARTS, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA, FORMER  
UNIVERSITY: SUDAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY, KHARTOUM, SUDAN**

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**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study is to investigate to what extent professional development promotes university teachers teaching profession. The researcher used the quantitative method of the research representing in interviews with university teachers at King Khalid University who is the sample of the study. The main findings of the research: firstly; high-quality professional development provides room for teachers to think outside the box and aspires for better. Secondly, teachers will interchange ideas when they collaborate in professional development sessions. Finally, professional development helps teachers' to be creative and innovative inside classrooms.

**Keywords:** professional development, teaching outcomes, creativity and innovation

**1. Introduction**

Education doesn't end when you get your degree. Every professional career can benefit from continuing education that helps him or her stay sharp and develop new skills. When teachers receive professional development, students benefit. Professional development helps teachers keep their skill sets fresh and learn new skills. The science of teaching constantly finds new ways to get through to students, but that's not the only reason professional development is important for teachers. Teachers also need to be able to prepare their students to succeed in a changing world — they need to be able to teach students how to use emerging technologies, how to navigate evolving

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workplaces, how to communicate effectively, and how to think critically and solve problems.

### **1.1 Definition of Professional Development**

Teachers get, the more likely students are to succeed. School systems today are charged with addressing ever-increasing demands: reducing the achievement gap, adopting evidence-based practices meeting adequate yearly progress goals, managing the requirements of second-language and special-needs students, and remaining current on the increasing amount of pedagogical and content area research. Educators must keep abreast of the important advances that are occurring in education. This is where professional development comes in.

Professional development is defined as *“the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students”* (Hassel, 1999). As Thomas Guskey (2000, p.4) states *“One constant finding in the research literature is that notable improvement in education almost never take place in the absence of professional development.”* Professional development is the key to meeting today’s educational demands. High-quality professional development strategies are essential to schools. The days of teacher staff development sessions consisting of “sit-and-get” workshops and expert-delivered awareness campaigns are long gone. We are now moving toward a more effective and more engaging professional development model. Research and experience help us recognize that high-quality ongoing professional development that deepens teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical skills; provides opportunities for practice, research, and reflection; and includes efforts that are job-embedded, sustained, and collaborative will assist in the goal to remain up-to-date (Sparks, 2002). Seminal research by Joyce and Showers (1988) concludes that levels of teacher learning and strategy use are greatly increased when coaching, study teams and peer support are provided.

### **2. Statement of the Problem**

Professional development is very important to develop the performance of school teachers; therefore, this paper will ensure to what extent it is important in the educational field.

The reason that leads the researcher to investigate the phenomena from perspectives of some English language teacher at secondary, intermediate and basic schools here in Assir Region in Tanumah district.

The objective of the study:

- 1) To know how professional development important for secondary school teacher
- 2) To identify the role of professional development relevant to the continuous assessment.
- 3) To assess secondary school teachers teaching outcomes.

## **2.1 The Question of the Study**

- 1) What is the role of professional development in developing secondary school teachers teaching outcomes?
- 2) To what extent professional development relevant to continuous assessment?
- 3) How can we assess secondary school teachers teaching outcomes?

## **2.2 Hypothesis of the Study**

- 1) Professional development has an important role in developing secondary school teachers' teaching outcomes.
- 2) Professional development relevant to the continuous assessment.
- 3) Professional development helps in assessing teachers teaching outcomes.

## **3. Methodology of the Study**

### **3.1 Interviews**

An interview is a purposeful interaction between two or more people focused on one person trying to get required information or a face-to-face encounter between the researcher and participant on lives, experiences or situations (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Gay, 2003). Such interviews permit researchers to obtain important data which could not be acquired with other tools (Cohen and Morrison, 2000). In this study, open-ended questions, semi-structured 1-hr long interviews were conducted with 25 English language teachers for the purpose of triangulating the information obtained through the questionnaire to assert the valid and reliability of research instruments.

### **3.2 Significance of the Study**

This study offer contribution to the field of English language teaching (ELT) through enlightening decision makers about the role of professional development in teaching for teachers' and students', then it help in spreading the awareness of professional development and that knowledge is endless.

### **3.3 Delimitation of the Study**

This study concerns the investigation of the role of professional development in developing secondary school teachers' teaching outcomes in order to keep focused and to ensure the validity of the study.

The study took place in February 2018, on Tanumah district.

## **4. Literature Review**

### **4.1 Ten Things Teachers Want in Professional Development**

- 1) Teachers want a voice and choice in the PD offered. At PLP, we like to think we listen. We survey, evaluate and take feedback from those who have been through

our programs. We are responsive and rework many aspects based on the feedback we receive each year. But I wonder about the district empowerment of the teachers before they show up in our sessions. Have they had voice and choice? Are district leaders talking to teachers before they “sign up”? Or are leaders making that “one size fits all” decisions for teachers? I also wonder if teachers already have well-developed voices and if they so do they know how to use them to make their choices known. Have they sat down and thought deeply about their professional learning needs? Do they understand the trends, shifts and needs their students are bringing with them that will require new teaching skills and capacities. It has been my experience that often teachers are too shy to speak up about their professional learning needs. I have also been told that even when they do share- no one is listening. Once teachers show up they are often resistant and we find ourselves having to spend weeks getting to know them, building trust and getting buy-in on what we are going to learn. Rare is the learner who comes ready to immerse themselves in the relationship based, self-directed, collaborative environment we provide. If teachers had more voice and choice before they came, I bet that would change.

- 2) Teachers want PD that is relevant for their students. This is so important. Professional learning should be aligned in ways that prepare teachers for what their students need most. If the goal is not to just teach students but to help them learn, then the focus needs to be on helping teachers become learners themselves. Often teachers see the relevancy issue through the lens of the “content and standards” they need to cover. Where we believe the focus needs to be on what will prepare kids to be successful in their future. Are the skills, techniques and strategies the teachers are learning going to help them find and guide student learning through passion, interest and personalized efforts?
- 3) Teachers want PD they can use right away. Nothing is worse than to require the entire district to take a workshop on a tool or curriculum that is “coming” without any practical application in the now. And nothing is more frustrating than a workshop that tells, talks, and shows with little opportunity to enact, engage or apply what they are learning. However, on the other side, at PLP we find teachers sometimes miss the fact that they are applying their new skills in the activities, collaborations and blended aspects provided during the course. What some want is an “easy button” that will give them a lesson plan or tech tool they can use the next day. Learning that gives the teacher immediate use but not much depth. Change is not easy. Teaching to multiple-choice tests is easy. It’s easy to try out a few web tools and put a check in the box next to change agent. Turning your classroom or school into a place where deep learning occurs and learners’ needs are being met is hard. Educational change is hard because it involves re-culturing and re-examining values and dispositions and letting go of what we are vested in. We have addressed this yin/yang need by offering

different types of professional learning. Some of the courses we offer are short, make and take courses designed to teach a practical skill that can be applied immediately. Others are job-embedded, year long and coached and taught through the use of learning cycles and design thinking that results in deep, connected learning. One style of PD focuses on self-efficacy of the individual teacher, the other focuses on the collective efficacy of teams of teachers embedded in schools or districts together.

- 4) Teachers want PD that is conducted by professionals with classroom experience. All of us at PLP have been classroom teachers. Most of us have gone on to work in leadership positions at the school or district level. All of us have worked with educators around the world to rethink their classroom practice. We are very Google-able. We have large digital footprints and you can see our best pedagogy online. Most importantly, we all have taught using the strategies we espouse. We also bring in classroom teachers or school and district leaders who are embedded now in schools to add their ideas to what we are offering PD around. We believe in collaboration in the most authentic sense in all our PD leveraging experienced classroom teacher's voice in all we do.
- 5) Teachers want PD that is innovative and creative. The learner is an active part in what is created and what is learned. Our mantra is, *"None of us is as smart as all of us."* In our relationship-driven learning environments, the syllabus is malleable and collaboratively created by teachers as their needs emerge. Personally, I expect and look forward to being both a learner and a teacher in the courses and professional learning experiences I lead. We all do here at PLP. And the collective learning strategies we use always yield better outcomes. Plus, teachers come out more confident in sharing their ideas and using their voice. They emerge as bloggers and social media users who understand how to connect and learn collaboratively (a skill that is needed in a teacher's toolbox) as well as skilled at pedagogy and the content covered overall.
- 6) Teachers want PD that makes them better teachers. Exactly! It is not just about some skill you can use immediately, but more importantly, it is about growth over time, developing thick schema, making connections, building a tribe, strengthening dispositions and values and reigniting fires and passion within each educator who participates.
- 7) Teachers want PD that is practical and not theoretical. Teachers should be most literate about the ideas, strategies, dispositions and values they are incorporating into their practice. If you do not understand and are not able to articulate the theoretical underpinnings- then how can you be sure you should be using them with children?
- 8) Teachers want PD that allows them to collaborate and speak honestly. If your professional learning does not create a place of trust and safety then I suggest you run, and if applicable ask for your money back. This includes face-

to-face conference workshops, webinars, Twitter chats, and blended learning activities. You need to be immersed in communities of practice and/or networked spaces where you are driving the learning right alongside the instructor. And the instructor should also be able to speak honestly without you pulling the “I am paying YOU” card. Treating each other with respect and having an open and willing spirit – being teachable – is what will allow critical moments and honesty to result in meaningful change and growth. We know how to create a safe environment that encourages honesty at PLP.

- 9) Teachers want PD that will be relevant for a long time. In a world that is constantly changing educators are looking for anchors. But let’s face it, we simply do not have it as easy as our predecessors in terms of change in education. The culture of schools remained unchanged for almost one hundred years. Teachers knew what they had to learn and once they learned it, they simply needed to refine their skills slightly.
- 10) Teachers want Admin to attend and participate in the PD sessions. Traditionally, teacher professional learning has focused on acquiring new knowledge and skills through passive, system-sponsored workshops delivered on in-service days. In these workshops, teachers learn new pedagogy from an outside expert and they are expected to take the learning back to their classrooms and try it out. After the workshop, when daily routines and pressures take over, and teachers have no one to help them problem solve, they go back to business as usual. Bringing new strategies from theory into individual classroom practice is even more difficult when teachers try to implement innovation and change since traditional professional development rarely offers ways for teachers to work together through the issues that emerge in practice. Our model of teacher networking doesn’t replace the traditional network—it subsumes and transforms it. The connected teacher benefits from this traditional network and also has access to a much wider community that contains the knowledge of thousands of people, all connected to one another through technology.

#### **4.2 How Much Professional Development Is Enough?**

In the world’s top-performing school systems, teachers receive about five times as much professional development time as American teachers receive. Academically high-achieving countries give their teachers about 100 hours of yearly professional development time, and between 15 to 20 hours a week of time to collaborate with and learn from their colleagues. The average American teacher receives about 44 hours of professional development time a year.

Fortunately, it’s easy for teachers to take professional development into their own hands by enrolling in an online degree program or professional development program. Online programs give teachers the opportunity to learn more effective teaching methods, refresh their own knowledge of the subject matter, gain insight into

the education industry, enhance their planning skills, and continue their education. Many feel that teachers' professional development should focus on learning how to impart the skills students need to succeed in the 21st-century workplace. Many of the teachers teaching today didn't learn these skills as part of their teaching education, because the professional landscape has changed drastically in a brief period of time.

Students need to know how to:

- 1) Think critically;
- 2) Solve problems;
- 3) Take initiative;
- 4) Work together;
- 5) Take the lead;
- 6) Adapt to rapid changes in culture and technology;
- 7) Communicate verbally and in writing;
- 8) Find and analyze information.

Today's students need to develop less tangible skills and qualities, too. A sense of entrepreneurialism, a healthy imagination, and a strong sense of curiosity are all qualities that can serve students well as they mature into adults. Professional development can show teachers how to impart these qualities, but teachers and schools need to devote more time to professional development and collaborative teaching. Professional development is an important way for teachers to refresh and deepen their knowledge of their own subjects and learn new ways to help students learn. Online programs are one way that teachers can take the initiative to strengthen their professional skills and help their students succeed.

Why is it important to have teachers' professional development: Zig Ziglar once said, *"The only thing worse than training employees and losing them is not training them and keeping them."* The takeaway is clear: The potential loss of dollars invested in employee development pales in comparison to the certain productivity loss inflicted by a mediocre workforce.

You'd be hard-pressed to find an executive who would dispute the wisdom of this insight. Even so, reality suggests that far too many employers have failed to take up professional development in any meaningful way. From an employee's perspective, this dearth of employer-sponsored professional development represents not only a frustrating lack of corporate empathy but a surefire ticket to career stagnation. To rise to their full potential, employees need to be challenged to grow. Apart from intentional development, opportunities for growth will be few and far between. Great teachers help create great students. In fact, research shows that an inspiring and informed teacher is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement, so it is critical to pay close attention to how we train and support both new and experience. The best teacher-preparation programs emphasize subject-matter mastery and provide many opportunities for student teachers to spend time in real classrooms under the supervision of an experienced mentor. Just as professionals in

medicine, architecture and law have opportunities to learn through examining case studies, learning best practices, and participating in internships, exemplary teacher-preparation programs allow teacher candidates the time to apply their learning of theory in the context of teaching in a real classroom.

Many colleges and universities are revamping their education schools to include an emphasis on content knowledge, increased use of educational technologies, creation of professional-development schools, and innovative training programs aimed at career switchers and students who prefer to earn a degree online.

### **4.3 Teacher-Induction Programs**

Support for beginning teachers is often uneven and inadequate. Even if well prepared, new teachers often are assigned to the most challenging schools and classes with little supervision and support. Nearly half of all teachers leave the profession in their first five years, so more attention must be paid to providing them with early and adequate support, especially if they are assigned to demanding school environments. Mentoring and coaching from veteran colleagues are critical to the successful development of a new teacher. Great induction programs create opportunities for novice teachers to learn from best practices and analyze and reflect on their teaching.

### **4.4 Ongoing Professional Development**

It is critical for veteran teachers to have ongoing and regular opportunities to learn from each other. Ongoing professional development keeps teachers up-to-date on new research on how children learn, emerging technology tools for the classroom, new curriculum resources, and more. The best professional development is ongoing, experiential, collaborative, and connected to and derived from working with students and understanding their culture.

Those of us committed to a long career in the classroom must seek new challenges if we expect our 20th year of teaching to be as engaging as our first. This doesn't necessarily mean changing jobs or grade levels—opportunities abound for those open to them.

Isn't teaching hard enough already, you ask? Why take on something new? Yes, teaching is exhausting, especially the parts we can't avoid—grading papers, attending staff meetings, preparing students for another standardized test. But if we focus on things that drive our passions for teaching, we can stretch ourselves and energize our careers.

Executive function is an umbrella term in neuroscience to describe the neurological processes involving mental control and self-regulation. Executive functions control and regulate cognitive and social behaviors like controlling impulses, paying attention, remembering information, planning and organizing time and materials, and responding appropriately to social situations and stressful situations.

Experts believe the executive function is regulated by the frontal lobe of the brain



the prefrontal cortex. Because humans are born with brains that are not fully developed, children are not born with these skills, but they have the potential to develop them

## 5. Interview Analysis

- 1) Professional development is very important for teachers what do you think? Most Teachers said that is true and must match to the students growing minds. And they all believe professional development is a crucial element.
- 2) How can Professional development help teachers to be passionate about their teaching? Most teachers mentioned when they develop themselves with new ideas and ways in teaching, they will be passionate about the results is shown on their students and that is interesting for them.
- 3) Teacher development is important because students deserve the best, you think it is true and why? More than half of teachers said that is completely true. A student in intermediate schools may not be aware of that but later they will be very grateful. That is what I personally faced (Mentioned by one teacher)
- 4) To what extent Professional development helps teachers' to be creative and innovative? Most teachers said those who are searching for perfection in their career are eager to find new ways to pass all information to their students, so they will be creative and innovative to achieve that goal.
- 5) The 5-Teaching method has an impact on the interest and attention of students through professional development we find ways to get the attention of students is it true and how? Most of the teachers mentioned, yes it is true. Students these days do not have any interests to learn due to different reasons, so the teaching method that teachers use to have an important impact on the student's attention.
- 6) Is Professional development important because teachers can collaborate and give each other feedback honestly? Explain how? All teachers said when teachers work together and discuss their problems or obstacles they face in teaching. Experienced teachers do their best to benefit the new ones. They all pass and share their experiences with each other.
- 7) Teachers' want professional development that is relevant to their students' needs as well for a longtime training what can you say? Most teachers mentioned any training program that does not match the students' needs, especially today's students will fail and the effort will be in vain.
- 8) Professional development and assessment are integrated into one department in order to advance students' linguistics proficiency that is right or wrong and how? Most teachers said that is right because when you develop so you have to evaluate results in order to judge the process.
- 9) High-quality professional development frequently provides room for teachers to think about, receive input and make changes in their practices, write your comments? Most of them said professional development must be up to date

presenting the latest ideas and methods in the field. The world changes a lot every minute and students also we have to change our students' minds quickly.

## **6. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Summary of Findings**

- 1) High quality professional development provides room for teachers' to think outside the box and aspires for better.
- 2) Teachers' will interchange ideas when they collaborate in professional development sessions.
- 3) Professional development helps teachers' to be creative and innovative inside classrooms.

### **6.2 Conclusion**

This study provides a theoretical and practical base showing the importance of professional development is a cornerstone for a developed teaching process. It reflects that development is an ongoing and everlasting process in teaching, so it is required every now and then.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

This study recommends the following:

- Professional development for teachers must be carried out by professional experts with a high degree of proficiency.
- Professional development is very important for every teacher because it makes teaching easier.
- Regular sessions and workshops for teachers in order to be up to date.

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