

Chapter 1

Designing Enduring and Impactful Professional Development to Support Teacher Growth

Ahmed Mohammed Alkaabi

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7220-8087>
United Arab Emirates University, UAE

ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, professional development is essential for contemporary educators to grow and thrive. The current educational landscape offers numerous technologies and opportunities that not only enable educational leaders to achieve professional development goals, but also promote professional longevity. Despite the substantial yet unsystematic growth of continuous on-site professional development in recent decades, research reviews reveal that many schools still maintain the status quo in their professional development practices. This chapter highlights the optimal conditions for establishing robust, data-driven professional development that integrates adult learning theories and feeds into other supervisory opportunities, ultimately enhancing teacher growth and student learning. To ensure proper implementation of skills and practices learned during professional development sessions, follow-up practices and additional support strategies are recommended. These measures address challenges, encourage reflection, and help refine educators' instructional practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Continuous learning is vital for teachers to deliver high-quality education, and professional development (PD) plays a crucial role in promoting exceptional learning experiences. Research reveals a direct correlation between improved teacher quality and enhanced student learning outcomes, underscoring the significance of PD for educators (Malm, 2009). With the evolving roles and functions of schools across numerous countries, teachers are increasingly expected to adopt contemporary teaching styles to accommodate diverse student learning needs. Consequently, PD initiatives advocate for the integration of technology in classrooms, empowering educators to engage students more effectively. This chapter emphasizes the importance of evaluating teachers' development needs in formulating PD plans and presents various tools that school leaders can utilize to devise tailored strategies for their faculty.

This chapter also offers an overview of adult learning theory and its application within PD initiatives to enrich the learning experiences of teachers. Reflective practice, a critical follow-up activity after PD trainings, enables participants to assess the relevance of the sessions (Ahmed et al., 2019). The discussion delves into the advantages of reflective practices and their incorporation into post-training follow-up sessions. The primary objective is to examine the various facets of PD for teachers and its impact on their growth and progression, as school leaders in the education sector place increasing emphasis on teacher training and development amid the redefinition of quality education parameters as quality should be considered as a continuous process of enhancement rather than a fixed goal or endpoint (Musah, et al., 2023).

BACKGROUND

As school systems evolve, educators must stay informed about significant advancements in education. Professional development (PD) serves as a process to enhance staff members' and teachers' competencies, resulting in exceptional student outcomes. Pitsoe and Maila (2012) have argued that PD is vital to addressing today's educational challenges. For teachers, PD training is crucial as it enriches their experience, deepens their knowledge, and strengthens their pedagogical skills. Traditionally, the education industry has focused on students and improving their educational standards. In PD research, the emphasis has been on the impact and effectiveness of PD exercises in schools. However, there has been insufficient attention given to the integration of PD with other supervisory and reform efforts, the application of adult learning theory principles, and the reinforcement of follow-

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