

«Էդիթ Պրինտ» հրատարակչություն

# ***Ավարտական հետազոտական աշխատանք***

**Թեմա՝ Continuing Professional Development**

**Առարկա՝ Անգլերեն**

**Ուսուցիչ՝ Արմինե Թադևոսյան**

**Դպրոց՝ Երևանի Նաիրի Չարյանի անվան համար 130 հիմնական դպրոց**

**Ղեկավար՝ Անուշ Խաչիկյան**

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## Introduction



Teacher professional development is a common practice used in developed countries. With the ongoing pressure on educators to improve student achievement, teacher continual professional development becomes an obligation for school systems that are committed to improving student achievement.

The purpose of this research paper is to find out how important and valued teachers find the practice of teacher continual professional development.

The most important school-related factor influencing student achievement is teacher quality. Being well aware of this, most schools make sustained efforts to provide effective professional development opportunities for their teachers. High-quality teaching, however, is something which cannot be achieved overnight. It requires a continuous process of development over the course of teacher's career.

The purpose of this research is to explore the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), to explain the relevance of CPD to a range of different people and to expand on the excitement that engaging in CPD can engender.

This work recognizes that if we are to maximize our enjoyment of work and life we need to be continually responding to the changing world we live in: are you living to work or working to live? What would you like to be doing? We need to look within at our latent skills and abilities and explore ways of building on our current talents and developing new aspects of ourselves.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a process by which individuals take control of their own learning and development, by engaging in an on-going process of reflection and action. This process is empowering and exciting and can stimulate people to achieve their aspirations and move towards their dreams.

CPD provides the opportunity to soar an eagle or a helicopter and look at our career progress from a wider perspective. It challenges us to make time for regular personal reflection and review. It reminds us that we have the responsibility for developing ourselves rather than pushing the onus on to our manager or others in the organization.

Remember the old saying, "You can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink".



Our response to that is to say that CPD is becoming thirsty-thirsty for new knowledge, thirsty for new skills, thirsty for new experiences.

### **Professional development is a Continuous process that applies throughout a practitioner's working life**

It is no longer possible to do all your learning at the start of your career and then spend the rest of your working life using what you have learned. The sell-by date for professional learning is getting shorter and shorter. Our assets do not remain the same if we do not freshen them-they dwindle, and dwindle fast.

We also live an information age when technology is producing continual changes. We need to assess continually how these changes could help us to carry out our roles better.



### **Individuals should decide for themselves their learning needs and how to fulfill them**

The path we walk is unique. Colleagues, family and friends may walk alongside us for some of the way but they cannot live life for us. So many people are in careers that were shaped by schooling and family rather than being their own choice. We also know that typically an individual may experience a range of careers in their working life. A professional chooses his work and his employer, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously and can change-if they want to. Exploring CPD assists us both to be aware that we are making choices and to appreciate the range of options that are available.

The process of CPD is a little like standing at a crossroads with lots of roads radiating from the centre. We may want to wander up each of these roads a little way to see what each possible option has to offer. This can take some time and reflection but helps us to appreciate the rich range of opportunities open to us.

## **What is Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?**

CPD stands for Continuing Professional Development. Continuing Professional Development is a commitment to ongoing lifelong learning. CPD encourages looking forward and identifying opportunities to learn something new, refresh existing knowledge, improve skills, or simply keep up-to-date with the latest developments within particular profession or industry.

In Practice, CPD can mean everything from taking a training course or attending an educational event, to studying for new qualifications or learning new aspects of a job.

Continuing Professional Development enables learning to become conscious and proactive, rather than passive and reactive. It involves an individual documenting and keeping a record of the increasing skills, knowledge and experience they gain throughout their career.

CPD combines different methodologies to learning, which includes training courses, seminars, workshops, conferences and events, webinars and online eLearning programs. CPD can also include sharing best practice techniques, thoughts and ideas, all focused towards an individual improving within the work environment.

### **What is it for?**

The CPD process helps you manage your own development on an ongoing basis. Its function is to help you record, review and reflect on what you learn. It's not a tick-box document recording the training you have completed. It's broader than that.



### **Training and development- what's the difference?**

These terms are often used interchangeably, though there is a distinction. As a rule of thumb, training is formal and linear. It's to do with learning how to do something specific, relating to skill and competence. Training can be as simple as using a PC application and as complex as learning how to be a pilot. Development is often informal and has a wider application, giving you the tools to do arrange of things and relating to capability and competency. It involves progression from basic know-how to more advanced, mature or complex understanding. Alternatively it can be about widening your range of transferable skills like leadership, managing projects or organizing information.

# Training and Development



## The key features of the CPD process

To justify the name, a CPD needs to:

- be a documented process
- be self-directed: driven by you, not your employer
- focus on learning from experience, reflective learning and review
- help you set development goals and objectives
- include both formal and informal learning.

## What will it do for you?

CPD is about developing your professional practice. So it may

- help keep your skills and knowledge up to date
- prepare you for greater responsibilities
- boost your confidence
- help you become more creative in tackling new challenges



- enable you to make better decisions
- help you take your career further

### **How do I start?**

Keep a learning log and record your thoughts in whatever way suits you best. You may find it helpful to write things down in detail, for example, or to make notes on insights and learning points. The process of writing makes you think about your experience at the time, and makes planning and reflection much easier. You can't review your experiences without recording them, however good your memory is.

### **Answering the following questions may help you to get started:**

#### **Where am I now?**

Review and reflect on any learning experience over the previous year or over the past three months. Write your thoughts down about what you learned, what insights it gave you and what you might have done differently. Include both formal training events and informal learning such as:

- learning from colleagues or shared learning from networking
- reading about new technologies, new methods of working, legislative changes
- shadowing or assisting an experienced colleague
- insights and learning points from coaching and mentoring
- reflections, insights and learning points from taking on a new responsibility
- organization or role change
- temporary job swaps within the department/organization
- deputizing or covering for colleagues
- insights and lessons learned from mistakes
- lessons learned from critical incidents or events

Make a note of any outcomes of each learning experience and what difference it has made to you, your colleagues, your students (if relevant) or your employer.

#### **Where do I want to be?**

Write down your overall career goals-where you want to be in two, five and ten years' time. Then write down no more than three specific and achievable shorter term objective, including the dates by which you want to achieve them.

### **What do I have to do to get there?**

Looking at your overall career goals, make a note of what you need to do to achieve them. This could include further training, job or role progression or changes in direction.

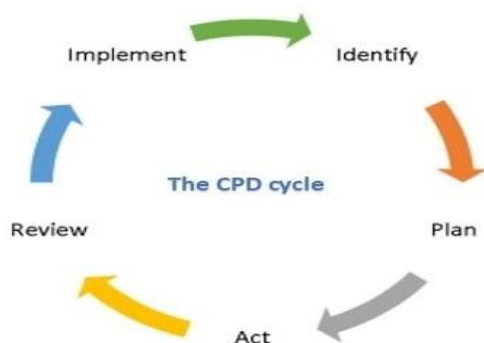
For shorter term objectives, include the first step- what you can do today or tomorrow. For example, having a chat with your manager about a new responsibility or finding out about new technology from a colleague who has experience of it.

### **When should I review progress?**

This step is essential! You'll need to set a date in advance for review of the objectives you've set yourself. You can either do this from one review to the next or decide to review regularly-once every three, six or twelve months. Put it in your diary and do it! **The cycle of continuing professional development** has begun.

### **What is the CPD Cycle**

The CPD cycle illustrates the process by which you can make the most of CPD activities by taking a structured approach:



## **Identify**

What are the areas that you need to learn, improve or update? What are your skills gaps? What are your aspirations and what do you need to do to get there? If you are not doing so already, speak to your employer about this as a part of your performance review or regular supervision meetings as they can help you to identify areas of learning for you.

## **Plan**

What is the best way to achieve what you want to do? The planning stage can be started at any point throughout the year, but you may find it useful to align it with your annual development or performance review. It's important to remember that a lot of the learning we do is not planned. Therefore, use this stage as a guide to follow, not a strict plan you have to stick to.

## **Act**

This is where you actually do what you have planned to do. It's likely that your plan will include a mixture of keeping up to date with your area of expertise, learning about the external environment and developing new skills.

## **Review**

It is important to take time to reflect on what you have learnt and review how effective the learning was. Ask yourself if more is needed, as if so what?

## **Implement**

You need to be clear how you will put your learning into practice in the 'real world'. Learning something without then implementing what you have learnt is a wasted opportunity-use it or lose it! Embedding learning requires repetition. Try to create opportunities where you can regularly revisit the things you have learnt by putting what you have learnt into practice.

## Why is Continuing Professional Development Important for Teachers?

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.

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.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is an important part for teacher education. It helps the teachers to keep their professional knowledge and skills updated. The new generations have a different approach to learning than the previous generations. CPD helps the teachers to learn new techniques in teaching students of this generation. It helps teachers to grow professionally, at the same time, improve their classroom skills. Teachers who have been in the profession for many years are usually reluctant to change their teaching styles. CPD will let them stay in touch with the latest developments in the education sector and help them to change their way of teaching. Here are some reasons why CPD is so important for teachers.



### **Encourages exchange of knowledge**

CPD encourages teachers to exchange their knowledge and ideas with the other teachers in school. This way, the senior teachers can act as mentors to the new ones and the new teachers can provide the senior teachers with the up-to-date knowledge on the latest teaching styles and modes.

### **Improves communication with other schools**

CPD allows teachers to meet colleagues from other schools. This also increases knowledge sharing and they learn new teaching techniques. It improves the quality of education by sharing knowledge.

### **CPD courses are flexible**

You can take the traditional classroom courses or take online courses as well. So, you have the flexibility of learning from home. There are lots of online materials available to develop teaching skills.

### **Get better career opportunities**

The CPD courses help to get promotions and have better career. CPD courses are relevant to your professional works, so you will learn lots of things that will improve your professional skills.

### **It is an evidence of competence**

Completing CPD courses gives proof of your competence. So, it helps you to stand out from the rest of your colleagues. You will become more competent than the others. It also tells that your knowledge is up-to-date.

CPD adds to the skills and knowledge you already have. It helps you to be a better teacher. You can perform competently as a teacher and meet the expectations of your students and employers. One note of concern is that sometimes it's hard to find a good trainer for the CPD courses. Competent trainers are necessary to develop the skills of teachers; otherwise, the CPD courses won't achieve the outcome it is supposed to achieve. CPD has no barrier in terms of age or seniority. So, if you are in the education sector, you must take CPD courses.

## Formal and Informal CPD

**Formal CPD** involves participating in organized activities; seminars, workshops, conferences and panel/group meetings, with appropriate content for chartered secretaries and where attendance can be evidenced. Courses can be undertaken face to face, online or via other electronic delivery.

Some examples of formal CPD activities include

- Completing or participating in a structured activity either as a delegate, speaker, panel member or other participant. This includes but is not limited to conferences, seminars, training courses (classroom, online), workshops, panels and group meetings.
- Participation in staff development training courses/activities provided by employers
- Sharing professional knowledge in formal settings
- Writing relevant books, articles and papers
- Lecturing, teaching and addressing meetings on relevant subject matter
- Being an examiner or being involved in professional or higher education that is relevant.



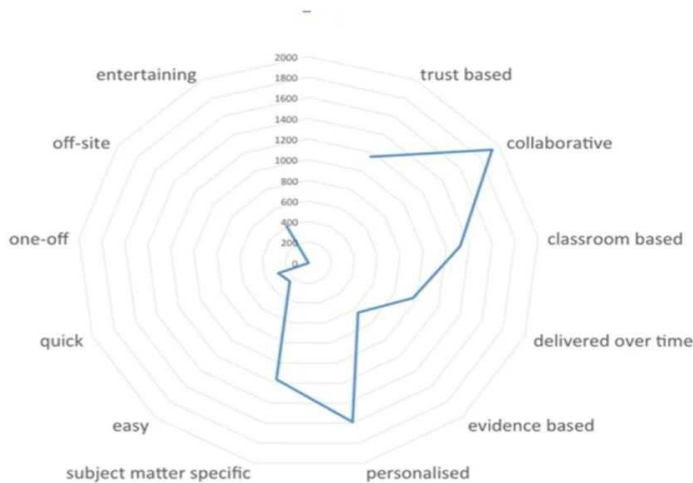
**Informal CPD** involves activities undertaken by the individual, like experiential/workplace learning, reading and research.

### What Kind of Professional Development do Teachers Want?

A few years ago 1,000 teachers were asked what professional development activities they would prioritise if they were in control of their own CPD. They gave some interesting insight.

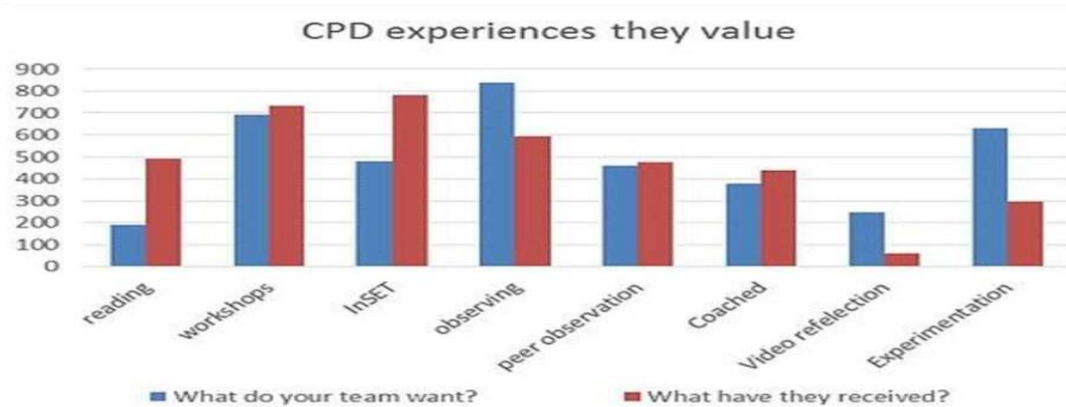
Teachers really valued collaborative and personalized classroom-based CPD. In fact, they find these professional development activities even more useful than being sent off site to courses.

The image below shows those teachers' CPD preferences.



“I would prioritise a system that staff trusted to be fair, supportive and provide real and constructive feedback to help improve teaching practice.”

Teachers also expressed a lot of interest in experimenting with different teaching practices. However, less than half of those who said that they highly value the ability to experiment with their professional learning claimed they are actually given the opportunity to.



“The whole reason for CPD is to develop the staff who will then bring new and fresh ideas to their teaching to be then able to get the outstanding lessons that people want.

I would prioritise more in-house training to provide ideas about different teaching styles and activities.”

Over 80% of the teachers surveyed said they value classroom observing as a professional development experience. This includes being observed by a peer , a coach or a mentor, as well as observing the teaching of others.

“I would prioritise the opportunity to observe and learn from each other.”

A number of teachers said that if it was up to them, they would prioritise watching other teachers teach in classroom observations, and would value the chance to observe teachers with particular expertise in different areas.

It was also suggested that video could be used to share this expertise and make it easier for teachers to observe each other by relieving the costs of lesson cover and the struggles of timetable issues.

However, only a quarter of teachers who said that they value video reflection claimed they have been able to use it for their continuous professional development.

### **Tailoring CPD to a Digital World**

With consistently high demands on educators’ time it’s always been a challenge for teachers to find a way to participate in professional development, have meaningful conversations with peers and attend a colleague’s lesson to learn from their experience, etc.



Whilst some schools adopted the use of technology to ease some of these issues early on, since Covid-19 pandemic with school closures, teaching in bubbles and working from home, the need for finding digital solutions for continuing teacher development became apparent across the road.



This raised the question for many school leaders if remote and blended professional learning could possibly be as effective as traditional methods?

In summer 2020 a team based at the University of Birmingham, Department of Teacher Education., as well as the EEF alongside Durham University undertook two independent rapid evidence assessments and concluded that there is indeed little difference in effectiveness. They both highlighted in particular the benefit of video technology “as it has potential to bring classroom interactions into a teacher education face-to-face observations and reliance on memory-which will be most fresh immediately after the teaching and increasingly distant as time passes.”

### **The Importance of Continuing Professional Development**

***The ultimate outcome of well-planned continuing professional development is that it safeguards the public, the employer, the professional and the professional's career.***

- CPD ensures your capabilities keep pace with the current standards of others in the same field.
- CPD ensures that you maintain and enhance the knowledge and skills you need to deliver a professional service to your customers, clients and the community.

- CPD ensures that you and your knowledge stay relevant and to date. You are more aware of the changing trends and directions in your profession. The pace of change is probably faster than it's ever been-and this is a feature of the new normal that we live and work in. If you stand still you will get left behind, as the currency of your knowledge and skills becomes out-dated.
- CPD helps you continue to make a meaningful contribution to your team. You become more effective in the workplace. This assists you to advance in your career and move into new positions where you can lead, manage, influence, coach and mentor others.
- CPD helps you to stay interested and interesting. Experience is a great teacher, but it does mean that tend to do what we have done before. Focused CPD opens you up to new possibilities, new knowledge and new skill areas.
- CPD can deliver a deeper understanding of what it means to be a professional, along with a greater appreciation of the implications and impacts of your work.
- CPD helps advance the body of knowledge and technology within your profession.
- CPD can lead to increased public confidence in individual professionals and their profession as a whole.
- Depending on the profession-CPD contributes to improved protection and quality of life, the environment, sustainability, property and the economy. This particularly applies to high risk areas, or specialized practice areas which often prove impractical to monitor on a case by case basis. The importance of continuing professional development should not be underestimated- it is a career – long obligation for practicing professionals.

## Conclusion

Each teacher has different levels of experience, different priorities they want to focus on and different ways they like to learn. It can't be presumed that one style of professional learning will fit all. Professional development activities should:

- Be designed around individual teachers' existing experience, knowledge and needs.
- Be relevant to the context and day-to-day experience of teachers and their schools.

Individuals are responsible for controlling and managing their own development. We can get what we want, if we let ourselves. Sometimes it is hard to give priority to our own needs. If we have been conditioned not to take risks or 'put our head above the parapet', it can seem difficult to plan to do so.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is accepted as an integral part of teacher education because only a continuing learning and training assures a high level of expertise and enables the teachers to keep their professional skills and knowledge up-to-date.

Our greatest limitation is the constraint of our imagination. We tend to imagine and crave for experiences that are already known by ourselves or others-more of...this, or greater than... that, or sometimes less of... the other. We frequently do not consider going beyond, experimenting with new ways of being and doing, creating a unique path.

CPD reminds us of the need not only to dream our future but also to take active steps to create our dream in reality. There's no point in standing around the photocopier, discussing, with envy, someone else's promotion. We owe it to ourselves to create such opportunities for ourselves-apply for our ideal job, sign up for that part-time course, volunteer to take on new tasks to develop our skills.

During the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) process, teachers gain a new understanding of teaching and learning, new beliefs, new teaching methods and new materials for student learning, as well as the ability to develop not only professionally, but also socially and personally.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers' CPD is increasingly encouraged by governments around the world, as it is seen as indispensable for meeting the ever-changing needs of students in today's schools.

Whatever the reason for educational change, teachers themselves find themselves

We are not dictated how much CPD we must do. There are no set hours or points to attain. We simply need to complete as much development activity as we feel is required to remain competent in our roles.

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