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Challenges Faced by Educators in the Implementation of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD): Gauteng Province

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Abstract

Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) is a system that encourages educators to grow professionally. CPTD is managed by the South African Council for Educators (SACE). All educators were trained on CPTD system, but implementation at school level is a challenge because most of the teachers are technophobic and Continuing Professional Teacher Development is an electronic system. The purpose of this study is to identify the challenges that educators face in the implementation of Continuing Professional Teacher Development, and suggest improvement measures to the system. This research was a qualitative study based on the diffusion of innovation theory. Data was collected through interviews and document analysis. A total of 2 school principals and 10 educators and 2 union members and 2 district officials were purposely selected. Thematic method of data analysis was conducted. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn based on analyzed data. The study revealed that there is minimal support and monitoring taking place in schools. In addition, educators are demotivated since CPTD has no monetary incentive like Integrated Quality Management System. The study recommended that with relevant monitoring and support, educators can be motivated to participate in CPTD programmes, and professional development can be a reality.

Keywords: challenges, educators, Continuing Professional Teacher Development

1. Introduction

Professional development is the cornerstone for quality education to be realised in every organisation and the teaching fraternity is not an exception to the rule. During the apartheid era, the South African education was organised into racially and ethnically divided sub-systems. Since 1994, the education system was rationalised into one, single education system, introducing new curriculum which required teachers to have new knowledge and applied competence. With the onset of curriculum 2005, learners were expected to be active participants in the classroom. Assessment strategies also moved summative to being more formative in nature. The teacher took the role of facilitator to promote the creation of meaning in classroom

instruction [1], in the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa states that, the National Teacher Education Audit conducted in 1995 showed that a third of the teaching force at that time was engaged in qualification-driven in-service education, and that in many instances, though there were considerable rewards in terms of salary increases, such qualifications had little or no impact on classroom practice. It was on the basis of this that it was found to be critical that all teachers need to enhance their skills for the delivery of the new curriculum. It is also emphasised in the policy framework that a large majority of teachers need to strengthen their subject knowledge base, pedagogical content knowledge and teaching skills. This was a serious call for priority to be given to educators' professional development. Replace the entirety of this text with the introduction to your chapter. The introduction section should provide a context for your manuscript and should be numbered as first heading. When preparing the introduction, please bear in mind that some readers will not be experts in your field of research.

2. What is professional development

According to Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) in [2] professional development describes an ongoing development programme that focuses on the whole range of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to educate learners effectively. Gulston [2] further explains that professional development emphasises the participation of educators or educational leaders in development opportunities in order for them to be better equipped with knowledge and skills.

Quality in education is something that we should focus on as a system of education. It is for this reason that the one most important factor why educators should be professionally developed is based on the conviction that the quality of teachers influences the quality of learners' performance and achievement. It is true because professional development needs to be prioritised within the education system because it is important in improving or enhancing ones knowledge and skills. Mestry et al. [3] mentioned that raising the quality of teacher performance through teacher development programmes is essential, it is believed, to improve the overall performance of the education system, which makes the debate about school type, school-by-school performance, and class size, among others, look irrelevant. Pitsoe and Maila [4] emphasised this point by mentioning that teacher professional development plays an important role in changing teachers' teaching methods and assisting teachers to move beyond a comprehension of the surface features of a new idea or innovation, to a deeper understanding of a topic.

Teacher professional development should therefore, be looked at as a continuous process. This is true because learning is a lifelong process. If teachers do not keep up with the global changes, especially those that come with technology, then they will not fit in this era. It is on this basis that continuing professional development (CPD) is prioritised.

3. What is continuing professional development (CPD)

Oxbridge Academy [5] defines CPD as a term used to describe learning activities that professionals take part in to develop and enhance their skills. There are many forms of continuing professional development activities available, which include workshops, conferences, consultation, coaching, both peer coaching and expert coaching, and courses which can either be to enhance existing professional

qualifications. CPD activities further also consist of demonstrations and peer observation, mentoring, inductions for beginner teachers, job rotation, teamwork and group work, clustering of schools and school visits, as well as designing and executing school improvement projects, communities of practice, lesson studies, reflective supervision and technical assistance [2]. We also see [6] highlighting the method of cooperative or collegial development, cascade or generation method, case study, skills development method, reflection, project method, narrative method, self-development, seminars, workshops, institutes, conferences, courses, observation of excellent practice, teachers' participation in new roles, portfolio, action research, students' performance assessment, supervision, coaching and mentoring are forms of Continuing Professional Teacher Development in Great Britain, Canada and USA.

Allen [7] defines CPD as a process 'of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge and experience that you gain both formally and informally as you work, beyond any initial training. It's a record of what you experience, learn and then apply'.

According to [8] CPD encompasses a wide variety of approaches and teaching and learning styles in a variety of setting (inside or outside of the workplace) it is distinguishable from the broader concept of learning. It is primarily related to people's professional identities and roles and the goals of the organisation they are working 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 is not a tick-box document recording the training you have completed. It is broader than that. 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 is not a tick-box document recording the training you have completed.

Day (1999) in [9] states 'Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom'. Based on this definition, they agree that the purpose of CPD is four-fold. Firstly, it is intended to facilitate the implementation of policy or educational reforms. Secondly, it is aimed towards preparation of staff for the new function. It also serves the aim of school development, and lastly, it is for personal professional development. Professional development of teachers in South Africa is aligned to these four roles to complement whole-school development. Therefore, professional development of teachers is the cornerstone for the provision of quality teaching and learning. It also implies that teachers never cease to learn. It therefore, puts emphasis on lifelong learning.

Kloosterman [10] mentions that continuing professional development involves maintaining and enhancing the knowledge, skills and experience related to your professional activities following completion of your formal training. Therefore, CPD should be a lifelong (throughout the career of a teacher), systematic, and planned process to maintain and develop professional competence, creativity and innovation. The outcome has value for both the individual and profession. Therefore, professional development of teachers is the cornerstone for the provision of quality teaching and learning. It also implies that teachers never cease to learn. It therefore, puts emphasis on lifelong learning.

3.1 The international context on CPD

The concept of continuing professional development is not peculiar to the South African context alone. Different countries use different policies on CPD for teachers, depending on their context. Guldenhuys and Oosthuizen [11] identify

different trends regarding teachers' CPD. The first trend is that of PD activities are linked to renewing of licences and career advancement or salary benefits or not, and can be optional or not. This is the practice in countries like Germany, United Kingdom, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. In countries like France, Greece, Iceland, etc. CPD is seen as a professional duty, but participation is optional. This is the practice in South Africa where CPD is treated as a duty for teachers, however teachers are given varied options of programmes for participation. They also earn different points for their participation in different activities and programmes.

The second trend identified by Day and Sachs (2004) in [11] is that PD activities can also be initiated by the authorities. This trend is observed in countries such as Australia, America and Japan, although there has not been a success with such trends and South Africa is no exception to this with some of the professional development being unauthorised and non-endorsed and imposed on teachers. The last trend is that of the role of research on professional development as observed in New Zealand where a research was commissioned to see what works and why to improve education outcomes. Such information was used to guide educational policy and practice about the conditions, both necessary and sufficient for professional development that has transformational impact at system level [11].

There are other countries, like the Netherlands that have introduced continuing professional development for their teachers due to changes effected in their curriculum. Seezink and Poell [12] assert that the secondary schools in Netherlands have been granted increasing autonomy by the Dutch central government to reform their curriculum and teaching methods. Reforms were then undertaken to make educational programmes more competence based. Many teachers then had trouble moving into their new roles and tasks associated with competence based education programmes (from an expert into a coaching role). This was experienced by educators in South Africa when outcomes based education moving from content based education with the teacher as a facilitator of currently National Curriculum Statements (NCS). There was a demand to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The Department of Education then realised that there is a need to develop and support educators on a continual basis. Since then, issues relating to effective professional teacher development have been on the agenda of the Department of Education in South Africa. Continuing professional development (CPD) is the means by which professionals maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills and develop the personal qualities and competencies required in their working lives. It is a process for setting yourself objectives for development then charting your progress towards achieving them. It is about where you want to be and how you plan to get there.

4. Continuing Professional Teacher Development in the South African context

In South Africa the continuing professional development of teachers is managed through the implementation of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system. Ref. [13], through the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development, mandates the South African Council for Educators (SACE) to manage the system. Therefore, as stated by [14] in the SACE professional development and research mandate, 'the South African Council for Educators (SACE), as a statutory body for professional educators has overall responsibility for the implementation, management and quality assurance of the CPTD system'. The OECD report on reviews of national policies for education in South Africa (2008) emphasised the role of SACE in teacher development by mentioning that 'SACE is

one of the most important bodies for the teaching profession in South Africa and it is well positioned to improve the public image of teaching' [15]. The system encourages educators to engage in professional development in order to achieve maximum benefits, hence the system awards points to the teachers for their development.

Research shows that an inspiring and informed teacher is the most important school-related factor influencing learner performance. Given the poor performance of South African schools in this area, it is critical that we pay close attention to how we train and support both new and experienced educators. Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) is an integral part of teacher education because only continued learning and training assures a high level of expertise and ensures teachers keep up-to-date with new research on how children learn, emerging technologies for the classroom and new curriculum resources [16].

Ref. [17] proclaims that The CPTD Management System will be made available to all teachers whether state-employed, employed by School Governing Bodies, or employed by independent schools. Ref. [17] reiterates that 'The main ideas are to encourage teachers to become better at their jobs and to encourage school communities to become better sites of teaching, learning and development'. The teaching profession is seen here as a revolving profession, especially with changing technology. So educators are expected to learn on a continued basis to be able to meet the global demands. CPTD is one way to encourage this. 'Professional development is part of SACE's Code of Professional Ethics for educators'. Each educator pledges to uphold the Code when they register with SACE. Section 7 of the SACE Code says that all educators must 'keep abreast of educational trends and developments' and 'promote the on-going development of teachers as a profession' [17].

Among the prescripts of SACE is that each educator develops a Personal Development Plan (PDP) file as part of the CPTD system. The PDP is a resource document to assist each teacher with professional growth. It will contain:

- Advice on understanding and analysing a teacher's professional development needs.
- The teacher's analysis of professional development needs (PGP).
- Guidance on how the teacher can undertake or access professional development activities.
- Information on the CPTD Management System.
- A record of the teacher's PD activities and PD points.
- Links between the teacher's PD activities and quarterly work schedule [17].

The PDP is a resource file in which the teacher is expected to record his or her CPTD activities. The activities have value for professional development. Therefore, teachers will be allocated points on the basis of such activities when they report them through the CPTD system. These include the following:

- Type 1 activities: these are teacher initiated activities.
- Type 2 activities: these are school initiated activities.
- Type 3 activities: these are externally driven activities offered by outside service providers.

5. Theoretical background

Diffusion of innovation theory was adopted for the study. The diffusion of innovation theory is one of the social science theories which was developed by Rogers in 1962. The theory relies on human capital and believes that innovations should be widely adopted in order to attain development and sustainability. The diffusion of innovation theory is regarded as an important change model for guiding technological innovation. Where the innovation itself is modified and presented in ways that meet the needs across all levels of adopters. The diffusion of innovation refers to the process that occurs as people adopt a new idea, product, practice, philosophy, and so on [18]. Rogers believed that in a social system the innovation is communicated by the process of diffusion. This process occurs at different stages. The stages include:

1. Awareness of the need for an innovation.
2. Decision to adopt or reject an innovation.
3. Initial use of an innovation to test it.
4. Continued use of the innovation.

The other important thing about the theory is about who makes the decision to accept the innovation. Rogers came up with three ways of taking decision about acceptance of an innovation. These include optional wherein individuals made a decision about an innovation in the social system by themselves. The second way is through a collective, wherein a decision to accept an innovation is made by all individuals in a social system. Lastly, the decision to accept an innovation can be made by the authority, wherein few individuals makes a decision for the entire social system.

The CPTD, in line with the theory is new innovation within the education system, and an electronic system, which has been advocated to all teachers at different levels and must be adopted and put to practice for the benefit of their continuing. Professional development. It would be interesting to establish where educators are in terms of the stages in this theory regarding CPTD implementation. It will also be interesting to establish how information on CPTD is communicated and sustained for educators.

6. Methodology

The research was conducted through a qualitative interpretivist approach. Qualitative research is viewed by [19], as a paradigm that recognises that researchers bring in their subjectivity (views, perspectives, framework for making sense of the world, their politics and passions). Saving-Baden and Howell Major [20], on the other hand, define it as a social research aimed at investigating the way in which people make sense of their ideas and experiences. They also emphasise that qualitative research focuses on an emic perspective of views of people and their perceptions, meanings and interpretations. The researcher, therefore, focused on the way teachers see their world within the continuing professional development.

A case study design was used as the method of research with one school selected for the study. The population interviewed school principals and teachers, district officials and union members. Purposive sampling was used for their selection. All educators selected are the ones who have been trained, and declared ready, to

implement Continuing Professional Teacher Development system. The district officials were selected on the basis of their involvement in CPTD training, monitoring and support. Data analysis was conducted through the use of thematic approach. This involved the characterisation of collected data, through the establishment of relationships between concepts and ideas. Common themes were then identified and these were further interpreted to create meaningful findings on the research topic.

7. Discussion

CPTD has been well received by the department and teacher unions as a system for managing and monitoring teacher professional development, however it has not been without its challenges. In the light of this the following challenges in the implementation of CPTD were identified in this study.

7.1 Challenges of CPTD implementation

7.1.1 Poor or non-participation of teachers in CPTC activities

There is generally non-participation of educators in the system due to inaccessibility of IT and resources (Gadgets), particularly for those schools where network is poor. One educator stated this:

‘We are expected to register and make our submissions through the CPTD electronic system, yet our schools do not even have WI-FI. Even in cases where schools have WI-FI, data for the school is limited and is used for administrative purposes. Maybe our principals will manage because they get free data from the department’.

One principal mentioned the following:

‘It is true that we get data from the department, however this is not enough to cater for all our needs as a school. Some of us were “born before technology” so we do not even know how to use these gadgets properly’.

It is clear from the inputs of educators above that CPTD implementation is a serious challenge, not unless all educators have access to resources.

7.1.2 Lack of interest by some educators

Ageing profession or those near retirement are reluctant to participate, Educators who are in the retirement brackets, and who are in the majority reluctant to participate. This came out strongly from those educators who are left with 1–3 years of service within the department of education. This is in agreement with the findings from the study conducted by [21] when they stated that in each career cycle teachers vary in their concerns and commitment, including their professional development behaviour and needs. Richter et al. (2011) in [11] emphasised this when they mention that teachers in their final stage of teaching tend to reduce their commitment and career ambition. They focus more on their personal goals. One of these educators responded by saying that:

‘What is that CPTD? Will it be of benefit to my retirement? I am too old to start new programmes in the profession. All I want is to retire and go home to rest’.

A greater percentage of educators are technophobic and as a result do not participate. This is illustrated in the words of one principal above when he confessed that some of them cannot even use these gadgets properly.

7.1.3 Poor planning by SACE

The CPTD Portal's capacity disadvantages the educators reporting processes. The electronic submission system of SACE also has its challenges and requires upgrading. Teachers have a challenge of accessing or even operating the CPTD system. Educators end up submitting hard copies of their forms, which creates another problem of capturing for SACE and this, leads to resubmission.

7.1.4 Lack of support by school management

There is lack of systematic and regular monitoring of teachers' reporting progress. This is an area neglected by management in schools. There is no good planning for CPTD activities and programmes at school level. The school management do not allocate time for these activities and the school principals as the driving force in their schools, do not see to it that teachers participate or have the ability to participate in CPTD programmes. The fact that teachers are aware of the 6 years of free punitive measure that has been put in by SACE makes them even more reluctant to participate. This is contrary to the idea of implementing CPTD as a form of duty for teachers. One HOD at school said:

'My main concern is to manage the subjects I am leading, not CPTD. It is not part of my job description. Each educator should manage his/her own CPTD activities. We all have our CPTD to manage. In fact, what is that?'

It is evident that no one wants to take responsibility to manage CPTD activities in schools. As a result, it becomes a neglected programme in the system.

7.1.5 Selective reporting

Reporting by teachers is mostly concentrated around Type 1 activities and Types 2 and 3 are neglected. Most teachers engage in these activities on a daily basis. Most of these activities are not linked to their individual development needs as identified in their appraisal process. This shows that there is a gap between CPTD activities and IQMS activities in schools. This is another factor that leads teachers to a point where they do not value CPTD programmes.

7.1.6 Lack of explicit relationship between CPTD and other existing developmental programmes

CPTD considered a compliance tool than a professional development activity. Although CPTD is part of the code of conduct for educators. Even though teachers are aware of CPTD and know that it is important for their professional development, some of them still have attitude. One educator was asked;

'What is that CPTD of value to my salary? We are interested in programmes that will benefit us financially. We need money to survive in life.'

It is evident from the statement above that some teachers wish CPTD would benefit them like IQMS does.

7.1.7 Lack of or poor ICT skills

Some teachers are technophobic and would not be encouraged by any system that is technologically driven, particularly those who are old in the system and had little exposure to technology. Lost or forgotten Username and Password is another challenge for such teachers. Some teachers fail access the CPTD electronic system because they do not have the correct username and password. Even when one has computer skills it is easy to forget the Username and Password.

7.2 Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter focussed on the challenges that educators face in the implementation of Continuing Professional Teacher Development with the aim of suggesting the strategies for improvement. The study revealed that CPTD is necessary to guide educators' professional development, however there are factors that impede educators from implementing it properly, as identified in the themes above. In terms of the challenges identified in the discussion section, the following recommendations were suggested:

- ICT literacy programme to be made available for teachers. Supporting the effective application of ITC skills may serve as a foundation for successful CPTD implementation in South Africa. The programme should also be made part of the curriculum for initial teacher training and be made compulsory for all students.
- CPTD is limited by issues of time. A link should be established with teacher centres for teachers to access technological resources with ease. The need for warm bodies to support CPTD implementation cannot be underestimated here. Support officers must be appointed at the teacher development centres to help with IT skills.
- CPTD should also be part of the curriculum at the initial teacher training programmes in tertiary institutions. There is a need for a module that focuses on CPTD for teacher education in South Africa as CPD participation is understood as a duty for teachers. This will assist in emphasising the value of professional development from the initial process of training and the need for continuity throughout the teaching career.
- Teachers who fall within the retirement bracket can be excluded from participation, particularly those who are left with 2 years to retire since the CPTD system run in 3 years cycles.
- Advocacy workshops should not be a once off activity. It is important to run such training at least once every year with emphasis being put on the development role of CPTD and how it is linked to other programmes like IQMS. This will help teachers to value CPTD for what it is and not link it to monetary incentive. The emphasis on the developmental value of CPTD will motivate teachers to participate. It will also erase the view that teachers have about CPTD as a SACE thing. They will understand that they also have a responsibility for their individual development.

This study was important in that it gave the educators a voice to raise their concerns about CPTD implementation. They also shared their experiences in the implementation of CPTD programmes and made valuable suggestions for

improvement. Teacher professional development is a progressive activity and must be prioritised by all who are involved. It is one form through which quality teaching and learning can be realised as educators improve on their knowledge and skills to keep up-to-date with the global trends.

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