The Necessity of Continuing Professional Development for EFL Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The teaching profession involves renewed work in the ever-changing and rapidly changing world of knowledge and technology. Which requires teachers to maintain the highest standards of professional practice to perform well with this innovation and rapid change. This study aimed to investigate the process through which EFL teachers become capable of engaging in, sharing control of, influencing events and in situations that affect their work as teachers. The study also aimed at investigating EFL teachers perceptions of Continuing professional development and identifying the main characteristics of existing practices, besides offering some suggestions to improve EFL teachers Continuing professional development. The study adopted the descriptive analytical method. The data was collected with a questionnaire. The sample consist of (60) EFL teachers from EL-Hasaheisa Locality. The data were analyzed with (SPSS) programme. As the result of the analysis it is found that: Effective Continuing professional development requires time and space, support from the Ministry of Education. Successful Continuing professional development is often grounded in teacher collaboration . The Ministry of Education does not have a budget for EFL teacher Continuing professional development. This study recommends that: The Ministry of Education should establish Continuing teachers training centres. Opportunities should be provided to teachers to participate in more activities and Continuing training. Finally the process of Continuing professional development of EFL teachers should be monitored continually.

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1.0 Background

The teaching profession involves renewed work in the ever-changing and rapidly changing world of knowledge and technology which requires teachers to maintain the highest standards of professional practice to perform well with this innovation and rapid change. An essential way to meet teachers need is through boosting their professionalism through Continuing Professional Development

Statement of the Problem

Many teachers are always seeking perfect status in teaching and learning process and complaining about the weakness of students and the insufficient professional support. So the researcher tries to propose the necessity of Continuing Professional Development for EFL Teachers to improve their skills ,knowledge and attitude through providing Continuing professional development to enable them to face teaching problems.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate teachers' perceptions of professional development.
2. To improve teacher's performance and change their attitude towards teaching process.
3. To update and share knowledge and skills specially in today world of constantly changing technologies.

Questions of the Study

This study set out to answer the following questions:
1. What is the current nature of teachers Continuing professional development ?
2. What is the role and responsibility of Ministry of the Education in providing Continuing professional development for teachers ?
3. To what extent do teachers participate in Continuing professional development programs?

Hypotheses of the Study

The present study attempts to suggest the following hypotheses
1. The absence of teachers Continuing professional development is one of the factors that lead to students' deterioration.
2. Planning, setting up clear goals and objectives and offering continuous training for teachers is a basic responsibility for the ministry of education.

3. Joining teachers Continuing professional development programs and sharing ideas and experience with other teachers leads to the development of teachers professionally.

Significance of the Study

One of the best known ways to improve students' performance is through teachers Continuing professional development, so through empowering teachers professionally "teachers" become up- to date in Knowledge , Skills and ready to the constantly changing technologies, beside sharing reciprocal knowledge, skills, and techniques which reflects positively in their practice . So students' performance will improve.

Methodology of the Study

The analytical descriptive method is used to cover in more details the theoretical part of the study , and notes-taking strategies namely; paraphrasing ,summarizing ,and quoting. Concerning the data of the study, is used: A questionnaire designed to illicit information from (60) EFL teachers from secondary schools inside El-Hasahisa Locality, Gezira State.. The data gathered from the questionnaire and analyzed with (SPSS) program.

Limits of the Study

This study limited to "The Necessity of Continuing Professional Development for EFL Teachers". The sample of the study comprised of (60) EFL teachers, chosen randomly the area of study in EL, Hasahissa Locality, Gezira State, Sudan, during 2018-2019.

LITERATUER RVIEW

Introduction

This part focuses on the theoretical relevant literature to the subject area of this research into teacher's Continuing professional development. First, the literature on the concept of continuing proccessional development of the teacher is reviewed with a critical investigation of different aspects of Continuing professional development as commonly interpreted.

Definition of Continuing Professional Development

Many definitions of continuing professional development found in the literature on teachers and teachers' education. Interpretations of these definitions deepen the understanding of what is intended to be achieved. Various terms are used in relation to continuing teacher development. Continuing education, professional development, professional learning, professional growth, in

service education, in-service learning, renewal, continuing professional development, in- service trading, on- going assistance, human resource development, recurrent education, continues career development, lifelong learning and professional growth are just a few of such terms. Craig (1987:37) describes professional development as:

> *The process by which individuals increase their understanding and knowledge*
> *and improve their skills and abilities to perform better in their current position*
> *or to prepare themselves for a position to which they can realistically aspire in*
> *the near future.*

Furthermore, they point out the need for incorporating various principles, approaches methods and human physical resources to enhance the planned outcome of continuing professional development. Fetemacher (1983:33) defines professional development as, *" The provision of activities designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and understandings of teachers in ways that lead to enhance their thinking and classroom behavior"* . This definition moves a step further adding anticipated effects of improving classroom teaching behavior implying that such a change would effect change in the behavior of the students as well . Such changes reflect changes in the teacher such as increased acceptance, motivation, confidence, satisfaction and commitment, which together for the deeper purpose of providing continuing professional development of teacher. Duttweiler (1989:2) defines professional development as *" any activity or process intended to promote positive changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes."* This definition in side of literature which emphasizes the three major domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes of teacher in the context of teacher development. The object of positive change should be reflected not only in the individual   teacher's behavior, but also in the teaching- learning process of attaining goals and outcomes. Harris (1989:19) also defines professional development as:

> *a process that improves the job- related knowledge, skills or attitude of*
> *employees. This general definition relates to the same categories of*
> *knowledge, skills and attitudes with emphasis on the relationship to the job*
> *to the outcome of the job well done.*

.   In- service education, as related to professional development of teachers, also focus on the operational aspect of improving teacher performance. For example, Holly and McLoughin (1989:175) define in- service education as follow: " *In service education is operationally improving skills, knowledge attitude or techniques relative to the teacher's role, predominantly*

that of instructor." Burfen's (1990), view of continuing professional development is not separate and isolated event but a part of the overall career- long process for individual teachers in an approach finally justified in terms of lifelong development. Moving towards a more complete definition of professional development, Philips (1991)defines professional development as a complex process incorporating the sum total of all activities, in which teachers improve and develop their instructional skills, their curriculum development, implementation and evolution skills, carries out to promote teacher's growth, students' learning and development of the school. He also asserts that, as a result, teachers develop a wide range of beliefs and attitudes that support effective teaching practices by various means and in a variety of contexts. Similarly, Fullan (1992:326), defined professional development as:

> "*a lifelong process, which begins with the initial preparation of teachers and continues throughout their teaching career. He states that continuing professional growth is the " Sum total of formal and informal learning e experiences throughout one's career from pre- service teacher education to retirement."*

Furthermore, he points out that the ultimate goal of professional development is changing the culture of learning for both adults and students so that engagement and betterment is a way of life in schools.

The Characteristics of Effective Continuing Professional Development of Teachers

Despite the various terminologies, there is a growing consensus in the literature regarding the elements of effective continuing professional development for teachers. The definitions described earlier point to four major layers of change development of parallel to each other. One layer relates to changes in students, reflecting how students learn and what they need to know and are able to do to educate their students. The third layer shows how the change in teacher and student influences the whole school development. The fourth later is the social which is the outcome of the change reflected in the three layers described. The effective component has to be based on change taking place as reflected in these layers which are mutually supporting the change taking place in each layer.

According to Jasman (2001) the synonym for the term " effective" is " powerful". Effective continuing professional development has power, to change teachers, students and the whole school system in general. If the component is effective, high power, it has a positive effect on teachers, students and ultimately the school and the whole society as well.

Models and Practices for Effective continuing Professional Development

Educators prominent in the field continuing professional development have produced models for application incorporating those characteristics described above, they are:

*Indivi*dually- guided Professional Development Model

This model acknowledges that effective teacher professional development would take place when teachers set their own learning agenda (Sparks, 1999). This refers to a process through which teachers plan for and pursue activities they believe would promote their own learning. the key characteristic of the individually – guided professional development model is that the designs the learning. The teacher determines his or her own goals and selects the activities that will result in the achievement of those goals. Hall (1997) explains that this model assumes that individuals can best judge their own learning needs and are capable of self- direction and self-initiated learning.

Observation / Assessment Model

This model is based on the use of external evaluation as a tool for self- analysis and reflection. Colleagues or other personal act as eyes and ears for teachers. They observe and provide feedback on instructional practice, classroom management, and other issues. This model provides a structure by which teachers can be supervised while developing professionally. Examples of this model are peer coaching and clinical supervision. The teacher and observer determine what should be observed, the methods to be used and discuss the observations with the intent of identifying what the teacher does well and what areas the teacher may want to work on

Development/ Improvement Process Model

Involvement in a development/ Improvement process engages teachers in developing curriculum, designing programs, or engaging in a school improvement process to solve general or particular problems. Teachers are sometimes called upon to develop or adapt curricula, design programs or engage in systematic school improvement processes that have, as their goal, the improvement of classroom instruction and / or curriculum. Typically these projects are initiated to solve a problem. Their completion often requires that teachers acquire specific knowledge or skills, for example, in curriculum planning, research on effective teaching and group problem-solving strategies. This learning could take place through reading, discussion, observation, training and / or trial- and- error. In relating the school development, Parke and Coble (1997)

declare that this model requires teachers, for example, to read research on effective teaching, interact guide teacher as they think through what they perceive to be the problems and develop solutions.

Training Model

When many teachers thinks of proccessional training model. The traditional training model involves teachers in acquiring knowledge or skills through appropriate individual or group instruction. Villegas- Reimers, and Reimers(2002), have found that traditional professional development models include one- day teachers training one-size- fits –all presentation, training with minimal administrator participation and training with lack of follow- up support. Training is a powerful process for enhancing knowledge and skills as pointed out by Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, (1989:48).

> It clear from the research on training that teachers can be wonderful learners. They can master just about any kind of teaching strategy or implement almost any technique as long as adequate training is provided."

Training is usually a cost-effective means for teachers to a cost-effective means for teachers to acquire knowledge or skills due to the high participant to trainer ration.

Inquiry Model

Teacher inquiry as a profession development model could take different forms (Sparks, 1999). It could be a solitary activity done individually or in small group or in a large group. It could be done informally or formally. It may take place in a   classroom, at a Teacher Center or a university or college. Lieberman (1990) shows that inquiry develops critical reflection in teachers.

Why Professional Developments is so Important

Over the years, educators have frequently said, "The teacher makes the difference." Just how true is this statement? Researchers have repeatedly shown that the teacher's qualifications are one of the most significant factors in determining student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1997). So just how important is professional development? Effective professional development is the KEY to student success. Dollars spent on professional development will have a greater impact on student learning than any other dollars spent. Help every teacher be a better teacher and we will help every student be a more successful learner.

Factors Influence Effective Professional Development

Research findings have revealed various factors affecting teachers professional development. (Imers and Rimers, 2000,) A review of the literature identifies indicators such as identification of professional needs, developing school- based practice relevant to learners, teacher influence in planning, continuous support, collaboration with colleagues, multiple evaluation sources are stated as factors of influencing for continuing professional development of teacher. Teacher professional development will be more effective if the teachers are supported throughout the

learning process. Support in the following areas should be provided. For if teachers, professional development is to be more effective.

- Time allocated to try new knowledge and time allowed for change in practice to occur (Miller, et al. 1998)
- School leaders who are supportive of teacher professional development (Harris, 2001).
- Appropriate materials resource, learning opportunities, and time away from teaching duties to attend courses .
- Long-term funding (Meththananda, 2001).
- Supportive learning environments witch lead to professional growth (Miller, et al,1998).

Continuing Professional Development of Change

A body of knowledge exists about continuing professional development and change. Change is described as the adoption of an innovation where the ultimate goal is to improve outcomes through an alteration of practice (Carloio,1998:2). Furthermore, notes that change is a social process, undertaken over a period of time and time not a " Decision event". Those involved in the change must undergo a learning process in order to appreciate the aims and goals of the proposed change, make adaptations to cater for the new practice and be permitted to achieve personal growth prior to attempting to implement the change.

METHODOLOGY

Population

The population of this study is the teachers of English in Hassahis locality at secondary schools level.

The Sample

The sample of the study was comprised of (60) EFL teachers, from the total number of teachers (200) were chosen randomly.

Procedures

The questionnaire is designed and used as tools to collect data. The questionnaire consist of a number of choices nearly (9) statements and (5) options. The sample of the study comprised of (60) EFL teachers, chosen randomly .The data gathered from the questionnaire ,analyzed with (SPSS) program.

Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

The concept of validity has two issues that need to be discussed. Validity has been identified as " the degree to which the researcher has measured what he set out to measure " (Smith, 1991:106).The study used statistical package for social to analyze the data which are collected. The researcher used person's correlation and the results below:

$$r_{XY} = \frac{N(\Sigma XY) - (\Sigma X \Sigma Y)}{\sqrt{[N(\Sigma X^2) - (\Sigma X)^2][N(\Sigma Y^2) - (\Sigma Y)^2]}}$$

Where = correlation

R: Reliability of the test

N: number of all items in the test

X: odd scores

Y: even scores

Σ: Sum

R = 2*r/1+r

$Val = \sqrt{reliabilit\ y}$

Correlation = <u>0.69</u>

$$R = \frac{2 \times r}{1 + r} = \frac{2(0.69)}{1 + 0.69} = 0.82$$

Reliability = <u>0.82</u>

$$Val = \sqrt{0.82}$$

validity = 0.90

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This part presents, the results of the study according to the tables which illustrate the statistical processes, the results are taken from the analysis of the statement below.

4.1 Analysis of the Questionnaire

Table (4.1) The importance of continuing professional development in improving students achievement

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	37	61.7
Agree	15	25.0
To some extent	7	11.7
Disagree	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

Table (4.1) Reveals that 61.7% of the respondents strongly agree, 25% agree, 11.7% to some extent, and 1.7% are disagree. According to results (86.7%) of the teachers agree that professional development is important in improving students achievement, so, the clime is supported .

Table (4.2) Maintaining cooperative learning between teaches to reinforce teachers' knowledge, skills and attitude

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	39	65.0
Agree	17	28.3
To some extent	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0

From table (4.2) 65% of the respondent strongly agree, 28.3% agree, and 6.7% are to some extent. The statistical result shows that (93%3) of the teachers agree with the above statement.

Table (4.3) Successful professional development for teachers is often stands on teachers collaboration.

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strong agree	37	60.6
Agree	18	28.4
To some extent	4	6.7
Strongly disagree	1	1.7
Total	60	100

Table (4.3) reveals that 60.6% of the respondent strongly agree, 28.4% agree, 6.7% to some extent and 1.7% strongly agree. The results shows that (89%) of the teachers agree with the statement.

Table (4.4) Sustained and continuous professional development is every educators and schools responsibility.

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	35	58.3
Agree	15	25.0
To some extent	9	15.0
Disagree	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

The statically results from table (4.4) shows that 58.3% strongly agree, 25% agree, 15% to some extent, and 1.7% disagree. According to the result (83.3%) supported the stamen that sustained and continuous professional growth effective is very educator's and every school's responsibility.

Table (4.5) The positivity of teachers to the opportunities of learning

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	21	35.0
Agree	18	30.0
To some extent	18	30.0
Strongly disagree	2	3.3
Disagree	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

Table (4.5) reveals that 35% of the respondents strongly agree, 30% agree, 30% to some extent, 3.3% strongly disagree, and 3.3% disagree. According to the results (65%) agree with the statement teachers are positive about all opportunities to learn.

Table (6): Working collaboratively with colleague so as to affect positively on teachers' practice and skills.

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	34	56.7
Agree	17	28.3
To some extent	5	8.3
Strongly disagree	1	1.7
Disagree	3	5.0
Total	60	100.0

Table (4-6) shows that 56.7% strongly agree, 28.3% agree, 8.3% to some extent, 1.7% strongly agree, and 5% are disagree. According to the statistical analysis of statement (4. 6) most respondents (85%) agree that Working collaboratively with colleagues affects positively on teachers practice and skills, thus this statement is accepted.

Table (7): The positive effect of well- prepared teacher on student's achievement.

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	39	65.0
Agree	8	13.3
To some extent	10	16.7
Disagree	3	5.0
Total	60	100.0

Table (4.7) shows that 65% of the respondent strongly agree, 13.3% agree, 16.7% to some extent, and 5% are disagree. learning styles, affect the students, language a acquisition. According to results (78.3%) of the teachers agree with the statement Well prepared teacher affect positively on student's achievement. Thus this statement is accepted.

Table (8): The key to students success through effective continuing professional development.

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	35	58.3
Agree	16	26.7
To some extent	7	11.7
Strongly disagree	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0

Table (4.8) shows that 58.3% of the respondents strongly agree , 26.7% agree, 11.7% to some extent, and 3.3% are strongly disagree. According to the statistical analysis most teachers (85%) agree. Thus this statement is accepted.

Table (9): The planning of ministry of education to meet the special needs of teachers.

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	10	16.7
Agree	4	6.7
To some extent	14	23.3
Strongly disagree	7	11.7
Disagree	25	41.7
Total	60	100.0

From table (4.9) 16.7% of the respondents strongly agree, 6.7% agree, 23.3 to some extent, 11.7% strongly agree, and 41.7% disagree. The results shows that most teachers (53.7%) are disagree with the statement Ministry of education plans to meet the special needs of teachers .

Testing the Hypotheses

In this part compare the hypotheses which relate with statements in the questionnaire to know the results which the researcher was obtaining.

Hypothesis (1)

The absence of teacher training or continuing professional development is one the factors that lead to students deterioration. According to the statistical; results the majority of teachers in table (4.1) (86.7%) , table (4.7) (73.3%) and Table (4.8) (85%) agree that *The* absence of teacher training or continuing professional development is one the factors that lead to students deterioration., the result of the study prove the hypothesis.

Hypothesis (2)

Planning, setting up clear goals and objectives and offering is continuous training for teachers is a basic responsibility for the ministry of education This hypothesis is well accepted and proved by tables (4.4, 83%), (4.5, 65%), (4.9, 53.7%), that the planning, setting up clear goals and objectives and offering is continuous training for teachers is a basic responsibility for the ministry of education.

Hypothesis (3)

Sharing ideas and experience with other teachers may led to the development of teachers professionally. The majority of teachers in tables (4.2, 93%), (4.3, 89%) (4.6,85%) reported that Sharing ideas and experience with other teachers may led to the development of teachers professionally. The results proved that the hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This part is devoted to summarize the study by shortly presenting it's the conclusion, the findings and the recommendations.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate teachers continuing professional development at secondary level, in this study theories and principles which provide the basis for teacher continuing development and effective teacher professional practices are used to formulate the theoretical framework. The study explains the finding and sets up many recommendations as the following.

Findings

1. Involving teachers in continuing professional development practices enables them to fulfill their individual professional needs.
2. Maintaining cooperative learning between teachers is one of the major concerns in the continuing professional development.
3. Continuing Professional development should be based on teacher's needs.
4. Successful teachers professional development is often grounded in teachers collaboration.
5. Teachers strongly believe that increased collaborative working would prompt them to reflect on their own practice, improve their teaching and improve student learning.

Recommendations

1. There should be a mechanism for measuring teachers continuing development and students' achievement levels.
2. The process of professional development of teachers' should be   monitored continually.
3. The continuing professional development of teachers should be assigned to a small team of teachers in the school under the guidance of the head teachers of the school.
4. Teachers should be trained on the day –to issues which they face in their learning- teaching process.
5.Teacher educators should visit schools to assess teacher performance continuously.

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