

TEACHER SELF-REGULATION IN CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR NATIONAL PROGRESS

By

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Abstract

This paper focused on teacher self-regulation in continuous professional development for national progress. The teacher, his job and preparation were discussed with emphasis on the concept and potentials of continuous professional teacher development. In making justification for this, it was observed among other issues that initial teacher preparation is not enough for a lifelong teaching job. Some influential factors were highlighted revealing the need for teacher self-regulation; and so, the concept, theory, components and process of self-regulation were examined relating it to continuous professional teacher development. Implication to quality national workforce was derived. The way forward proffered includes: introduction of continuous professional teacher development in the curriculum of initial teacher education, improved working condition and provision of time by reinstating study leave with pay to enable teachers proceed on continuous professional development without losing their jobs.

Introduction

Formal education, also known as school education, intermingles with two other forms of education – the informal and non-formal. While one is totally unplanned, the other is partially planned, and formal education is fully planned with designated person as a teacher. The school education is deliberately planned and established by the society to meet her developmental needs. This singular point makes school education so invaluable to successful and sustainable societal development.

In Nigeria, formal education is positioned on five main national aims and objectives, which are to build - a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy and a land full of opportunities for all citizens (FRN, 2014). To support these aims and objectives, the educational policy provides for the long-term development of the education system stated in the following extracts:

Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most essential instrument of change. Any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by education. Life-long education shall be the basis of the nation's educational policy. Education and training facilities shall continue to be expanded in response to social needs and made progressively accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice... The education system shall be structured to develop the practice of self-learning. ... At any stage of the education process after junior secondary education, an individual shall be able to choose between continuing full-time studies, combining work with study, or embarking on full-time employment work with study, or embarking on full-time employment without excluding prospect of resuming studies later on. (Oyibe, 2016)

The underlined phrases which motivate this presentation can further be paraphrased as follows: Seeing that education is the most essential instrument of any fundamental change, Life-long education shall be the basis for continuous expansion in response to social needs and made progressively accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice through the individual's choice of any form of continuing education.

The key individuals in above assertion are the teacher and the learner. Considering the roles of the two individuals, continuing education is even much more compulsory for the teacher because he must 'have it, to give it'. A teacher cannot give what he does not have, he must go all-length to achieve and sustain '*continuous expansion in response to societal needs*', before helping learner(s) achieve same. This is, therefore, the crux of the matter in this paper titled: ***Teacher self-regulation in continuous professional development for national progress.***

The Teacher and his job

The teacher is the individual that carries out the activity of teaching. He engages in the act of helping learners learn by firstly, translating of the curriculum into a working document, planning, and engaging learners in various activities that bring about learning. He is professionally prepared to be mentally, physically and morally sound to perform the expected roles.

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Teaching is not an easy job. It is so complex and challenging, which is why educators, beyond the legislative dictum, justify the need for not just the birthing of a teacher but also the making of a teacher (Eze; Achuonye;& Uzoechina, 2015). Such intending teachers are mandated to pass through some rigorous training to equip them with best practices in methods, tools, and skills that eventually make them effective teacher. Anyone teaching, irrespective of level, without any form of formal teacher preparation is a ‘quack’, or at best, an ‘auxiliary’. Teacher education is the foundation for teaching.

Teacher Preparation

Teacher Education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the school and classroom (Achuonye, 2010). The major aim is to produce effective, efficient and highly motivated teachers to combat the enormous task of helping someone learn (Achuonye, 2019). Teacher education requires acquisition of knowledge and skills provided in the Faculty of Education, teaching subjects, general studies, teaching practice, and research projects. While knowledge of the subject content is acquired through departmental courses, teaching skills and methods are acquired through education courses and by observing master teachers, participating in microteaching and supervised teaching practice.

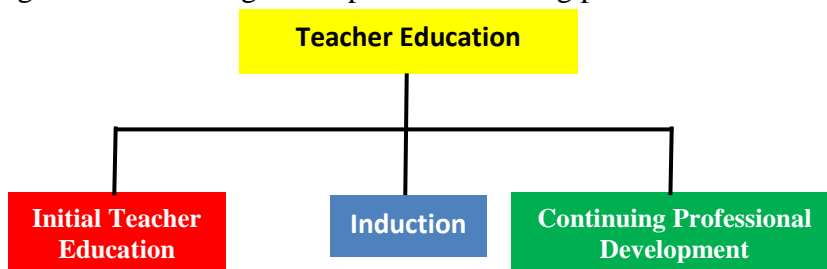


Fig. 1: Seamless continuum of Teacher Education

Teacher Education is not a one-off process, rather it is a seamless continuum (Fig. 1) consisting of three stages: initial teacher education, induction and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) (Mwansa, 2018). The task of teaching is so multi-faceted and challenging that new teacher, whether new in the field or new in a school, needs some form of induction such as mentoring and teacher-support programme. Proper induction increases retention of

beginning teachers in the profession, improves teaching performance, promotes teachers' personal and professional well-being. Teachers do not learn all that is required to become effective teachers overnight, or in the confines of the classrooms and textbooks. In-service Teacher Education programme offers remediation in many situations, gaps, inadequate and innovative exigencies to advance and update knowledge, skills, re-orientate teachers through various forms of on-line and conventional continuing education programmes, regular workshops, conferences and seminars (Ashby; Hobson; Malderez; Tomlinson; Roper; Chambers; & Healy, 2008).

The Concept and Potentials of Continuing Professional Teacher Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an ongoing professional activity in which a practitioner identifies, undertakes, and evaluates learning appropriate to the maintenance and development of the highest standards of practice within an evolving scope of practice. Oxbridge Academy defines CPD as a term used to describe learning activities that professionals take part in to develop and enhance their skills. Professional development in education has been described as an organized effort to change teachers with the expected result of improving their teaching practice and student learning (Gomba, 2019). It is a system that encourages educators to grow professionally. 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.

Quality in education is something that all stakeholders should focus on as a system of education. With the conviction that the quality of teachers influences the quality of learners' performance and achievement, CPD is prominent in improving or enhancing teacher's knowledge and skills. Teacher professional development should therefore, be looked at as a continuous process because human need is dynamic and 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 into this era. It is on this basis that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is prioritized. This could be short or long-term, physical or online, in form of seminars, workshops, conferences, consultation, coaching, both peer coaching and expert coaching, which can enhance existing professional

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qualifications(Elshami; Elamrdi;Alyafie;&Abuzaid, 2016). The activities consist of demonstrations and peer observation, mentoring, inductions for beginner teachers, job rotation, teamwork and group work, brainstorming and collaborations, cooperation, clustering of schools and school visits.

The CPD process helps teachers manage their personal development on an ongoing basis. It helps each individual teacher record, review and reflect on what he/she learns. It is not a tick-box document recording the training the individual has completed. CPD, therefore, contribute to the quality of education in the classroom, facilitate the implementation of policy or educational reforms, prepares teachers for new function, serves the aim of school development, and enhances personal professional development. Therefore, professional development of teachers is the cornerstone for the provision of quality teaching and learning.

Justification for CPTD

The concept of undertaking CPD originated from the evidence that undergraduate education and training alone could not prepare workers for whole professional life because knowledge has a half-life of approximately five years after which it declines.This means that initial undergraduate education and training is inadequate; regular updating of knowledge and skills is required. 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 (Naidoo;& Naidoo, 2018).

Teachers require to have new competence, knowledge and skill to implement new curriculum, 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, all teachers need to enhance their skills for the delivery of the new curriculum. Large majority of teachers need to strengthen their subject knowledge base, pedagogical content knowledge and teaching skills.To perform these new roles effectively and efficiently, teachers need to acquire new knowledge and skills, through learning activities such as CPDs. This implies that teachers never cease to learn and CPD should be a lifelong (throughout the career of a teacher), systematic, and planned process to maintain and develop professional competence, creativity and innovation.

Influential factors

Some factors affecting continuous professional development of teachers are -

- **Initial teacher education programme.** CPTD is not part of the curriculum at the initial teacher training programmes in tertiary institutions. Student-teachers are not taught the value and ways to achieve CPD in teaching profession. They therefore focus on the acquisition of the initial certificate which erroneously believed as the final.
- **Teacher identity.** Some teachers are in the profession not by choice or design, but by necessity; and so, lack a strong professional identity, still contemplating on whether to continue as a teacher or not.
- **Teacher efficacy.** Efficacy beliefs are strongly correlated with one's performance. Teachers with high *self-efficacy* believe that they can teach students well and believe they have a certain degree of control over both teaching and learning process and their performance. A teacher with high self-efficacy may undermine the need for CPTD.
- **Teaching professionalism.** The unsettled professional status of teaching wears teachers and may discourage them from CPD particularly with the adverse working conditions in which they are simply trying to survive, physically or emotionally.
- **Time.** Teaching is such a time-bound job that CPTD is hindered by unavailability of time to dedicate for it. This is particularly true at this period where sabbatical leave, study leave or study leave with pay etc. are very rare if not totally impossible to get by teachers.
- **Long service.** Teachers who fall within the retirement bracket can particularly those who are left with 2-5 years to retire may not see any need for CPD believing that since they have been successful this far there is no room for improvement – they have seen it all.
- **Administrative supports** - Proper remunerations and incentives encourage teachers to improve their practice and stay longer in the profession. Government, Principals, proprietors, HODs, and

supervisors who usually make the decisions about professional development options and control the funding, may not support if skeptical about the merits. CPD is not free, it requires finance for tuition/registration fees, materials, and logistics. Where there is no scholarship or any financial assistance from the school administration or government, individual teacher find it difficult or even impossible to embark on the programme. They may need to understand that they also have a responsibility for their individual development.

- **Societal stability.** Any form of environmental commotion destabilizes CPD programme in that area. For instance, civil conflict, disease pandemic (COVID-19, Ebola, etc.) breed unrest, insecurity, and may destroy infrastructure - roads, electricity, cellular networks, Internet, landlines, thus making most professional developments very difficult or even impossible.
- **ICT skills.** A greater percentage of educators are technophobic and would not be encouraged by any system that is technologically driven. This is particularly true for those who are old in the system and had little exposure to technology. Lost or forgotten Username and Password or data usage are other challenges for some teachers. Digital illiteracy serves as a foundation for successful CPTD implementation in this era, and many teachers are still lagging behind in ICT skills.
- **Teacher's attitude.** This is about personal value or interest for improvement which triggers self-motivation for CPD. Attitude is also influenced by the theme and perceived relevance, how it is linked to teacher effectiveness. Ignorance of the value of CPD hinders interest. Many teacher do not understand the value of CDP and so will not want to give it their time and resources. Teacher's attitude to CDP is more positive where he/she identifies own learning needs, consequently driving personal learning plans, and reflections on the knowledge acquired. It influences decision making. Who makes the decision to accept the innovation or to attend CDP programme? It may be from the authority (school management or government), collective decision of the association/group, or individuals - self-initiated. Research (Kanamu, Van Dyk, Chipeya, & Kilaha, 2017), has shown that

whichever of the three, individual decision prevails in all. This is because authority or group decision may take a teacher to CDP programme but the decision to actively participate and integrate the new ideas and skills remains a prerogative of the individual teacher based on attitude.

Attitude, they say, is everything; and determines the altitude which stands for the height attainable. It therefore plays significant role in CPTD. Many hindrances could be surmounted or relatively managed if the teacher possesses good attitude to teaching, high values for the profession, and perceives CPDs as relevant means for enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in his/her service delivery (Uarije, Daniels, Kalondo, Amkongo, Damases-Kasi, & Nabasenja, 2017). Positive attitude triggers determination, persistence and grit to learn to unlearn to learn all of which hinges on the tenets of self-regulation.

Self-regulation: concept and theory

Self-regulation is a term derived from the word *regulate*, which means – control or maintain the rate or speed of something so that it operates properly. Its synonyms include self-acting, self-moving, self-activating. Self-regulation is complex and multifaceted.

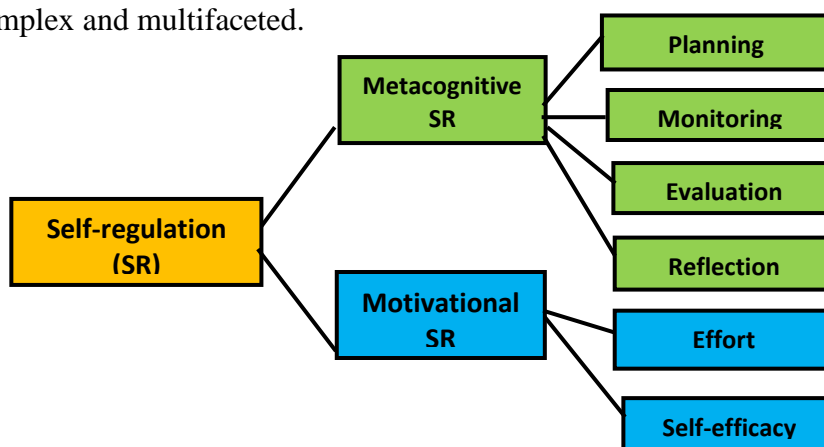


Fig. 2: Self-Regulation Theory (Zimmerman, 2006)

Self-regulation is extent to which individuals are more meta-cognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally proactive participants in their own

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learning (Zimmerman, 2006). Figure 2 above reveals that self-regulation consists of meta-cognitive and motivation aspect. While meta-cognitive aspect involves planning, monitoring, evaluation and reflection on learning issues, the motivational aspect involves salient effort and self-efficacy status to achieve the desired change/improvement. Self-Regulation Theory (SRT), therefore, is a system of conscious personal management that involves the process of guiding one's own thoughts, behaviours and feelings to reach goals (Carter; Kofle; Forster; & McCullough, 2015). Self-regulation consists of several stages individuals must function as contributors to their own motivation, behaviour and development within a network of reciprocally interacting influences.

SRT pertains to goal attainment and motivation, which can be applied to our everyday life. We can plan, evaluate our actions and refrain from doing things we will regret. Research shows that self-regulation is a strength necessary for emotional well-being. The self-regulated learning is the process of taking control and evaluating one's own learning and behaviour. This emphasizes control by the individual who monitors, directs and regulates actions toward goals of information. People who have poor self-regulatory skills do not succeed in relationships or cannot hold jobs. In other words, intellectual capability or educational certificate can earn you a job, self-regulation will keep you growing in the job.

Components and Process of Self-Regulation

In goal attainment, self-regulation is generally described by *Baumeister; Vohs; & Tice* (2007) in these four components:

- Standards: of desirable behaviour.
- Motivation: to meet standards.
- Monitoring: of situations and thoughts that precede breaking standards.
- Willpower: internal strength to control urges

Closely related to the components is the work of Albert Bandura, whose work brought together behavioral and cognitive components in which he concluded that "humans are able to control their behaviour through a process known as self-regulation." This led to the known process that contains self-observation, judgment and self-response. Self-observation (also known as introspection) is a process involving assessing one's own thoughts and feelings in order to inform and motivate the individual to work towards goal setting and become

influenced by behavioral changes. Judgment involves an individual comparing his/her performance to their personal or created standards. Lastly, self-response is applied, in which an individual may reward or punish him/herself for success or failure in meeting standard(s). This process is summarized and graphically represented in Fig 3 and reiterated in Fig. 4.

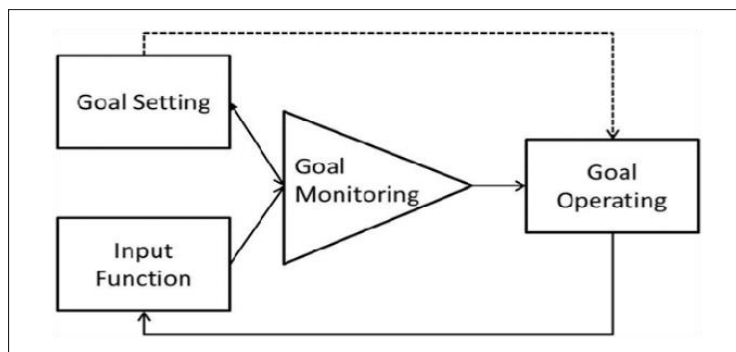


Fig. 3: Self-regulation process

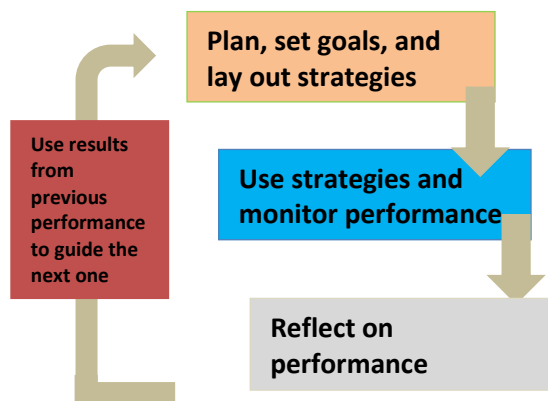


Fig. 4: The Cycle of Self-Regulated Learning

CPD reflects the adult learning principles of autonomy, self-directed, goal orientated, and practice-based learning. There are four main stages in the CPD

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learning process: review, plan, implement, and evaluate and reflect. The first stage of review involves a self-directed assessment of individual knowledge, skills, and performance in the context of a specific profession, such as radiography (Sichone, Chigunta, Kalungia, Nankonde, & Banda, 2020). The practitioner should put in mind the current and future practices when undertaking the self-assessment. The second stage of planning includes identifying individual learning needs, the outcome to achieve, and the learning activities to help achieve the outcome. The third stage of implementation entails acting to achieve the identified learning activities. The final stage involves evaluating and reflecting on the impact the learning activity has made to improve the quality of service delivery.

Self-regulation in CPTD

As earlier shown in Fig. 1, Teacher Education is one-off event because teachers, like other professionals, need to stay informed about new knowledge and technologies. Teacher Education should be continuous through self-realization of felt needs, self-determination/grit, and readiness to embrace change – embrace technology, eradicate all forms of digital divide in classroom.

Teacher professional development is a progressive activity and must be prioritized by all who are involved. It is one form through which quality teaching and learning can be realized as educators improve on their knowledge and skills to keep up-to-date with the global trends. 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. The main ideas are to encourage teachers to become better at their jobs and to encourage school communities to become better sites for 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.

Successful CPTD anchors on teacher self-regulation through self-assessment, self-propelling, self-directed learning and life-long learning. Self-regulation, therefore, drives the teacher to take decision to constantly improve his knowledge and skill for better teaching and learning. Such a teacher surmounts

the challenges, invests his time and resources to remain competitively relevant at all times. Self-regulated teacher understands that as people acquire knowledge, their attitudes change; changes in attitude lead to positive changes in their practices and higher productivity.

Implications for national progress

A nation is a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture or language, inhabiting a particular territory. Nigeria is a nation at east we are united by history and live in a geographical location – West Africa. The word progress is development towards an improved or more advanced condition. Its antonym is regress while synonym is advancement – development in a positive way.

Nigeria is a nation blessed with abundance of human and non-human natural resources yet, one of poorest, most corrupt, crime-infested, insecurity saturated, unemployment, unemployable over-population of graduates, poor-thinking class, over-dependent independent nation, etc. Obviously, Nigeria deserves progress not just in socio-economic but an all-round progress. It requires sustainable development, attainment of global benchmark, increased global visibility, high ranking educational institutions, meeting global competitiveness, etc. These are generally achieved through quality education which produces quality graduates - workforce of international standards, innovative/creative proactive, higher cognitive thinking community, problem solvers, wealth creators, job creators/job sustainers, producers not just consumers, exporters not just importers – a self-reliant nation.

Achievement of these and many more goals is tied to the apron of quality-conscious teachers who are self-regulated for continuous improvement. ‘*Years of experience refers to years of improvement*’; that means, 20years of experience stands for 20years of improvement. Every teacher breeds its kind; an up-to-date teacher produces up-to-date graduates. Such trendy teachers are well-informed, abreast of current functional techniques, processes, strategies, skills and ideas in their fields. These teachers not only hand down to their students, updated knowledge and skills, but also, self-regulation to agitate and go for regular improvement in their jobs. This is the basis for sustainable development which every functional individual and society must desire.

Conclusion

Teacher Self-Regulation in Continuous Professional Development for National Progress

This paper has been an attempt to redirect the attention of educators and all stakeholders to the need for continuous professional teacher development rather than just the usual one-off Teacher Education. It stresses that teacher self-regulation is a key to harnessing the numerous potentials of continuous professional development. It believes that continuous professional development of teachers producing updated workforce would invariably liberate Nigeria from her present sordid state of regression into an enviable state of progressiveness.

Way Forward

To ensure self-regulation for effective CPTD, the following suggestions are imperative -

- i. There is need for a module or compulsory advocacy that focuses on CPTD for Teacher Education; assist in emphasizing the value of professional development from the initial process of training and the need for continuity throughout the teaching career. Trainee-teachers at all levels – colleges of education, institutes of education, faculties of education, etc. should be taught that teacher preparation is not a one-off event, rather it continues for life.
- ii. Improve working conditions to attract and retain higher population of quality teachers.
- iii. Ensure strong professionalism through enhanced ethics and conducts guiding teaching profession to boost teachers' morale and image in the society.
- iv. Create time for teachers to embark on CPD by reinstating sabbatical leave, study leave with pay, leave of absence, inter-school teacher exchange, etc.
- v. Teachers should be meant to understand that *years of experience* is means *years of improvement*, and finishing well matters a lot; well-planned advocacy and special incentives among the long service teachers can help.
- vi. Government and administrators of educational institutions should prioritize CPTD through proper funding and other motivational packages.
- vii. Every form of societal restiveness should be curtailed and possibly eradicated to ensure safety of lives and properties.

- viii. ICT has come to stay, therefore, every in-service and intending teacher should make concerted effort to shun any form of technophobia, and boldly embrace ICT for successful migration into the digital space.
- ix. Positive attitude overcomes challenges and enhances output. Teachers at all levels should always apply self-regulation to their profession, view it from positive angles, and be happy with their job. Someone once said, and I concur that –

*When you're happy teaching, you become a good teacher,
and then, every other good thing is added unto you!*

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