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## **Professional Development Through Self-Reflection**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The teacher is the backbone of the educational system, the maker of the mankind and the architect of the society. The most important factor in educational reconstruction is the teacher's regularly examination of his/her personnel qualities, educational qualifications, professional training and the place occupies in the institute as well as in the community. The teachers are the principal agency for implementing educational programs at various levels. They play a pivotal role in our effort to relate education to national development and social change. In a profession as challenging as teaching, honest self-reflection is key for the professional development.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Reflection is definitely a vital skill as it can be considered to be a key to teacher development. In fact, Cunningham (2001) reported that reflective practice draws upon the input of other learners and is collective by nature, which creates a basis for partnerships in learning in the classroom. It can be either intuitive or systematic and organized, it enables teachers to become aware of their weak and strong points. Absence of such awareness would make a growth of the teacher impossible. However, to reflect does not mean just to realize what the strengths and weaknesses are, it should involve analysis of a searched area and a plan of subsequent actions (Christodoulou, 2010). The process of reflection feeds a constructive spiral of professional development and competence (Pollard and Tann, 1993).

Professional development is a process of developing one's knowledge, skills and competencies required in a profession so as to meet the contemporary and future demands of that particular profession. It is more important in teaching profession, because preparation of future generations depends on the functioning of teachers. Professional development is a dynamic process. One has to put deliberate and continuous efforts to grow professionally. Otherwise he will be lagging behind in the maintenance of expected standards of their respective profession. The Mudaliar Commission Report Stated, "We are convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated education reconstruction is the teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place that he occupies in the society."

Many of the teachers show indifference towards professional development. They are satisfied with what they have learnt before coming in the profession. They forget the fact that learning is a continuing process. Efforts are made by the government agencies to provide in-service refresher courses to facilitate professional development of the teachers. But many of the participants attend these programs halfheartedly. Only a few participants attend such programs with full attention and grow professionally. So the purpose of conducting such programs is not met adequately. This shows until and unless a teacher intensely feels to become an effective teacher no program gives effective results.

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### **NEED OF SELF-REFLECTION**

It is self-reflection that integrates intellectual and emotional human development and provides meaning and purpose in learning and academic and professional pursuit. This connection allows people to maintain vigor in learning and keeps students motivated and responsible for their own learning (Chuprina, L. & Zaher, L.; n.d.). A teacher may try to escape the external supervision of the head of the institution and inspecting authorities by a number of ways. But he/she cannot escape the supervision of his/her conscience. So some queries can be considered for self-reflection, which will enhance the process of professional development of teachers at all levels. It is expected that these queries will ignite the individual selves to ponder over the issue of professional development.

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### **Attitude to accept major responsibilities**

A gap exists between the desired role and actual role of the teachers. A teacher is expected to be an important and responsible member of the functional groups that are directly involved in the teaching process. He must possess knowledge of consultancy services and participates in professional activities outside the institute. But it is sorry to say that teachers are not involving themselves in all these activities. Teachers are very less interested in involving themselves in paper setting moderation and examination of scripts. They have lesser approach for work in inter-disciplinary field and are less interested to imbibe students for social justice. Thus we must not ignore the increasing gap between the desired role and the actual role of the teachers. As the issues like assessment and accreditation, institutional improvement, institutional efficiency, etc., have come in fore front, it is of utmost importance to understand the teachers' contribution to all this. This indicates that some efforts should be taken to bridge the gap. The best way is to do an appraisal of the performance of the teachers against the background of his description. Do we have requisite knowledge of the subject?

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### **Proper balance in private affairs and professional duties**

A teacher is a common social being facing joys and sorrows, problems and responsibilities of life. Some time he may be suffering from some family problem, health problem or any other social problem. In such situation he must be able to control his emotions in his professional life. The problems which a teacher faces should not affect his professional preparation and class room teaching. The teachers have to think that they possess easy balance between their personal affairs and professional duties; their personal problems are not interfering with their profession.

### **Life-long education**

Continuing education is that indicator on the basis of which teachers gain popularity and do justice to their profession. Codes of conduct or professional ethics for teachers have been enumerated by registered teachers societies or ministries of education in many countries. The international journals having articles full of committed professionalism of other countries can help the teachers in their professional development with the help of e learning. Continuing education is the main indicator of professional development and to scrutinize teachers.

### **Social interaction**

The changing global scenario demands promotion of alliance with society in order to achieve the goals of education. The teacher is the pivot around which the process of education revolves, so he should develop relevant programs after consulting the professionals from society. There is need to reduce isolation not only at academic level but also at social interaction level. A dynamic teacher should maintain good relations with stakeholders taking their opinions in needy hours i.e. deciding about the important aspects of educational process. It may help the teacher in reducing the burden in the time of tension.

### **Professional up gradation**

Expansion of knowledge in the fields of science and technology is taking place at a very rapid pace in contemporary times. Each day new facts, new theories, new methodologies, new devices and new models are being discovered. This has created a lag in the knowledge and skills among those who are engaged in science and technology based professions. The knowledge gained by them before entering into the job becomes obsolete after a few years in the service. New developments, techniques and knowledge evolve in short period of time, so a person not formed bonds with continuing education, becomes roughly half as competent to that job for which his initial training was intended.

### **Knowledge of ICT**

There are typically two approaches towards ICT's in education. Many teachers are techno phobic, and being unaware about the use of modern technology, they are unable to integrate technology into their teaching and research activities. On the other hand some are propagated by technology vendors and push everything towards technology. Now there is need for a teacher to introspect himself to adopt a balanced approach between the two extremes and examine the areas where education faces challenges that can be suitably and effectively responded to by the ICT's. New technologies, not only ICT, should be used as much as possible to reduce cost, enable more effective use of resources and provide wider exposure to students. A web-based portal should be created by the teachers to exchange ideas information and experiences. It is the duty of a teacher to transform traditional classroom to the modern one. The transformation will be possible, if among other actions that are taken, there is fundamental shift in the way the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching learning process is self-introspected

## Professional Ethics

Professional ethics refers to the basic values and conceptions of good practice that guidelines for professional conduct. The behavior of students is molded by the teacher and teacher's behavior by professional ethics. Professional ethics emphasize the teachers to follow pre-established norms in his thought and in actions. If the professional ethics are forgotten the individual as well as society starts moving in the wrong way direction. The work culture is strengthened where the professionals act and interact personally in an ethical manner. Professional ethics includes the people, infrastructure, working conditions and working hours. The National Policy on Education (1986) has suggested that national level associations of teachers could prepare a code of professional ethics for teachers and see to its observance. The professional ideals are listed in five major areas, namely, teacher's moral duties and responsibilities towards their students in and outside the school ;their interpersonal relationships ;their working style and behavior with the authorities for the betterment of the institutions ;their behavior with the parents, guardians and the public keeping in view the dignity of the profession ;and their commitment to strengthen moral and intellectual life of the community\society and the nation. A teacher must introspect whether he is practicing these codes of ethics or not. He must not spend most of his time in leisure activities. He must appreciate the colleagues practicing professional ethics and should not indulge in political malpractices. Only practicing ethics can make him effective, respectable and socially acceptable.

## Teacher's Attitude

Attitude can be defined as an organization of beliefs, habits, and motives associated with a particular object. It involves a tendency to behave in a certain way in situations which involve something, whether person, idea or object. A teacher can bring the desirable changes in the students only if he has positive attitude towards his profession. The establishment of good relationship between teacher and class is vitally important and determines whether the process of learning is going to be a cooperative effort or an uneasy alliance. The teachers should have favorable attitude for discharging their duties and responsibilities successfully. Favorable attitudes of the teachers towards teaching profession also help students to learn and shape their minds (Basak & Ghosh; 2021).

## Leadership Behavior

Today education is seen as a series of teaching, thinking, learning experiences. Which serves to change student's behavior in a specified desired manner? From the earliest times teachers have had a hazardous and onerous task to perform, to mould the buddy, mind and soul. A teacher has to introspect himself whether he is creating a safe environment to develop risk-taking behavior in his students. He should help his students to learn how to think on their own then telling them what to think. To impact proper leadership, he should be aware of the latest innovations, researches and experiences in the field of education.

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## CONCLUSION

In this era of knowledge society a teacher would not able to prove his work without professional development. So the teacher should engage himself in self introspection and no doubt, after self-introspecting a teacher should develop qualities of a good teacher: motivation, concern for students, moral courage with character, commitment to profession, freshness in knowledge free from obsolescence and become a role model. He should have close bonds with continuing education and research. But the sorry state of Indian teachers is, they are victims of resource crunch and they do not avail needed facilities for professional development. Sometimes institutions, administrators and managements act as anchors. To avail chances of professional development in such institutions is in the hands of teachers themselves only.

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