



The Effects of Continuous Professional Development for Teachers in UAE

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims at finding The Effects of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Teachers in UAE. The present study was conducted on Middle and Senior Secondary CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education, India). The data was collected from 25 teachers from Abu Dhabi. Six different classes were observed before and after the CPD sessions. Each class consisted of 30 students, each from different backgrounds. Pre-survey and post-survey were conducted on the pedagogy of teaching. Stages of the Teaching and Training cycle were used to assess progress. The results showed that there is an effect of CPD on Lesson planning and active learning strategies.

Keywords: Continuous Professional Development; Pedagogy; Teaching and Training Cycle; Active Learning Strategies; Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Background

The transformation of the education field has highly benefited from modern technological developments, changing social needs, and the desire for a globalized world, (Sancho, 2006). Governments have been insisting on conducting CPD sessions for teachers for improving the quality of teaching, (Guskey, 2000). Consequently, the conventional way of teaching has now transcended into a method fully focused on the students, where analytical skills, creativity, communication, and compromise are integrated. For this turning point, effective teaching tools and strategies must be introduced to prepare today's students for the future. Globalization on the other hand has created a paradigm in teaching and learning (OECD, 2014). Gone are the days when a pen and chalkboard would suffice; the dynamics of a classroom and who learns from it have changed.

After the COVID-19 global pandemic, new methods of teaching and learning were introduced. Now we have not only embedded technology in our classrooms but also active learning components so that all students are not disadvantaged within the educational system. Innocent children who are facing hardships deserve a valuable education. This is why the phrase “differentiated learning” is so in vogue now; “one size fits” doesn't really apply anymore (Pantic & Wubbels, 2012). Studies by Hargreaves (1994), Marzano (2003), Yoon et al. (2007), Hattie (2009), Popova et al. (2018) has confirmed the importance of teachers on students' achievement.

Thus, it has turned out to be a necessity for individuals to gain the required education to become teachers. Such CPD programs enable teachers to stay informed of upcoming trends in education, so they never get left behind. New skill acquisition and knowledge enhancement is the goal of these programs. It is essential that students working towards being professionals undergo extensive learning to remain relevant in a constantly shifting world.

Problem Statement

Women With the rapid shift towards student-centered teaching approaches and the integration of technology in education, there is a growing need for educators to continuously enhance their lesson planning and teaching strategies Smith, J.D. (2023). However, many teachers, especially in middle and senior secondary CBSE schools, may lack the necessary skills to effectively engage diverse learners using active learning strategies. (NCERT, 2020; Singh & Sharma, 2019.) This study investigates how Continuous Professional Development (CPD) influences teachers' ability to plan lessons and adopt active learning strategies, addressing challenges related to differentiated instruction and 21st-century skill development. Hence the present study is stated as, “The Effects of Continuous Professional Development for teachers in UAE.

The general objective of this study is to investigate the effects of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for school teachers in UAE. The government of UAE has launched a massive teacher training involving 1583 trainers and 25000 teachers (MoE UAE, 2018a). It's not just in planning good lessons but also in the impact it has on the teaching process and achieving outcomes.

Literature Review

Continuous Professional Development and Its Need in the Present Time

CPD sessions are significant in the present times as they influence teachers' skills, confidence, teaching practices etc. Below are a few key findings from recent research.

1. Improving Teaching Quality and Student Outcome- Studies indicate that CPD focused on practical teaching strategies, such as mentoring or collaborative learning, has measurable benefits, including narrowing achievement gaps and improving overall classroom effectiveness. (Webology, 2022)

2. Teacher Retention and Motivation: CPD programs help improve motivation in teachers as it increases a sense of professional growth which often translates into better career commitment.

These findings suggest that well-designed CPD sessions that involve teacher input and address specific pedagogical challenges can greatly enhance both teacher performance and student achievement (Ahmed 63).

This research is based on several factors which were researched by famous educationists like Badri et al. (2016), Nkolika (2023), Petar N. V. (2024), Abakah (2022). Ucan (2016).

The theory focuses mainly on the 21st-century Skill Framework. The 21st-Century Skills Framework identifies the essential skills and competencies needed to thrive in today's complex and rapidly changing world. It includes skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, digital literacy, and adaptability. The research can align with this framework by examining how the combination of effective lesson plans, active learning strategies, and mindful assessments contributes to the development of these skills in learners.

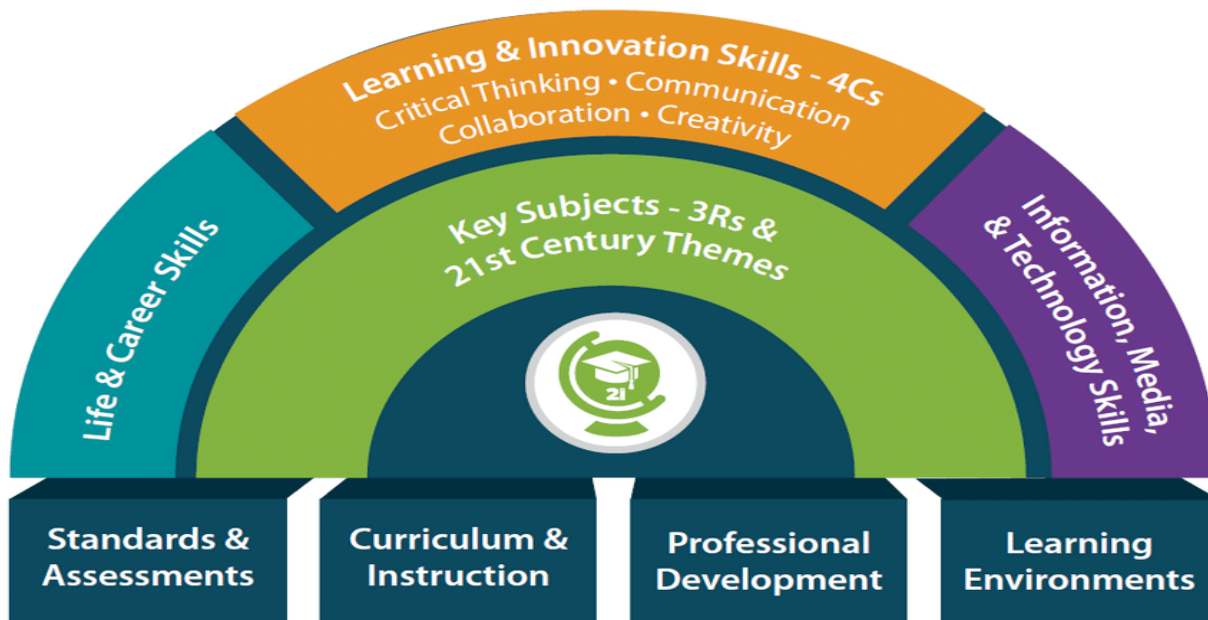


Fig 1. 21st Century Skills Framework

KOLB'S LEARNING CYCLE

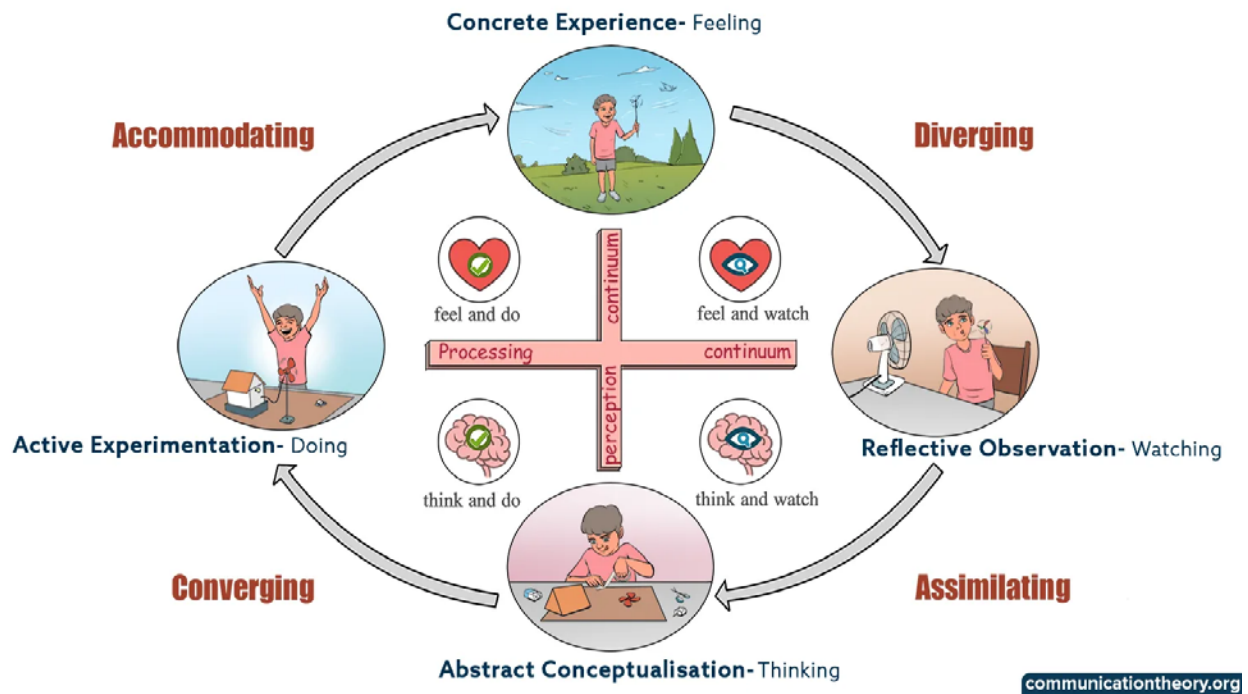


Fig 2. Kolb's Learning Cycle

Experienced trainers should conduct CPDs keeping in mind these theories and give training to the teachers for the betterment of the teacher and their students.

Conceptual Framework

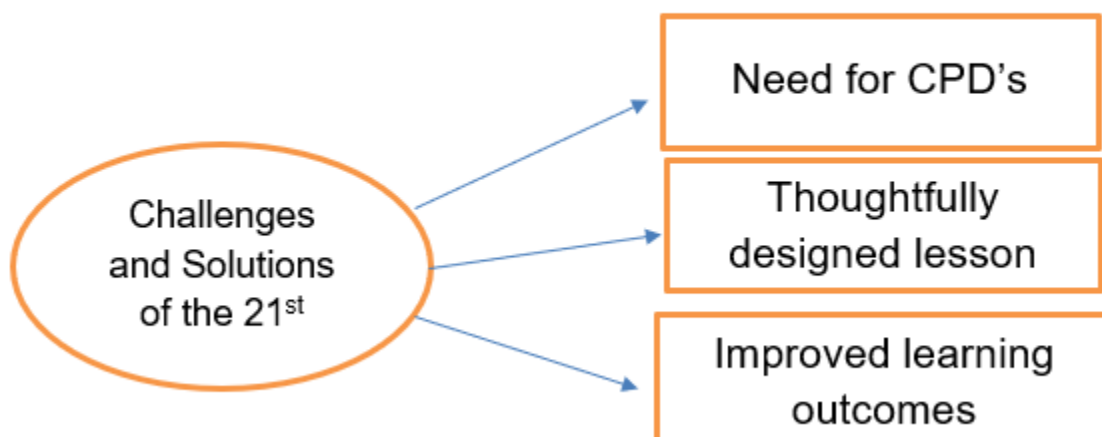


Fig 3. – Conceptual Framework

Research Objective

1. To investigate the relationship between CPD and teachers' knowledge, skills and practices and its impact on student achievement.

2. To critically analyze the problems faced by teachers in planning a lesson for the 21st-century learner.
3. To find possible ways in which the teaching and learning process is augmented for the benefit of both the teachers and students after the CPD session.

Methods

Design

Data from teachers from middle and secondary level were acquired through a questionnaire. The quantitative data was acquired from teachers, senior level functionaries, and data was collected from the Academic Supervisors on the said topic. Hence the study is a kind of mixed method research approach to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. Samples from 25 teachers, 4 supervisors, and 2 principals were taken for the study. A questionnaire was prepared by the researcher to collect data from teachers. An interview was scheduled with the principals and academic supervisors. Both the questionnaire and interview schedule are validated through expert opinion.

Process

The research is divided into 3 phases. It is conducted for middle school and senior secondary teachers. The teachers participating in this research are between the ages of 35 to 50. The teachers in the study are experienced and have taught in both student-centred and traditional classrooms. The lesson plan used is in the style of the United Arab Emirates recommended by the Abu Dhabi Department of Educational and Knowledge (ADEK). Students of grades 6 to 12 are observed for the case study. The age of the students varies from 12 to 18 years of age.

After acquiring permission from the administration of Abu Dhabi Indian School, BR 1, the research was conducted. Under the able guidance of the CPD leader of the school, the research commenced. The investigation consists of 3 phases.

Results & Discussion

Introduction stage - Phase One:

In the first phase, a review was conducted among the teachers teaching middle school. With the change in the learning styles and methodology, the teachers needed help to change to a student-centered classroom and activity-based learning. In the first half of the experiment, the teachers were asked about the challenges they faced with the ever-changing education trends. Some of the challenges that were highlighted were as follows,

1. How to plan a lesson?
2. What are differentiated activities?
3. Why should there be a change from the traditional method of teaching?
4. Is it possible to change to student-centered teaching, especially using the Central Board of Education (CBSE) curriculum?
5. How have the students been performing so far?

The CPD session was conducted via ZOOM. After all these questions, the challenges were ubiquitous. The teachers, although experienced had little to no idea about the student-centered method of teaching. Despite the mandatory 50 hours of CPD sessions for teachers as per the National Education Policy 2020, there were still obscure areas. The need for the instructors to change with time, “since there is always room for sharpening the skills or some didactic issues to solve” (Fenici, 2021).

Immediately after the questionnaire, the session continued with answering the questions and finding practical solutions to the same.

Learning Stage - Phase Two:

In phase two a CPD session consisting of strategies, and methodologies was introduced and briefed on with examples of an ideal Lesson Plan with active learning strategies. For this study, the subject of English was used. A change was made by the school CPD Leader to the Lesson Plan as student-centered learning was recommended both by the UAE government and the CBSE, and a mandatory change had to take place.

Implementation stage - Phase Three:

After a comprehensive session, the teachers were asked to implement the methodologies and strategies in class. Close monitoring was done on 25 teachers from middle and senior secondary. 5 teachers were chosen among them for further study with different models of lesson plans. The teachers in the study were guided on the Lesson planning and on using coherent activities that align with the lesson objective as learnt in the CPD session.

Conclusion

In conclusion, CPD sessions are of monumental importance for the development of teaching and learning and has a huge impact of the outcome and achievability. Planning the lessons effectively and executing them as per the lesson plan helped 100% of all the teachers. The activities and learning strategies had a monumental effect on the outcome achieved. Most of the students were able to achieve the outcome. The few who did not achieve the outcome had learning disabilities like retention problems, auditory issues and mild autism. Hence in an ever-evolving educational landscape, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions play a pivotal role in empowering teachers to meet the diverse and dynamic needs of their students. These sessions not only enhance subject knowledge and pedagogical skills but also promote reflective practice, innovation, and adaptability in the classroom. By staying current with emerging educational trends and technologies, teachers can foster more engaging, inclusive, and effective learning environments. Ultimately, investing in CPD is an investment in the quality of education itself, ensuring that educators remain inspired, informed, and equipped to shape future-ready learners.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate: Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Their involvement was entirely voluntary, and strict confidentiality of their responses was maintained throughout the study.

Conflicts of Interest: Not Applicable.

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