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## Investigating the Role of Professional Development Interventions in the Development of Teaching Skills Among Primary School Teachers of District Swat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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### Key Words

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**Abstract:** Primary education is the foundation for future education of children and teachers at this level are faced with the challenging task of shaping the potentials of young children in the right direction for creating the sound foundations of their future education. Hence, these teachers need to be much more dynamic and competent for fulfilling their uphill task. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the role of professional development interventions in the development of teaching skills among primary school teachers of district Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The objectives of the study were to; find out professional development interventions arranged for the teaching skills development of primary school teachers and investigate the role of professional development interventions in the development of teaching skills among primary school teachers. The population of the study was 2173 primary school teachers of District Swat. A sample of 348 participants was randomly selected for the study. A Likert scale questionnaire was developed, validated and pilot tested for data collection. The data were collected through self-administered questionnaire and analyzed with frequencies, percentages and chi square test of significance. The study found out the professional development interventions of the British Council Training for Teaching Skills of Teachers, Induction Training for newly recruited Teachers and CPD trainings for the development of teaching skills among primary school teachers and demonstrated the development in the skills of pedagogy, content, classroom management skills, communication skills, use of ICTs and assessment skills and practices among primary school teachers. The study further recommended the arrangement of need analysis, use of standard criteria and collaboration of stake holders for the professional development interventions of teachers.

## Introduction

Professional Development (PD) trainings is a planned, continuous and long lasting process by which teachers can be developed personally and professionally, by enhancing their qualities, improving their knowledge, skills and classroom practices (Padwad, Amol, Dexit, Krishna, 2011). PD is considered as a major factor of elements required for the advancement of the quality and professional growth of a teacher. Teachers not enter as finished products in the class hence, the need for their continuing professional

development always there. Its means, pre-service training does not equip educators with all the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise they need to effectively performed their classroom practices.

Keeping in view the importance of PD, nearly all educational policies of Pakistan focused on its provision for the teachers working in educational field for the purpose to keep them abreast for latest developments in

the field of education. The NEP (2009), emphasizes standardized in-service teachers' training, separate professional trained teachers' supervisors shall be developed. The policy focused to provide in-service training which cover at large angles the pedagogy and major subjects' knowledge, testing and evaluation practices, various level teaching, monitoring and trainings on emerging needs like training in language and Information Communication Technology (ICT).

The PD cascading model was proposed and used for trainings, workshops and refresher courses for the capacity building and professional development of the teachers (e.g., Ahmad, Shaheen, & Hussain, 2022; Gouleta, 2015). Using cascade model teachers are trained in groups, a first phase\group of teachers are trained in a targeted subject area and they become second group\phase trainers after being qualified or adequate as trainers in that particular subject (Hayes, 2000). This process is repeated for another and another group. Typically any training repetition is called phase of the cascading process. Cascade model is a top-down approach to training implementation, sometime known as a means of transmitting or disseminating information within an institution deploying informal learning activities (Jacobs & Russ-Eft, 2001; Jacobs, 2002). It is important to provide an effective means to support, improve and attract teachers in order to create a better learning condition for pupils and also positive working environment for teachers (Evers, Heijden, & Kreijns, 2016). To fulfill the gaps in the skill sets of newly recruited teachers and developing the expertise of existing teacher's continuous professional development is vital (Evers et al., 2016).

Recognizing the importance of teachers' professional development, the Elementary & Secondary Education department (E&SED) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, through Provincial Institute of Teachers Education (PITE) initiated to scale up its Professional Development for the provision of skills and strategies to the teachers working in the public sector schools (Urdu Point\Pakistan Point News-15th March,2018). Teachers are the major players in the process of education and their

professional development is a key for school improvement and quality of the teaching, learning process. It will useful not only for teachers, but for students, school administrators, parents, families and colleagues. Thus it can be considered as both an individual and social obligation. The present study of professional development training program adds more strength to these trainings by identifying the strength and weaknesses by recording primary schools' teachers' opinions and their suggestions for program improvement. The study attempts to provide the clear picture of the challenges and opportunities for teachers, trainers, students and educational officials in translating the intended values of curriculum into training. To provide and strengthen opportunities for individual teacher to meet their professionalism needs. It ultimately benefits schools, students as well as the whole educational system.

## **Literature Review**

Professional development or growth of teachers in general includes trainings given to teachers before entering the service (pre-service) and during the service throughout the career but when we talk about Professional Development of teachers, we refer primarily to the in-service teachers training programs (teacher education) held for working teachers only. Hence while the goal of professional Development is common to both in-service and pre- service programs. In-service teachers training or INSET is more like a process and Continues Professional Development is more like a product (Tewari, 2016). Professional Development trainings is a planned, continuous and long lasting process by which teachers can be developed personally and professionally, by enhancing their qualities, improving their knowledge, skills and classroom practices (Padwad, Amol, Dexit & Krishna, 2011).

Professional development is a combination of factors required for the advancement of the quality and professional growth of a teacher. Teachers not enter as finished products in the class hence, the need for their continuing professional development always there. Its means, pre-service training does not equip educators with all the necessary

skills, knowledge and expertise they need to effectively performed their classroom practices. Teacher's professional growth is generally defined as activities such as workshops, seminars and refresher courses which aim to trained teachers through in-service training program (Odabasi & Kabakci, 2007).

In more effective way, professional development consists of procedures and activities that are designed for the enhancement of professional expertise, recognitions, executive and attitudes of teachers to improve the learning of their students and as a result their academic achievements. PD is considered an important tool to enhance the knowledge and expertise of professional teachers. PD for primary teachers is indispensable to prepare teachers to adapt with the changing demands of the current educational systems, their school settings and locale and to their unique set of pupils. PD is as essential as in-service models to introduce and remind teachers of previous theories, techniques and activities as well as introduces new ones. PD programs for primary teachers have been globally used to ensure teachers employ best possible teaching and learning approaches and practices in their classes. Different countries have adopted new learning mechanisms across the world to upgrade teachers' knowledge and professional skills.

Teachers primarily need to have hold on the pedagogical skills and subject knowledge that would make teachers to help student's creative thinking and do away with misapprehension (Darling Hammond, 2008). Also she explains that teacher awareness about student's previous knowledge about a particular topic is necessary and to judge their individual students strengths and defects. Teacher should to motivate students by using various teaching techniques and assessment practices. Darling – Hammond also explained that teachers should have a good expertise in subject matter and in delivering that subject knowledge; to collaborate with peers and others and think about on his/her own activities.

In-service education is designed for the workforce development of the school system

and the educational enterprise. For the effective performance of teacher's functions, it becomes imperative to train them in new skills and modern methodology. The higher the level of educational attainment by teachers needs high level educational standard in the country. Professional development (PD) and trainings are sometime use interchangeably whereas the difference between the two is significant. PD is long –term providing support for teachers and in turn to students and includes trainings, ongoing workshops, and follow up sessions, observations and evaluations to improve their practice as teachers.

Generally, teachers are supposed as the focal point of educational growth. Therefore, in-service trainings are the activities and courses in which a teacher already on job may take part to increase their professional skills, knowledge and interest, in relation to initial training. In this case, in-service trainings are designed in such a way to cover the weak areas of professional inadequacies of on the job teachers. . As Fisher (2009) notices that the skill appropriate in past might no longer suitable to prepare students for the world beyond school.

For doing whole range of different jobs effectively teacher's trainings is almost crucial: making teachers able to boost performance of student; to act as role models; to help transform education effectively and raise it society; to develop confidence and creativity. ). Normally Professional development take place in formal settings, such as trainings, teaching research groups, and guidance programs (Timperley, 2011).Also through informal setting teachers can developed professionally as peer teaching, participant-based planning, and coaching collaboration of colleagues (Little, 2012). Planned training workshops widen the understanding of educational problems. The development of their professional competence ceaselessly is the moral responsibility of any teacher. It was suggested that in-service trainings program must be commenced during vacation each year to refresh teacher's abilities and enable them to perform their functions and duties more efficiently. Harris and Sass (2011) examined the effects of different kinds of continuing education and trainings on the

performance of teachers to improve student learning outcomes. They identified that primary and middle school teachers' performance graph reached to peak with in-service trainings. But they saw no positive impact of pre-service teacher's trainings on teacher's performance. They further explain that there is no proper linkage between pre-service trainings and teacher's effectiveness. In-service teacher trainings, which are mainly used to improve teacher quality and student learning outcomes, also act as an important agent in social development programs.

### Statement of the Problem

The professional development of teachers is a prerequisite for school improvement, educational change and overall achievement of students. The early phases of professional development interventions have been completed and in order to determine its role for the development of teaching skills among primary school teachers, the study aimed to investigate the role of professional development interventions in development of teaching skills among primary school teachers.

**Table 1.** Population and Sample of the Study

1	Population (N)	2173 PSTs	Total %
2.	Sample (n)	348 PSTs	16%

The researcher collected the data through self-developed questionnaire. The tool was developed from the literature review, validated with the expert opinions of the faculty members of the institute and the developed version was pilot tested with the collection of data from 30 respondents. These respondents were not included in the final analysis of data. The tool reliability was determined by applying Cronbach alpha and its level was .793. The tool was consistent for the data collection according to the criteria or scale set by Griffiee (2012) who recommended the level of  $\alpha = .70$  as a standard one for the data collection.

The data collections were made through

### Objectives of the Study

The study objectives were the following:

1. To find out professional development interventions arranged for the teaching skills development of primary school teachers.
2. Investigate the role of professional development interventions in the development of teaching skills among primary school teachers at primary level.

### Method and Procedure

Study is a descriptive survey research design that was quantitative in nature. The data were collected with a questionnaire.

All the female (2173) Primary school teachers from (08) training sessions of PD training sessions in District Swat was be the population of the study (Education department District Swat, 2020).

The researcher randomly selected (348) participants through simple random sampling by using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for the collection of data through questionnaires from the selected respondents.

self-administered questionnaires. The participants were informed about the purposes of research. They were taken in confidence about the confidentiality of their information.

The collected data were analyzed through the SPSS using frequencies, and percentages and applied the Chi-square test of significance.

### Results

The data analysis of brought following findings to light with respect to the objectives of the study: The collected data after the analysis the findings were listed below the each objectives of the study:



**Table 2.** Professional Development Interventions for Primary School Teachers

Trainings	Responses		Chi-value	P-value
	Total = 348 (100%)			
	Yes (%)	No (%)		
British Council Training for Teaching Skills	144 (41.4)	204 (58.6)	10.345	.001
Induction Training for Newly Recruited Teachers	62 (17.8)	286(82.2)	144.18	.000
Continuous Professional Development for Teachers	343 (98.6)	5 (1.4)	328.28	.000
Others	75 (21.6)	273 (78.4)	11.12	.000

a- df= 1 Chi-square Table value= 3.841

About the professional development interventions of the respondents; 41.4 % respondents got the British Council Training for Teaching Skills of teachers, 17.8% received Induction Training for Newly recruited teachers, 98.6% participated in the Continuous Professional Development Training for teachers while 21.6% received other trainings in connection to the continuous professional development of teachers.

In connection to professional development interventions for teachers at primary level, the study revealed that the major interventions for professional development of teachers are the British Council Training for Teaching Skills of Teachers, Induction Training for Newly recruited Teachers and Continuous professional development training of teachers.

**Table 3.** The Role of Professional Development Interventions in the Development of Teaching Skills Among Primary School Teachers

Areas of CPD Trainings	Responses		Chi-value	P-value
	Total = 348 (100%)			
	Yes (%)	No (%)		
Pedagogy (Teaching Methodologies)	316(90.8)	32(9.2)	231.77	.000
Content Knowledge (Subjects)	339(97.4)	9 (2.6)	312.93	.000
Classroom Management	302(88.5)	40(11.5)	206.39	.000
Communication Skills	306(87.9)	42(12.1)	200.27	.000
Use of ICTs for Teaching	220(63.2)	128(36.8)	24.322	.000
Assessment Practices	331(95.4)	16(4.6)	285.95	.000
Others	70(20.1)	277(79.6)	355.70	.000

df= 1 Chi-square Table value= 3.841

In relation to the role of professional development interventions in the development of teaching skills among primary school teachers, table no. 3 highlights that 90.81% participants agree that Professional Development trainings improve their pedagogy or teaching methodology, 97.4% respondents view that the PDs improve their content knowledge, 88.5% view that the PDs improve their classroom management skills, 87.9% agree that the PDs help in improvement of their communication skills, 63.2% agreed that the PDs helped in showing them the importance and use of the ICTs for teaching, 95.4% viewed that

PDs assisted in the development of their assessment skills and practices for student evaluation while 79.6% agreed that PDs cover some other areas of classroom practices to improve students' learning.

The table demonstrates the role of professional development interventions in the development of the pedagogy or teaching methodology, improve content knowledge, classroom management skills, communication skills, use of the ICTs for teaching, assessment skills and practices for student evaluation.

## Discussion

In connection to professional development interventions for teachers at primary level, the study found out that the major interventions for professional development of teachers are the British Council Training for Teaching Skills of Teachers, Induction Training for Newly recruited Teachers and Continuous professional development training of teachers. The findings of the study are in line with the findings of the studies of Padwad, Amol, Dexit and Krishna (2011), Jacobs (2002), Evers et al. (2016) and Tewari (2016).

The findings of the study demonstrated the role of professional development interventions in the development of the pedagogy or teaching methodology, improve content knowledge, classroom management skills, communication skills, use of the ICTs for teaching, assessment skills and practices for student evaluation. The findings from the study are in conformity with the findings of Darling Hammond (2008), Fisher (2009), Timperley (2011) and Harris and Sass (2011) who identified the role of professional development interventions in the development of teaching skills among primary school teachers.

## Recommendations

Following recommendations or suggestions are made on the basis of research findings.

1. As the professional development has positive impacts on teaching skills of primary school teachers and over all development and professional growth. The same trainings may be arranged on regular basis for the development of teaching skills among the primary school teachers.
2. Pre-planning on the basis of need analysis may be made for professional development of teachers at the primary level with teachers' involvement in the planning of teachers training for making the trainings more effective and outcome based.
3. Standard criteria for the selection of master trainers in terms of qualification, training in their field (subject they teach) and high quality pedagogical skills may be

considered for recruitment of trainers in professional development.

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