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Issues and Challenges of Continuous Professional Development of Educators in the Colleges of Education in Ghana

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Abstract:

Teachers' Professional Development (CPD) plays an integral part in school effectiveness. Research on school effectiveness indicates that most of the factors that correlate with effective school outcomes have direct implications for teachers and indirect ones for teacher learning and Continuous Professional Development. The study gives overview of what teacher education and CPD are all about and the models involved in delivering CPD.

The study was geared towards conscientizing teachers in general of the need for continuous professional development in view of militating challenges. The study was also aimed at making institutions in which teachers work realize how imperative it is for the school to improve on the quality of education by providing avenues for their teachers to pursue higher theoretical and practical education to create a good balance in the knowledge they impart.

The study brought to view out the main challenges of tutors in their quest for professional development is finance. Again, it was realized that teaching at the Colleges of Education is highly dominated by males (72 males as against 18 females). Based on the findings, recommendations were made. The researcher recommended for better conditions of service in terms of allowances and leave arrangement. Also, it was recommended that more women be encouraged to take up teaching in higher institutions.

Keywords: *Continuous Professional Development (CPD), colleges of education, educators, issues, challenges*

1. Background to the Study

Teaching is a system of actions intended to induce learning. Teaching involves a cluster of activities beyond talking and chalking. The intention of every teacher is to educate or bring up his or her pupils to a standard (Farrell & Isaacs 1989). This means that, the ultimate purpose of teaching is to help the learner to learn, to improve on his or her standard of behaviour, mentally, physically and emotionally. For any teaching activity to be effective, it must evolve around three folds. Thus, the teacher, student and what is to be taught must be related. These three elements must harmoniously be related to produce the intention, which is learning.

The triadic concept of teaching presupposes that the teacher must understand the subject matter, and the subject matter to be taught must suite the interest and level of understanding of the students. The whole teaching process revolves around a central figure, which is the teacher. It is upon this premise that the teacher's training and knowledge base so far as the subject matter is concerned must be of paramount interest to the individual, the institution where he or she is employed and the nation as a whole. The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teacher has, since 1980s become an important subject in teacher education reform in the world (Ding, 2001). Increasingly, it is being realized that teaching is a specialized work and that teachers, as developing professionals should reach their maturity both in the context and level of their profession through lifelong learning and exploration. In addition to this realization are the changing role of the teacher in view of information, knowledge of society and the complicated nature of globalization. Traditionally, classroom has been about acquiring and applying knowledge, and the teacher's work is simply to disseminate knowledge to a younger generation and to prepare them for assessment and ultimately for employment in the society (Tang, 2001). The emergence of information and the search for knowledge has brought a change of mindset in learning. Hargreaves (2001) sees teachers caught in a triangle of competing interest and imperatives in the knowledge society as: catalysts, counterpoints and casualties. Teaching in view of today's knowledge society is technically more complex and wide ranging than teaching has ever been. With respect to the educator, the quantum of work coupled with consequences of globalization must help the teacher therefore becoming committed and continually engaging in upgrading, self-monitoring, reviewing their own professional learning (Day, 1999). This would mean participating in face-to-face and virtual professional learning networks (Lieberman & Wood, 2002), adopting continuous professional development portfolios in which teachers accumulate and renew their own professional learning, consulting and critically applying the evidence of educational research so that their practice is always informed by it (Hargreaves, 2001). The teacher must undertake action research, make inquiry of their own, and connecting professional learning with levels of reward in their pay (West, 2001).

It is apparent that if teachers are to win the confidence of their students and be seen as professionals in this knowledge society, they must commit themselves to a process of lifelong learning through CPD. To augment the need for CPD for all professionals of which the teacher is of no exception, there are a number of institutions which run advanced

programmes on sandwich as well as regular basis for teachers. Currently, the University of Cape Coast and University of Education, Winneba run programme in all educational related areas to whatever level one wants to get to. With changing trend in education in Ghana currently, all training colleges are in the process of being converted into tertiary institutions (Daily Graphic). This therefore means that the requirement level for teaching all subjects must also change. It therefore behooves the individual teacher to meet these changing needs. To augment the efforts of individual teachers in their quest to seek for further advancement, the Ghana Education Service revised its study leave scheme in 1998 based on a circular received directing all certificate 'A' teachers to obtain Diploma Certificate within a given time. For instance, within 2001/2002 academic year, the quota was pegged at 5000 thus encouraging more teachers to go for further studies (Ghana Education Service, 2005).

Again in 2007/2008 academic year, a top-up programme was organized by Ghana Education Service to bring teachers with Certificate 'A' to the Diploma status. Even though CPD is not mandatory for educators, Bolam and McMahon (2004), state four main reasons for teachers to undertake CPD as it could be a guide and motivating factor to all educators (i) to improve individual performance, (ii) to enhance their ability to meet changing needs, (iii) to train for new roles or promotion, (iv) and as preparation for management.

Notwithstanding these benefits of CPD, the concept is not without challenges. The study therefore seeks to uncover the numerous challenges educators encounter in their quest for continuous professional development.

2. Literature Review

In today's fast pace and rapidly changing world, teachers are faced with the awesome task of preparing pupils to function effectively in an ever more complex and demanding society. Curriculum development and daily lesson planning can become an almost overwhelming challenge as teachers attempt to give proper weight to advances in technology, global awareness, environmental consciousness and skills. Teacher training can be seen as the process of equipping an individual with the means to carry out the job of teaching. This is normally done by means of a course of training that presents the individual with a series of skills that meet the requirement of different aspects of teaching (Leat, 1999). In the specific field of language teaching, these would consist of skills and techniques to teach grammar, lexis, pronunciation, reading, writing, listening and speaking, plus the more general skills involved in the classroom management. For most part, it is fair to say that teacher training is a process that comes from "outside" - from a course and from a trainer or group of trainers. Teacher development on the other hand, comes from within the individual and requires a commitment from the individual to move forward in some way as a teacher (Keiny, 1994).

If Teacher Development comes from within the individual practitioner, how does this differ from the notion of Continuous Professional Development (CPD)? First and foremost, CPD is to do with the commitment of the organization where the individual is employed. CPD implies both the commitment of the individual and the commitment of the institution. It is in this vein that Day (1999:22), defined CPD as consisting of all-natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct and indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contributes, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the morale purpose of teaching and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people, and colleagues through its phase of their teaching lives. Teacher Development is Professional; Personal, and Social Development, Teaching and Teacher Education, 10, 5, pp 483-497.

Day (1999) outlines the end benefits of CPD thus the individual, school and subsequently contributing to the quality of education in the classroom. The book also categorically states the trend CPD should take. Hence it is a process alone and with others, teachers, review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents".

Gordon (2004) on his part prefers to use the term successful professional development for CPD and defines it as "a combination of experiences which empowers individual educators, educational terms and educational organizations to improve curriculum, instruction and student assessment in order to facilitate student growth and development"(p. 5). From the definition of Gordon, CPD is a tool for capacity building which seeks to empower the individual or group of educators of which social studies educators. The main elements of CPD according to Gordon are curriculum, instruction (teaching) and student assessment. The ultimate aim of CPD is to lead or promote growth and development. CPD can also be defined as a systemic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties to a suitable standard throughout a person's working life. It is therefore succinct that the basic philosophy behind CPD is a culture of continuous and lifelong self-directed learning. Essentially CPD is about learning by reflection and learning from that experience to improve on everyday performance. From the foregoing discussion, Teacher Development is more or less a voluntary activity but CPD is much more of a requirement for all employees of a given organization. The Chartered Institute of Professional Competence (U.S.A) sees CPD as something that must take place throughout a person's working life. Again, the Institute also sees CPD as a commitment to being professional, keeping up to date and continuously to improve. From the Institute's report on how various professionals sees CPD or Continuous Professional Education (CPE), it is a means by which members of professional association maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills and develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives. Continuous Professional Development is also seen as holistic commitment to structured skills, enhancement and personal professional competencies. The aim of CPD is to benefit not only the individual but also the organization and ultimately the profession as a whole.

3. Methodology

The survey was conducted on tutors of colleges of education in the Central and Western Regions of Ghana, thus Foso, Ola, Holy Child, Enchi, Wiawso colleges of education respectively in July, 2018 by the researcher during conference marking of tutors of Colleges of Education at Saltpond. Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of tutors for the study.

3.1. Sample and Sampling Technique

College	No. of Tutors	Percentage
Foso College of Education	20	22.20
Komenda college of Education	15	16.60
Ola college of Education	18	20.00
Holy Child College of Education	12	13.33
Enchi college of Education	14	15.55
Wiawso college of Education	11	12.22
Total	90	100.00

Table 1

For accurate and reliable information for the study, questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering data. The overall reliability co-efficient after the pilot study was 0.75 using Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient. The instrument used had open-ended as well as closed- ended items. The closed –ended items have responses from which respondents were required to choose from according to the one they strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed or disagreed with. The opened-ended items had spaces provided for respondents to provide additional comments. The researcher used simple percentages and averages to analyze the data gathered as the data gathered were grouped into frequencies and percentages. Thus, the relationship between the variables was established on the basis of frequencies and percentages.

4. Results and Discussion

The objective of the study sought to determine the issues and challenges of college educators in their quest for continuing professional development. The main issues this study addressed were; kinds of challenges educator encounter, aspiration of educators as they go through continuing professional development programmes, benefits educators stand to derive from continuing professional development and the effects of CPD related programmes on the overall academic performance of students?

4.1. Issues and Challenges of Educators in Their Quest for Continuous Professional Development

By continuous professional development, the researcher meant teacher development. Six statements were raised to emerge answer this question. Analysis of results in relation to this question was based on identification of the main issues and challenges that have emerged and continue to emerge before the issues and challenges can be tackled.

	SA		A		D		SD		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No %	
Social studies educators do not have study leave facilities for further studies	31	34.4	40	44.5	19	21.1	0	0	90	100
The cost of teacher education programme are not within the reach of social studies educators	37	41.1	28	31.2	15	16.7	0	0	90	100
The imbalance in the teacher demand and supply also possess a great challenge to CPD	53	58.9	37	41.1	0	0	0	0	90	100
Globalization with respect to issues as the duration of teacher education is a challenge to CPD	42	46.7	48	53.3	0	0	0	0	90	100
The culture/climate of a school in terms of leadership style and attitudes could be a challenge to CPD	40	44.4	50	55.6	0	0	0	0	90	100
Bad media reportage in the event of mass failure and failure of implantation of educational reforms is a challenge	30	33.3	58	64.4	2	2.3	0	0	90	100

Table 2: Issues and Challenges of Continuous Professional Development

Source: Field Survey, July, 2017

From table 2, most of the respondents were in agreement that educators do not have access to study leave facilities for further studies. From table 2, 71 (78.8%) out of the 90 respondents were unanimous on this point while 19 (21.2%) thought otherwise. With regard to cost of teacher education programmes not within the reach of educators,

65 (72.2%) agreed. This shows how emphatic they were in their responses. From the table Continuous Professional Development is necessary to help implement reforms of all kinds. The same unanimity in response applies to CPD being an essential tool for fostering professional dialogue among teachers.

There was also clear unanimity on the view that culture/climate of a school in terms of leadership styles and attitudes could be a great challenge to continuous professional development of teachers. There was also a majority view expressed on bad media reportage in the event of mass failure and failure of implementation of educational reforms. Eighty-eight respondents (frequency of 30 and 58) representing 97.8% were in the majority. These analyses substantiate the view of Mereku (2000) on demand and supply of teachers who posits that the teacher student ratio at the basic school level in Ghana was 1: 46, 1: 40 at the junior secondary school level and 1: 16 at the senior high secondary. Again, between 2000 – 2005, out of the teachers who went to school with study leave, only 30% returned to the classroom. This presupposes that there would be downward trend in the study leave quota for teachers. This therefore greatly affects teachers' continuous professional development which is supposed to be a process along a continuum of learning. Monk and Brent (1996) on financial dimensions of teacher education

Ongoing and relevant staff education and training are necessary if a teaching force is to be effective (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000; Dalin, 1992) this research therefore suggests that adequate time and resources need to be set aside for teacher development. In Ghana, a number of teacher education programmes are organized on regular as well as on sandwich basis for teachers. However, the cost of these programmes poses a great challenge to educators. For instance, between 2017/2018 academic year, Teacher Education regular students of the College of Education Studies paid between GH¢3800 and GH¢4000 respectively for fresh and continuing students. This is indeed a lot of money and clearly beyond a lot of pockets of many teachers with various responsibilities. This therefore has potential of deterring a lot of teachers from pursuing higher education.

While salaries and wages are not directly related to teacher education, they do have a powerful effect on the type and quality of student attracted to the teaching profession (Coombe, 1997). He noted the high departure rates, absenteeism, neglect of duty, and lack of discipline among teachers in Africa, and of which contribute to lack of discipline, absenteeism, and repetition among pupils. In Ghana, for example, teachers under Ghana Education Service who go for further studies at the master's level do not witness any significant difference in pay levels. A teacher who reaches principal superintendent before his or her first degree is not likely to attract any pay increases after his course of study. It is the aspiration of all teachers that as they advance in their studies, their positions commensurate with their salaries (Bame, 1991).

	SA		A		D		SD		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Educators look to better numeration after course of study	36	40.0	26	29.0	18	20.0	10	11.1	90	100
Educators aspire to better conditions of service	35	39.0	45	50.0	10	11.0	0	0	90	100
CPD provides educators opportunity for professional growth	60	34.8	30	65.2	0	0	0	0	90	100
Educators look to promotions as they develop professional	45	50.0	45	50.0	0	0	0	0	90	100
Acquisition of knowledge is an asset to the educator	49	54.4	41	45.6	0	0	0	0	90	100
Educators' knowledge acquisition must impact on their practices positively	70	77.8	20	22.2	0	0	0	0	90	100

Table 3: Aspirations of Social Studies Educators as they Educate
Source: Author's Questionnaire, 2017

Education is power and therefore a tool for enhancement. However, with respect to career development, people educate with great aspirations ranging from better conditions of service to improvement on initial competencies (Cheung, 2005). Thus, the survey sought to examine the aspirations of educators as they educate themselves. Table 3 presents the findings of the items designed to answer the research question. From table 3, more than half of the respondents agreed that educators look to better numeration after course of study. A high number of tutors agreed that educators look forward to better conditions of service in terms of study leave and transfer.

The above presents the ideal situations, generally, many workers are underpaid considering the work load of these professionals at the conditions of service seeks to compensate for the lost. The case of the teacher is however different. It is the hope of these teachers that specific teachers' conditions of service that are specific to the teaching profession are drafted in consultation with teachers' representative. Conditions of service to be addressed include leave arrangements, the length and configuration of the school year and the teaching weeks, the scale of teacher's conduct, arrangement for transfers from one school to another, maternity leave, cover for teachers on leave, appraisal and staff development, promotion arrangements and housing standards (West, 2001).

	SA		A		D		SD		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
CPD of teachers is necessary to help implement reforms	52	57.8	38	42.2	0	0	0	0	23	100
CPD is essential in fostering of professional dialogue among teachers	48	53.3	42	46.7	0	0	0	0	23	100
CPD is needed to help teachers better understand how students learn	45	50.0	35	39.0	10	11.0	0	0	90	100
CPD is a tool for teachers to identify and critically examine cultures that are inconsistent with students' empowerment	34	38.0	50	56.0	6	6.0	0	0	90	100
CPD provides educators with opportunities to build upon their initial competencies	42	46.7	48	53.3	0	0	0	0	90	100
CPD is necessary for teachers to avoid the negative consequences of teacher involvement in school governance	26	29.0	64	71.0	0	0	0	0	90	100

Table 4: Benefits of Continuing Professional Development

Source: Author's Questionnaire, 2017

Furthermore, the survey found out what benefits teachers hope to derive from continuous professional development. The results as demonstrated on the table 3 shows that, out of the 90 respondents, 52 percent and 32 percent strongly agreed and agreed respectively that CPD of teachers is necessary to help implement reforms. Majority of the items raised received unanimous response and even in two cases where 100 percent was not achieved, more than two-thirds of the respondents admitted that CPD of teachers is necessary to better understand how students learn and also a tool for teachers to identify and critically examine cultures that are inconsistent with student empowerment. These unanimous agreements are in line with Day (1999; 4) who asserts that professional development is a process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extent their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching.

	SA		A		D		SD		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Introducing students to the mode of thinking and inquiry in all disciplines	48	53.3	41	45.5	11	12.2	0	0	90	100
Educators helping students to acquire thinking, group skills and academic skills	39	43.3	39	43.3	12	13.4	0	0	90	100
Including in students the spirit of participation	51	57.7	27	30.1	12	12.2	0	0	90	100
Educators must help learners to develop attitudes, values and beliefs for their survival	43	48.0	47	52.0	0	0	0	0	90	100
Students must be taught to influence the social and civic institutions	49	55.0	31	34.0	10	11.0	0	0	90	100

Table 5: Responsibilities of Educators to Their Students

Source: Author's Questionnaire, 2017

Table 4 above displays the kind of responsibilities educators have to their students. From the table respondents were unanimous once again to the fact that educators own to their students several responsibilities of which those five items raised are applicable. It is against these and many core responsibilities that teachers are quick to implement new found knowledge. However, the situation is not so as expected by teachers. In some institutions, implementation of such ideas could be sabotaged by other colleagues. This is largely dependent on the fact that teachers' learning and CPD are influenced by the changing contexts – policy, practice and professional culture – in different countries. Hence, CPD policies and practice are necessarily rooted in the particular contexts of a single education system and, indeed, are often the product of unique and dynamically changing set of circumstance – political, economic, social, cultural, historical, professional and technical- in that system. The different contexts make professional learning in teaching either an individual obligation or an institutional right (Hargreaves, 2003)

	SA		A		D		SD		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
The more professional knowledge a teacher has the higher the level of students' achievement	43		23	56.5	24	30.4	0	0	90	100
CPD of teachers help create an environment in which learners are in sighted and supported to learn	53	59.0	30	33.3	7	7.7	0	0	90	100
Teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge enhance instruction, hence students' performance	54	60	36	40	0	0	0	0	90	100
Improved practice of teachers must result in better students' performance	40	44.0	50	56.0	0	0	0	0	90	100

Table 6: Effects of CPD Related Programmes on Academic Performance of Students

Source: Author's Questionnaire, 2017

Data from table 5 reveal that most of the tutors (frequency of 43 and 23) representing 73.3% did agree that the more professional knowledge a teacher has, the higher the level of student's achievement.

Effective teachers have different styles and personalities, and are considered effective for varying reasons. In many communities, teachers are considered effective if many of their students attain some of the following: sound academic achievement and enjoyment of learning; and skills to continue to learn, solve problems and functionally operate in and contribute, to their societies. Whatever other worthwhile results are achieved because of teachers' work, teacher effectiveness is usually expressed in terms of pupils' academic achievement (Craig, Kraft and Plessi 1998).

5. Conclusions

With respect to issues and challenges of continuous professional development of educators especially in the Colleges of Education in Ghana, the study concluded that:

- There are issues and challenges of continuous professional development of teachers. These ranges from non-availability of study leave facilities to administrative bottlenecks
- Continuous professional development of educators stands to improve performance of teachers, enhance ability of teachers to meet changing needs as well as train for new roles or promotions.
- Educators' responsibilities to students range from helping them to make reflective decisions, participating fully in civic communities to acquisition of skills and development of attitudes, values and beliefs.
- All educators look forward to better remunerations as well as better conditions of service as they educate themselves.
- Continuous professional development of educators impacts positively on academic achievement of learners and also equips learners with skills to solve problems, functionally operate and contribute to their societies.

6. Recommendations

Almost all the respondents one way or the other identified financial problems as one of the challenges militating against them in their quest for professional development it is recommended that teachers be better remunerated so as to meet basic needs as well as professional needs like education. Again, educators stand to benefit greatly in content as well as in pedagogical terms as they seek to educate. For this reason, it is recommended that Ghana Education Service as a body provide teachers with opportunities to educate; such as study leave with pay and scholarships.

Better conditions of service were identified as one of the aspirations of educators as they pursue further studies. Ghana Education Service as a body mediating on behalf of teachers should look into the conditions of teacher and proposes better conditions of service in terms of allowances and leave arrangements.

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