

**PERCEPTION OF LIFELONG LEARNING AND
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE PRE-SERVICE
TEACHERS OF MUMBAI REGION**

Karuna Harkara Sinha

Associate Professor, Hansraj Jivandas College of Education,
Khar(W), Mumbai -52.

ISSN 2277-7733

Volume 8 Issue 2,
September 2019

Abstract

Everyone should have access to opportunities to learn and the Trust is committed to providing an environment where this can take place. Learning is, however not something that can be 'done' to someone. It is a participative process and the Trust aspire to create an environment where people want to learn with us and from us. It is not just our staff but service users, carers and partners who all have a role to play in learning and in teaching. Learning is not just about sitting in a classroom and being talked to. Learning is about participation and variety, appealing to all learning styles and all abilities. Most people associate learning with formal education at school, college, university etc. We are all told, from an early age, that we should 'get a good education'. Generally speaking it is true that a formal education and the resulting qualifications are important. Education may maximize our potential to find better, more satisfying jobs, earn more and, perhaps, become more successful in our chosen career. However, 'schooling' is only one type of learning. There are many other opportunities to further your knowledge and develop the skills you need throughout life.

Keywords: *perception, lifelong learning, professional development, pre-service teachers, Mumbai*

Knowledge can be acquired and skill-sets developed anywhere – learning is unavoidable and happens all the time. However, lifelong learning is about creating and maintaining a positive attitude to learning both for personal and professional development. Lifelong learning is the "ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, but also self-sustainability, as well as competitiveness and employability. Evolved from the term "life-long learners", in 1993, the term recognizes that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations. During the last fifty years, constant scientific and technological innovation and change has had a profound effect on learning needs and styles. Learning can no longer be divided into a place and time to acquire knowledge (school) and a place and time to apply the knowledge acquired (the workplace). Instead, learning can be seen as something that takes place on an ongoing basis from our daily interactions with others and with the world around us. It can take the form of formal learning or informal learning, or self-directed learning.

Rationale

Lifelong learning can enhance our understanding of the world around us, provide us with more and better opportunities and improve our quality of life. There are two main reasons for learning throughout life: for personal development and for professional development. These reasons may not necessarily be distinct as personal development can improve your employment opportunities and professional development can enable personal growth. Learning for its own sake brings its own advantages. For example, learning in whatever context: Boosts our confidence and self-esteem, Makes us less risk

averse and more adaptable to change when it happens; Helps us achieve a more satisfying personal life; Challenges our ideas and beliefs and Can be fun.

Learning for Personal Development

There does not need to be a specific reason for learning since learning for the sake of learning can in itself be a rewarding experience.

There is a common view that continuous learning and having an active mind throughout life may delay or halt the progress of some forms of dementia, although there is actually very little scientific evidence to support these claims. However, keeping the brain active does have advantages since learning can prevent you from becoming bored and thus enable a more fulfilling life at any age. There are, of course, many reasons why people learn for personal development like: You may want to increase your knowledge or skills around a particular hobby or pastime that you enjoy; Perhaps you want to develop some entirely new skill that will in some way enhance your life – take a pottery or car mechanic course for example; Perhaps you want to research a medical condition or your ancestry; Perhaps you're planning a trip and want to learn more about the history and culture of your destination and Maybe you will decide to take a degree course later in life. There are several established contexts for lifelong learning beyond traditional "brick and mortar" schooling:

Home Schooling: involves learning to learn or the development of informal learning patterns; Adult Education: or the acquisition of formal qualifications or work and leisure skills later in life; Continuation Education: which often describes extension or not-for-credit courses offered by higher education institutions; Knowledge work: which includes professional development and on-the-job training; Personal Learning Environments: or self-directed learning using a range of sources and tools including online applications

To help young people learn the more complex and analytical skills they need for the 21st century, teachers must learn in ways that develop higher-order thinking and performance. To develop the sophisticated teaching required for this mission, they must be offered more and more effective professional learning. Meaningful learning is a slow and uncertain process for teachers as well as for students, with some elements that are more easily changed than others, according to the interplay with teachers' deeply rooted beliefs and attitudes. A wide, all-encompassing conceptualization of teacher learning and development within communities and contexts includes the key elements of vision, motivation, understanding, practice, reflection and community which is achievable only if the teachers are ready and motivated to be lifelong learners. In view of the immense importance of lifelong learning for the professional development in any area or profession in the present era of educational explosion, an attempt was made to study the perception of Lifelong Learning and Professional Development among the Pre-Service Teachers of Mumbai Region.

Objectives of the Study

To study the perception of lifelong learning and professional development among the pre-service teachers of Mumbai Region; To study the Understanding of various ways of lifelong learning and professional development of teachers; To study the understanding of the importance of life long learning for the professional development of teachers.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted only in one Teacher Training Institute of Mumbai. The study was limited to only 50 Pre-Service Teachers of Mumbai Region.

Research Design

In keeping with the aims, the researcher adopted the Descriptive Survey Method. A five-point scale developed by the investigator was used for the present study. The scale had two parts: (a) To study the perception of lifelong learning and professional development among the pre-service teachers. (b) To study the understanding of various ways of lifelong learning and professional development of teachers. (c) An Opinionnaire developed by the investigator was used to study the understanding of the importance of life long learning for the professional development of teachers. The sample for the present study consisted of 50 pre-service teachers. The sample for the present study was selected with the help of Purposive Sampling technique. The data was analysed with taking the Percentage of the responses for variables.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 - Perception of lifelong learning and professional development among the pre-service teachers of Mumbai Region.

| Variable | N | Percentage of Sample- (Strongly Agreed) |
|--|----|--|
| Lifelong Learning and Professional Development | 50 | 80% Positive |

Interpretation: The above table shows that 80% of the sample strongly agreed that in the present era of knowledge explosion teachers need to be lifelong learners if they have to grow professionally.

Table 2 - Sub Variable wise analysis: (Ways of Lifelong Learning and Professional Development)

| Variable | N | Percentage |
|---|----|--------------------------------|
| Teachers As Life-Long Learners | 50 | 80%-Positive |
| Design Lifelong Learning Criteria like Personal Learning Plan Authentic Context | 50 | 90% - Positive |
| Reflective and Collegial Dialogue | 50 | 85%-Positive |
| System Supports | 50 | 85% -Positive |
| Conducting Action Research | 50 | 96% -Negative |
| Collective participation and effective staff communication; | 50 | 80% - Negative |
| Teacher networks and study groups; | 50 | 85% - Positive |
| School curriculum, assessment, standards and CPD should be linked. | 50 | 70% - Negative |
| Changes in teachers' practices, attitudes or beliefs towards professional development | 50 | 90% - Positive |
| Collegial learning in trusting environments | 50 | 60% Positive |
| Collaborative and extended over time; | 50 | 50% Positive & 50% Negative |
| Use of ICT | 50 | 90% Positive |

Negative Implies that students have marked negatively that these variables associated with Lifelong Learning and Professional Development; Positive Implies that these variables related to with Lifelong Learning and Professional Development.

Interpretation: The above table reveals that majority of the ways mentioned were positively acknowledged by the Pre-service teachers like Teachers as lifelong learners, Design lifelong learners criteria's, Reflective and Collegial Dialogue, system Supports, Teacher networks and Study groups, Change in teachers practices, attitudes or beliefs towards their professional development etc. only few areas conducting Action Research, collective participation and effective staff communication, collaborative and

extended overtime were not considered important ways of lifelong learning for the professional development of teachers.

Table 3 - Understanding the Importance of lifelong learning for professional Development

| Variable | N | Percentage |
|--|----|----------------|
| Importance of Lifelong Learning for Professional development | 50 | 90% - Positive |

Interpretation: The above table shows that 90% of the sample expressed that being lifelong learners is very important for the professional Development of teachers.

Findings

The study revealed that the Pre-service teachers do have a firm belief that lifelong learning and professional development are strongly related terms. Further it was revealed that Pre-service teachers do believe that now-a – days teachers need to be lifelong learners, design their lifelong learning criteria’s, be reflective thinkers, get engaged into constant collegial dialogues, be ready to bring changes in their attitudes, teaching practices and beliefs, ready to learn from their colleagues and use technology while teaching if they have meet the diverse needs of their student community, be effective teachers which will instinctively facilitate their professional development. The study further revealed that the future teachers were not sure of some of the ways of lifelong learning which shall guide teachers towards their professional development like Conducting Action Research, linking of CPD with school curriculum, assessment and standards and using Metacognitive abilities. Perhaps the reason for the same may be that Pre-service teachers have limited knowledge, experience and exposure of these terminologies. The study also revealed that majority of the pre-service teachers had a clear understanding of the fact that teachers have to be lifelong learners for their professional development. If that does not transpire, teachers will be left at the back in the era where it is assumed that students have additional knowledge and skills than their teachers.

Conclusion

The Study revealed that the although majority of the pre-service teachers acknowledged the importance and various ways of lifelong learning linked with professional development for teachers, they still remain ignorant of some important ways of lifelong learning required for professional development. Therefore, it is imperative for teacher training institutes to emphasize the importance of such areas of lifelong learning through curricular transactions along with co-curricular activities.

References

Archer, J., Hoff, D. J., & Manzo, K. K. (2001, December 5). Staff-development guidelines emphasize student achievement. *Education Week*, 21, 16. Bransford, J. D.
 Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.). (2000). *How people learn*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
 Darling-Hammond, L. (1996). The quiet revolution rethinking teacher development. *Educational Leadership*, 53, 4-10.
 Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The right to learn*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
 Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Teacher learning that supports student learning. *Educational Leadership*, 55, 6-11.