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**IN NIGERIA, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS  
AND COUNSELLORS IS A MUST FOR QUALITY EDUCATION.**

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**Abstract**

*The paper looked into the professional growth of teachers. The study emphasized that a teacher's primary focus should be how to stay current with new innovations in his subject area and instructional methods. A teacher's professional growth necessitates that he continues to study throughout his career. A teacher should feel accountable for finding the greatest way to allow for his professional development. The report went on to look at what makes a good teacher, what makes a good teacher, what activities contribute to a teacher's professional development, and what difficulties have hampered teachers' professional growth in Nigeria. The paper suggests that professional teachers organize a large-scale and coordinated program of teacher professional development education for all teachers at all levels in the country, and that a fundamental policy be developed to ensure that every teacher is adequately involved in their professional development, among other things.*

**Keywords:** *Counselor, education, professional, teacher, and development.*

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**Introduction**

A teacher's main focus should be how to stay current with new advancements in his subject area and instructional methods. A teacher's professional growth necessitates that he continues to study throughout his career. A teacher should

feel accountable for finding the greatest way to allow for his professional development.

The role and function of schools, as well as what is expected of teachers, are changing around the world. Teachers are being asked to teach in increasingly multicultural classrooms, to place a greater emphasis on integrating students with special learning needs into their classes, to make more effective use of information and communication technologies in the classroom, to participate more in planning within evaluative and accountability frameworks, and to do more to involve parents in schools. Teachers' pre-service preparation, no matter how good, will not be able to prepare them for all of the obstacles they will experience throughout their careers. In order to maintain a high standard of teaching and retain a high-quality teacher workforce, education systems attempt to provide chances for in-service professional development for teachers (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, 2022)

Professional development that is effective is ongoing, includes training, practice, and feedback, and includes sufficient time and follow-up support (Teaching and Learning International Survey, TALIS, 2022) Teachers are involved in learning activities that are similar to those they would use with their students, and they are encouraged to form learning communities. There is a rising interest in transforming schools into learning organizations and finding more systematic ways for teachers to share their knowledge and experience.

Teachers' development beyond their initial training can serve a variety of goals (OECD, 2022), including: updating teachers' subject knowledge in light of recent advances in the field; updating teachers' skills, attitudes, and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives, new circumstances, and new educational research; enabling teachers to apply changes made to curricula or other aspects of teaching practice; and enabling teachers to apply changes made to curricula or other aspects of teaching practice.

The researchers use a comprehensive definition of professional development among teachers (TALIS, 2022) to study teachers' professional development: "Professional development is defined as actions that develop an individual's abilities, knowledge, competence, and other traits as a teacher." The definition acknowledges that development can take different forms, ranging from formal

to informal. It can be made available through external expertise in the form of seminars, workshops, or formal qualification programs, collaboration between schools or teachers across schools (e.g. observational visits to other schools or teacher networks), or collaboration within the schools where teachers operate. Coaching/mentoring, collaborative planning and teaching, and the sharing of best practices can all help teachers grow.

Participating in in-service training and workshops, enrolling in higher education, and attending professional meetings are just a few of the things that assist a teacher stay current in his field.

### **What is the definition of a teacher?**

A teacher is someone who imparts knowledge or skills to someone who is less knowledgeable. A teacher is described as someone who has completed professional training in a teacher college or a university's faculty of education and has been certified. This comprises primary schools, secondary schools, and post-secondary educational institutions (Ede, Oleabhiele and Modebelu, 2017). A teacher, according to Akpabio in Ede, Oleabhiele, and Modebelu (2017), is a person who has acquired the unique abilities required for efficient information transmission and is now engaged in the teaching profession. A professional teacher, according to Agwu (2015), is a person who has a registerable professional qualification that qualifies him to teach at an acceptable level of recognized education in Nigeria and is of sound mind and mental alertness. This means that a teacher is someone who has been professionally trained and certified to teach a specific subject or information. Teachers are also supposed to provide teaching, career counseling, and social regulations to society and students. As a result, a professional teacher must have the knowledge and skills necessary to influence human behavior. The ability will be comprised of skill, knowledge, technique, aptitude, and procedures, all of which the instructor will require through training in some form.

### **Characteristics of a Good Teacher**

The traits a teacher possesses while teaching have a significant impact on the quality of learning or knowledge ingested by students. In other words, an

effective teacher is considered to possess certain characteristics that will aid in the delivery of efficient instruction. The following are some of the qualities:

A good teacher is one who is able to motivate students to learn in a way that is meaningful, pleasant, and fun. He creates a vibrant and disciplined learning environment.

A excellent teacher provides students with a variety of learning opportunities. He presents a variety of learning experiences with the goal of achieving learning objectives.

In class activities, he encourages students to raise questions and express themselves openly.

He is a firm believer in the ability of all students to learn. He does everything he can to guarantee that every learner has an adequate opportunity to gain knowledge. With all of his students, he is patient. He explains the same information in a variety of ways and exposes the students to a variety of learning styles.

A skilled teacher makes effective use of class time. He makes certain that students get the most out of their learning time.

He should be well-versed in the subject he'll be teaching. He should have studied a subject as a course of study in higher education and be able to explain key concepts, principles, and policies in the subject he is teaching.

He must be quite knowledgeable about contemporary environmental challenges. He should be capable of deciphering and analyzing societal issues. When educating his students, a good teacher must maintain a high level of concentration. Any events or emotions should not distract him.

He should have the skills and ability to guide every student through the learning process, regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic status, or individual abilities. He should always be on time and regular in class. He should not be a student who habitually misses classes or is late to class. As a result, he is expected to arrive to his class prior to the start of his instruction time.

### **Who is an Educational Counsellor**

An **educational counselor** provides academic, personal and therapeutic support for a broad array of **students**. His/her job leverages **counseling** concepts and psychology tools to promote **student**

**development** and facilitate **student success**. Educational counsellor may spend a portion of their time in individual counseling sessions or in group sessions through workshop programs and campus outreach activities (Top Counseling Schools, 2022)

An educational counselor, often referred to as a **school counselor**, is a crucial member of educational world. They assist students each day and can have a big impact on not only their academic careers but also their **mental health**.

### Core Counselling Skills

The skills an educational counsellor possesses while counselling have a significant impact on the quality of learning or knowledge ingested by students. In other words, an effective educational counsellor is considered to possess certain core skills that will aid in the delivery of efficient instruction in counselling. The following are some of the skills:

- i. **Attending Skills:** The counsellor is expected to give his/her maximum attention while listening to the client during the counselling process.
- ii. **Bodily Awareness or Non-verbal cues:** The counsellor should use non-verbal cues to pass information to the client during counselling session like nodding the head, smiles or slight frowning of the face.
- iii. **Boundary Management:** It is the responsibilities of the counsellor to ensure that the counselling environment is secure and comfortable. The counselling room should be a private and confidential place to meet without interruptions. Also, there should be agreement on the start and closing time.
- iv. **Caring:** This skill is one of the most valued aspects of counselling relationship as this makes the client feel that the counsellor is genuinely interested in his/her problem. The counsellor can convey care through warm reception and exchange of pleasantries, making sure the client feels relaxed and comfortable in the counselling room.
- v. **Observing:** The counsellor should be careful to observe some idiosyncrasies displayed by the client. How the client speaks, sits, moves his/her legs and hands, how the client dressed. The purpose of careful observation is not just to collect information for diagnosis but it is a good

way to probe and enter into the client's personal world and create a platform for discussion (Azuka,2017)

### **Activities that contribute to a teacher's professional development**

There are numerous aspects that influence a teacher's professional development in Nigeria. They are as follows:

School activities (induction and mentoring): Schools' policies and procedures to support teachers who are either new to the profession or new to the school are an important activity for teachers' growth (OECD, 2005). The key obstacles that new instructors face are very similar throughout schools, such as inspiring pupils to learn, managing the classroom, and evaluating student work. Induction and mentoring programs may be able to assist new teachers in overcoming these obstacles and avoiding early retirement.

Certain in-service courses might be offered to familiarize teachers with the school's new approaches, methodologies, and curriculum (Lakshmi, Rao and Rao, 2016). After school, these courses can be of varied lengths. Professors could, for example, teach a university course on the school grounds. Meetings to improve the minimal benchmark curriculum, exchange opinions on methods of teaching sequencing the topic, activities, resources, and breadth of the courses are examples of teacher's club activities. Seminars on specific themes such as co-curricular activities, teaching strategies, evaluation, and curriculum revision might be held. Demonstration classes, extension lectures, exhibitions, and experimental projects are some of the activities that might be organized in the school. Teachers from different schools can meet two, three, four, five, or six times a year to talk about various issues and share their experiences with methods, resources, curricular activities, and evaluation. Problems in the local area can be discussed and resolved.

Higher Education: Many school systems require teachers to continue their education. Teachers should register for research projects or pursue post-graduate education studies.

In-service Teachers should attend workshops to familiarize themselves with the consequences of the government's altered syllabus. Workshops are classes taught by professors that are oriented on a certain theme, such as curriculum development, teaching planning, or test development. Teachers will be more aware of new concepts and instructional strategies as a result of this.

**Professional Organizations:** In the twenty-first century, professional employees are permitted to form groups, and teachers are represented by a number of state and national organizations. Economics Educators Association of Nigeria (EEAN), Social Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (SOSTAN), English Language and Literature Teachers Association of Nigeria (ELTAN), Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN), and others are examples of teachers' associations in Nigeria. Teachers' organizations can produce a variety of pamphlets, essays, textbooks, and journals to help enhance the level of teaching in many topics. Meetings, lectures, paper readings, round table discussions, demonstrations of techniques and materials, pooling of teacher experiences, and conferences are some of the various activities that teachers' groups can conduct (Rao & Rao, 2017).

**Writing for Professional Development:** Writing is an important part of a teacher's professional development. He will be able to improve his ability to speak and express himself as a result of this. The teacher might write about his classroom experiences as well as his own tactics and strategies. He can provide his thoughts on curriculum and evaluation approaches. A teacher might also provide articles and reports from his project to publications, which can help him gain recognition. This allows the teacher to subscribe to one or two periodicals, keeping him up to date on current events.

**Fieldtrips and educational visits:** Teachers have the opportunity to travel and participate in educational visits. When a teacher interacts with other instructors or specialists from different fields of study, he learns a lot about the profession. Visits, conferences, and meetings can all be used to make these connections. Teachers who are new to the profession should observe experienced teachers in action. Whereas travel provides relaxation and pleasure, it also aids in the gathering of information, experience, and materials that can aid a teacher in his classroom teachings; a teacher's visits to fields, museums, aquaria, gardens, exhibitions, other schools, and industries provide him with practical knowledge (Lakshmi, Rao and Rao, 2016). A teacher could be interested in data collection or watching as a hobby. Such hobbies not only assist to enrich curricular activities, but they also encourage students to take on certain tasks when they witness their teacher engaged in his hobbies.

### **Challenges which have marred the Professional Growth of Teachers in Nigeria.**

Teachers, like other professions, have faced numerous obstacles that have hampered their professional development. The following are a few examples of such issues:

**Work schedule conflict:** In Nigeria, teachers' allocated time is either insufficient or poorly linked with the types of professional development that they desire.

Professional development for teachers in the country is too expensive. Thousands of instructors, particularly those in private institutions, have not had access to professional development opportunities. They do not have access to the same benefits as their counterparts in public organizations. Teachers in public schools are entitled to in-service training, and lecturers in tertiary institutions are eligible for financial support from the Tertiary Institutions Fund (TETFUND), whereas those in private institutions are not. For these teachers to develop themselves, they must sponsor themselves. A substantial number of teachers in the country had to cover the entire expense of their professional development. Because of the financial implications, some teachers do not participate in greater development than they did previously.

There has been no sufficient development inside the country: Currently, there are just a few institutions and universities of education that offer all educational topics. Only a few institutions have faculties of education that provide courses in disciplines such as economics, geography, and computer education, among others. Due to the small number of higher education institutions, qualified teachers in this field are in short supply. Teachers who want to continue their education in these fields must take courses that are closely related. Some teachers cited a lack of appropriate development opportunities as a factor for not participating in more development.

**Lack of employer support:** For some teachers, particularly those in private schools, a lack of employer support is a barrier to ongoing professional development.

**Other impediments:** There are numerous flaws in teacher professional development. Other impediments to teacher development include the following: Lack of enthusiasm, insufficient facilities or resources, insufficient teacher educator training, administrative issues, and organizational issues are all issues that need to be addressed.



## Conclusion

The value of professional development for teachers cannot be overstated. A teacher's professional development demands him to remain learning throughout his career by participating in in-service training and workshops, enrolling in higher education, and attending professional meetings to keep up with new advancements in his industry. Despite some efforts to train teachers in the country, much more has to be done in terms of teacher professional development.

## Recommendations

The following suggestions are made in order to tackle the difficulties that have hampered teachers' professional growth in Nigeria:

- i. Professional instructors should organize a large-scale and coordinated program of teacher professional development instruction for all teachers at all levels throughout the country.
- ii. A fundamental policy should be developed to ensure that every teacher is adequately involved in their professional development.
- iii. For each educational subject, a subject teachers' organization should be formed at the local, state, and federal levels.

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