

COACHING AS A PROMISING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS

Chanchal Tyagi¹ & Vijay Jaiswal²

1. Research Scholar, Dept. of Education, C.C.S. University, Meerut

2. Professor, Dept. of Education Department, C.C.S. University, Meerut

Received : 28/09/2018

1st BPR : 10/10/2018

2nd BPR : 25/10/2018

Accepted : 07/11/2018

ABSTRACT

Continuing professional development (CPD) as a lifelong learning process applies to all teaching professionals irrespective of their age or seniority. Through this process “individuals take control of their own learning and development, by engaging in an on-going process of reflection and action. This process is empowering and exciting and can stimulate people to achieve their aspirations and move towards their dreams (Megginson & Whitaker, 2004).” A diverse range of CPD practices is there that help teachers to develop their skills, share their experiences and bring up to date their knowledge of innovations in their field. Attending seminars or conferences, teacher exchange programmes, in-service training events are some of them. To have a space and scope for individual evaluation of approaches, experiences and interactions also gives opportunities for CPD. This may be in the form of reflective diary entries, teacher forums and blogs, coaching programmes etc. The opportunity to receive and share appropriate career advice can prove to be invaluable for practitioners. Coaching gives such an opportunity and can be a source for positive change and enhancement for teachers. Having this notion the present paper aims to make a clear understanding of coaching and its positive effects for teachers in terms of both as a coach and coachee.

Key Words : Coaching, Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Introduction

Teachers' professional competence and commitment are the key factors in quality education. Lifelong professional development of teachers has all the more become an essential part of their teaching career. Teachers' professional development that is a pre-requisite for their empowerment is a continuing lifelong process and starts from their entry in the profession and continues throughout their career (NCERT, n.d.). The term used for this lifelong learning is Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which is a “planned, continuous and lifelong process whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities, and to improve their knowledge, skills and practice.....” (Padwad and Dixit, 2011, p. 10). CPD includes both “formal and informal provisions for the improvement of educators as people, educated persons, and professionals, as well as in terms of the competence to carry out their assigned roles.” (Joyce, Howey and Yarger, 1976, p. 6). Day (1999) regards CPD as an individual and collaborative effort to review, renew and extend teachers' commitment as well as to develop their knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential for good professional thinking, planning and practice (synopsis). The opportunity to receive and share appropriate career advice in form of coaching can prove to be an invaluable collaborative effort of CPD for practitioners also (Kapur, 2013). So the

present paper makes a clear understanding of coaching and argues it as a CPD practice

Models of CPD

Lieberman & Wood (2002) classified CPD into three types: direct teaching (such as courses, workshops and so on); learning in school (such as peer coaching, critical friendships, mentoring, action research, and task-related planning teams); and out of school learning (such as learning networks, visits to other schools, school-university partnerships and so on). Kennedy (2005) described nine models of CPD, which are outlined below.

Training- focuses on skills, with expert delivery, and little practical focus.

Award Bearing- usually in conjunction with a higher education institution, this brings the worrying discourse on the irrelevance of academia to the fore.

Deficit- this looks at addressing shortcomings in an individual teacher, it tends to be individually tailored, but may not be good for confidence and is unsupportive of the development of a collective knowledge base within the school.

Cascade- this is relatively cheap in terms of resources, but there are issues surrounding the loss of a collaborative element in the original learning.

Standards Based- this assumes that there is a system of effective teaching, and is not flexible in terms of teacher learning. It can be useful for developing a common language but may be very narrow and limiting.

Coaching / Mentoring- the development of a non-threatening relationship can encourage discussion, but a coach or mentor needs good communication skills.

Community of Practice- these may inhibit active and creative innovation of practice, although they have the potential to work well through combining the knowledge bases of members.

Action Research- This is relevant to the classroom, and enables teachers to experiment with different practices, especially if the action research is collaborative.

Transformative- the integration of several different types of the previous models, with a strong awareness and control of whose agenda is being addressed.

Kennedy (2005) suggested that the first four of these were essentially transmission methods, which give little opportunity for teachers to take control over their own learning. The following 3 are more transformational, giving an increasing capacity for professional autonomy, with the action research and transformative models being able to provide even more professional autonomy, and giving teachers the power to determine their own learning pathways.

Coaching in form of collaborative CPD, is a strong dimension of teachers' professional learning in school (Lofthouse, Leat and Towler, 2010). Even the newly-emergent national strategy for continuing professional development in the United Kingdom (DFEE, 2001a) strongly advocates the use of coaching to enhance teachers' professional development and performance in schools. (DFEE, 2001a,b,c) suggests some of the potential benefits of adaptation of coaching in terms of mutual support for learning, dissemination of good practices, translation of teacher learning to pupil learning and the embedding of desirable changes. A recent DFEE publication, *Learning and Teaching: a strategy for professional development* (DFEE, 2001a) suggests that positive changes in teachers' practices are most likely to be developed where professional development involves, amongst other elements "coaching and feedback on their professional practice over a period of weeks and months. This is a particularly important element, and can be decisive in determining whether changes in practice survive" (Rhodes and Sandra, 2006, p. 299). Even Veenman (1995) and Veenman et al (1998a,b) using coaching as in-class support to provide teachers with feedback on their own practice as a means to stimulate self-reflection found it very effective in improving teachers' professional practice.

Coaching is a process of communication used to help another person to realize his or her personal

and professional goals where the person being coached develops his or her own solutions (reg 12). This process is directed by the coach whereas its goals are decided by the coachee him/herself with or at the suggestions of the coach. The process of coaching also involves regular feedback to coachee. It is an enabling process of enhancing learning and development aimed at improving performance in a specific aspect of practice (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2006). Downey (2001) also interprets coaching in the same way as "the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another." Whitmore (1995) defines coaching as a medium to unlock a persons' potential to maximize their own performance and to help them to learn rather than teaching them.

Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them learn rather than teaching them. Whitmore (2002: 54) also developed a seminal model of the coaching process based on the acronym GROW (goal, reality, options, way forward), set out as follows:

- GOAL setting for the session as well as for the short and long term
- REALITY checking to explore the current situation
- OPTIONS and alternative strategies or courses of action
- WHAT is to be done, WHEN, by WHOM and the WILL to do it

An alternative model based on the acronym STRIDE (strengths, targets, real situation, ideas, decision, and evaluation) has been developed by Thomas (2009) as follows:

- STRENGTHS: paying attention to the strengths of participants within a resourceful mindset
- TARGETS: identifying targets to be achieved and motivations to achieve them
- REAL SITUATION: exploring the current situation to surface constraints and challenges
- IDEAS: tabling ideas which might succeed in achieving the defined targets
- DECISION: selecting the most appropriate option to move forward
- EVALUATION: reviewing progress and evaluating the results

Both models rely implicitly in their operation on Egan's (1998) 'skilled helper' approach. This aims to allow the person being coached to be objective in looking at the problem they face, and the skilled helper acts as facilitator in helping them to see the 'blind spots' of their problem before developing an ideal scenario that they would like to work towards. Such 'skilled helper' facilitation demonstrates the characteristics of effective mentoring and coaching as laid out in the national framework for mentoring and coaching (CUREE 2005). This identifies that effective coaching involves:

- a learning conversation through a professional dialogue rooted in evidence
- a thoughtful relationship based on trust and sensitivity
- a learning agreement establishing confidence in boundaries and ground rules
- combining support from fellow professional learners and specialists
- growing self-direction by increasing responsibility for own development
- setting challenging goals linked to school and individual priorities
- understanding different approaches and their underpinning theory
- acknowledging benefits to those coaching, recognising symbiotic learning
- experimenting and observing, supporting innovation and creativity
- using resources effectively, to protect and sustain learning and reflection

Difference between coaching and mentoring

Understanding the meaning and concept of coaching, a question arises in the mind that how it is different from mentoring as both of these practices are very much about helping people to focus their plans on future opportunities. Both these processes are used to complement each other and take place independently. There are open, honest relationships between the mentor or coach and their protege. A mentor or coach is an 'accountable partner' who works in their protege's best interests and brings a new approach to either a specific skill or an entire career. But in fact coaching and mentoring are standalone

activities. They are not the same.

In coaching the focus is on meeting very specific objectives within a set period of time and is mainly concerned with performance improvement (often short-term) of certain skills. With a very specific purpose it usually takes place on a one-to-one basis. Learning goals are usually determined in advance as there is usually a planned programme with a much shorter time frame than in mentoring. Learning goals are usually determined in advance (Michael & TIS, 2008). The goals are typically set with or at the suggestion of the coach. While the learner has primary ownership of the goal, the coach has primary ownership of the process. In most cases, coaching involves direct extrinsic feedback i.e. the coach reports to the coachee what he or she has observed (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2005). Whereas mentoring is an indefinite, relationship based activity focused on several specific but wide range of goals. It is primarily related to the identification and nurturing of potential for the whole person. It can be a long-term relationship in informal process where the mentor is a facilitator who works with either an individual or a group of people over an extended time period. In mentoring the goals may change but are always set by the learner. The learner owns both the goals and the process (Michael & TIS, 2008). Feedback comes from within the mentee – the mentor helps them to develop insight and understanding through intrinsic observation that is, becoming more aware of their own experiences.' Thus mentoring basically seeks to build wisdom – the ability to apply skills, knowledge and experience to new situations and processes (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2005).

Peer-coaching as a CPD practice

The purpose of peer coaching is to positively impact student achievement by creating a culture of continual instructional improvement through structured and allocated time for professional conversations, observations, and reflection on the authentic application of best practices in every classroom. Peer coaching will:

- stimulate a professional dialogue focused on increased instructional skill.
- cultivate an open and safe learning environment for teachers.
- increase awareness of individual teachers' expertise as instructional leaders.

Now the question comes how coaching can help in continuing professional development of teachers and the answer is Peer-coaching as research suggests that teachers learn most from a combination of support from their peers and specialist support. Encouraging professional communication peer coaching helps teachers to develop a 'shared language' about teaching and learning. Putting teachers in control of their own professional development peer-coaching allows them to 'start from where they are' and enables them to deepen their awareness and understanding of ongoing classroom activities, their effectiveness as teachers; and their own and their pupils' learning. Peer-coaching adds to the job satisfaction of teachers and can renew their enthusiasm for teaching. Teachers can use it throughout their careers in any teaching-learning situations also (NUT,n.d.). In United States, peer-coaching has been a feature of teacher professional development for many years, and has been seen as a means to effect and embed lasting improvements in professional practice (Shalaway, 1985; Swafford et al, 1997; Swafford, 1998).

Peer coaching is a collaborative type of practice built upon trusting relationships that develop between teachers and is based on mutually working together to improve teaching skills in order to improve student learning. Robbins (1995) defines Peer-coaching as "a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect upon current practices; expand, refine and build new skills; share ideas; conduct action research; teach one another, or problem solve within the workplace." Thus it is an interactive process between two or more teaching professionals used to share successful practices through collaboration and reflective practices a problem-solving vehicle. It increases the opportunities of reflection and clear thinking, and improves psychological well-being

and confidence of both the coach and coachee.

Like all professional processes, peer-coaching is most successful when teachers adapt it to their own needs and circumstances. For this purpose some basic principles help to establish a climate in which both participants in peer coaching benefit fully. Some principles set by NUT (n.d.) are as follows:

- Peer coaching should be contextualized within a specific teaching and learning focus – such as trying out a new teaching strategy, or approach to 'managing' pupils or introducing a new aspect of the curriculum – and linked to specialist support relevant to that focus.
- As peer coaching is based on observation of teachers in the classroom so to make it to be successful, the teacher to be observed needs to have trust in the observer and feel comfortable about him/her being in the classroom.
- Peer coaching is a mutual and reciprocal approach during which both partners have the opportunity to observe and to be observed and give and receive feedback. Whatever the positions or relative status of the participants, peer coaching should be a non-hierarchical process in which both partners are focused on receiving and providing professional support.
- Peer coaching should be non-judgmental, non-threatening and based on an agenda agreed between participants. Participants need to have confidence about how the information gathered during observation will be used.
- The main focus of observation and feedback should be decided by the teacher being observed. It is the observed teacher, not the observer, who has the power to take the learning forward. To put this into practice, peer coaching must be preceded by discussion between the teachers involved.
- Feedback is informal professional dialogue. Interactions between teachers and learners can be interpreted in many ways. The observer's job is to give the teacher information he/she would not otherwise have in order to maximize his/her choices about what to do. It is not about doing things right or doing things wrong. If feedback builds on self-evaluation and shared exploration of the information provided by the observer, the observed teacher's own ideas and practice will form a natural springboard for planning future progress.
- The outcomes of peer coaching are owned by the teachers involved – any recording should be open to both partners and confidential to them.

Benefits of Peer-Coaching

- Improved student achievement
- Enhanced student progress
- Enhanced sense of professional skill
- Increased ability to analyze lessons
- Better understanding of best practices in teaching and learning
- Wider repertoire of instructional strategies/resources
- Deeper sense of efficacy
- Stronger professional ties with colleagues
- Improved teaching performance
- Better articulated curriculum
- More cohesive institutional culture
- Positive institutional climate

Conclusion

In many respects, coaching, while seemingly less costly than other forms of CPD, where course fees and supply costs are a constant demand on institutional budgets, also carries significant costs in time and

resourcing and should by no means be seen as the 'cheaper option'. Thus coaching in terms of peer-coaching can and is doing well for continuing professional development of teachers. It has shifted the locus of control of professional development in hands of teachers themselves and as a CPD practice is beneficiary for both the coach and coachee. It is getting very successful in making teaching-learning process a reflective activity giving teachers a scope of collaborative learning. To make its best use in CPD of teachers it is therefore required that it should be adopted at initiation level by the schools/colleges and teachers so that dependency on INSET activities for professional enhancement of teachers can be reduced to a satisfactory level.

References:

- CUREE (2005). *Mentoring and Coaching: CPD Capacity Building Project*. London: Department for Education and Skills
- Day, C. (1999). *Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning*. London: Falmer Press.
- DFEE (2001a). *Learning and teaching: A strategy for professional development*. London: Stationery Office.
- DFEE (2001b). *Good value CPD: A code of practice for providers of professional development for teachers*. Nottingham: DFEE Publications.
- DFEE (2001c). *Schools: Building on success*. London: Stationery Office.
- Downey, M. (2001). *Effective Coaching*. London: Texere Publishing Limited.
- Egan, G. (1998). *The Skilled Helper – A Problem Management Approach to Helping*. Pacific Grove, CA, Brooks/Cole
- Joyce, B. R.; Howey, K. R. & Yarger, S. J. (1976). *Issues to face. I.S.T.E. Report I*. Palo Alto, California: Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching. Retrieved from http://archive.org/details/ERIC_ED129733 accessed on 22th Sept., 2017
- Kapur, K. (2013). The role of mentoring in developing reflective practices for CPD. In R. Bolitho, & A. Padwad (Eds.), *Continuing professional development: Lessons from India*, New Delhi: British Council, 96-107.
- Kennedy, A. (2005). Models of continuing professional development: A framework for analysis.
- *Journal of In-Service Education*, 31 (2), 235-250. Retrieved from <http://www.fm-kp.si/zalozba/ISBN/978-961-6573-65-8/219-240.pdf> accessed on 24th Sept., 2017.
- Leiberman, A. and Wood, D. E. (2002) From network learning to classroom teaching. *Journal of Educational Change*, 3, 315-337. Retrieved from <http://www.fm-kp.si/zalozba/ISBN/978-961-6573-65-8/219-240.pdf> accessed on 24th Sept., 2017.
- Lofthouse, R.; Leat, D. & Towler, C. (2010). *Coaching for teaching and learning: A practical guide for schools*. CFBT Education Trust. Retrieved from http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/pdf/5414_CfT_FINAL%28Web%29.pdf Megginson, D. & Clutterbuck, D. (2005). *Techniques for coaching and mentoring*. London: Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann
- Michael, A., & TIS. (2008). *Mentoring and coaching: Topic gateway series no.50*. UK: CIMA
- NCERT. (n.d.). *Fifty years of teacher education in India (post-independence development)*. Retrieved from www.teindia.nic.in/js/50Years_TE_Devp.pdf on 23rd Sept., 2017.
- NTPA. (2016). *A guide to support coaching & mentoring for school improvement*. Australia: Australian council for educational research.
- National Union of Teachers. (n.d.). *A to Z of peer coaching*. National Union of Teachers. Retrieved from https://www.teachers.org.uk/files/A-Z_OF_PEER_COACHING_RS.doc accessed on 22th Sept., 2017
- Padwad, A. & Dixit, K. (2011). Multiple stakeholders views of continuing professional development. In R. Bolitho and A. Padwad (Eds.), *Continuing Professional Development Lessons from India*, New Delhi: British Council, p. 10.

- Rhodes, C., & Beneicke, S. (2006). Coaching, mentoring and peer-networking: Challenges for the management of teacher professional development in schools. *Journal of In-Service Education*, 28 (2), 297-310. doi:10.1080/13674580200200184
- Robbins, P. (1995). Peer coaching: Quality through collaborative work, in J. Block, S. F. Everson & T. R. Guskey (Eds.) *School Improvement Programs: A Handbook for Educational Leaders*. New York: Scholastic.
- Shalaway, L. (1985). *Peer coaching ... does it work?* Washington: Washington National Institute of Education Research and Development Notes.
- Swafford, J., Maltsberger, A., Button, K. & Furgerson, P. (1997). Peer coaching for facilitating effective literacy instruction, in C. K. Kinzer, K. A. Hinchman & D. J. Leu (Eds.) *Inquiries in Literacy Theory and Practice*. Chicago: National Reading Conference.
- Swafford, J. (1998). Teachers supporting teachers through peer coaching. *Support for Learning*, 13(2), 54-58.
- Thomas, W. (2009). *Coaching and Creativity, Creativity for Learning*, Retrieved from www.creativityforlearning.co.uk/id5.html accessed on Sept. 23, 2017.
- Veenman, S. (1995). The training of coaching skills: An implementation study. *Educational Studies*, 21, 415-431.
- Veenman, S., De Laat, H. & Staring, C. (1998a). Evaluation of a coaching programme for mentors of beginning teachers. *Journal of In-Service Education*, 24, 441-427.
- Veenman, S., Visser, Y. & Wijkamp, N. (1998b). Implementation effects of a program for the training of coaching skills with school principals. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 9, 135-156.
- Whitmore, J. (1995). *Coaching for performance: A practical guide to growing your own skills*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Whitmore, J. (2002). *Coaching for Performance*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

