

# 5.4 Continuous Professional Development

In this section: Extensive guidelines and information to support all teachers and school leaders to continue learning and improving their skills throughout their career.

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# Rules: Continuous Professional Development

**Includes: CPD Evaluation and accreditation; Providers; Equal Opportunities**

The TSC shall serve as a common platform for CPD of teachers in Sierra Leone.

- TSC shall organise, coordinate, commission, validate, accredit, and register CPD of teachers in due cooperation with the MBSSE, TTCs, SLTU and other relevant institutions and providers of CPD.
- CPD must be registered in a) the teacher's individual Portfolio, and b) in the Teacher Database, irrespective of the provider. Duplication, overlap and irrelevance of CPD must be avoided.
- CPD must be needs based and systematic. It must address teacher competency gaps and the need to develop new competencies.
- TSC must ensure consistency in individual CPD. CPD must be linked to a pathway towards increasingly advanced competencies in teaching and school management reflecting the *Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders*.
- The completion of CPD with demonstrated good results should count as one of the criteria for teacher and school leader promotion to higher positions, grades and salary.
- When there are changes in school curriculum, in subject knowledge, or other changes relevant for the contents and methods of teaching, TSC and MBSSE must ensure teacher skills and competencies are upgraded.
- IT, use of the internet and teaching technology should receive special attention in CPD. The TTCs, TSC, district education authorities and school leaders should ensure teachers receive the necessary training.
- If and when sufficient numbers of teachers in a district are considered to share similar training needs, the TSC-DO and DEO may organise a training programme with a qualified provider.

## Evaluation and accreditation of CPD

- Participant learning in a training course may be measured through pre and post-tests.
- Training courses are evaluated through a) immediate reaction evaluation, 2) outcome evaluation of improvements in performance, and 3) impact evaluation, which may be measured in connection with relevant surveys, reviews, etc.
- Participants in training receive credit points according to the *Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders (TSC, 2017)*.

## Providers of CPD

- CPD may be offered by TSC, TTCs, other training institutes, international agencies, NGOs,

and other registered, certified and qualified providers of teacher training.

- Providers of CPD must inform the TSC on the contents of the training, accreditation, who the participants are, and other aspects of the training courses which they offer.
- As far as possible, teacher training by external providers should be adapted to TSC's overall standards, strategy and plans for CPD.
- TSC must conduct regular checks and quality assurance of providers of CPD.
- TSC maintains a database of qualified CPD facilitators and institutions.

## CPD and Equal Opportunities

CPD must adhere to the highest standards set by the Government in gender, inclusiveness, equity and Persons with Disabilities providing equal opportunities for professional development for all teachers.

CPD is an instrument for promoting and reinforcing equal opportunities for careers in the teaching service.

# Process: How to enrol for CPD training

For national courses, interested candidates should consult with their superiors, refer to their personal Teacher Portfolio and complete a CPD APPLICATION FORM. They should submit this to the TSC-DO to coordinate the selection of participants based on individual training needs and training records captured in the teacher's database. This will ensure systematic CPD and avoid of duplication.

Currently, the TSC offers CPD courses for school leaders in mentoring, school leadership and professional standards. Other courses are under development. School leaders should acquaint themselves with the current CPD offers for school leaders.

Teachers are offered a series of competencies classes in priority subjects. Information on these can be found on [www.tsc.gov.sl](http://www.tsc.gov.sl) or from TSC-DO.

# Process: How to register participation in a CPD training course

The TSC, TTCs or any other provider of CPD must ensure participation in CPD learning events is registered after completion of the course. This is to ensure systematic individual professional development and avoid duplication. Providers other than TSC must provide details to the TSC.

Registration includes:

- Registration on the list of participants in a scheduled course
- Completion of a CPD ATTENDANCE FORM during the training
- Registration of course completion, certification and credits in the Teacher's personal Teacher's Portfolio
- Registration in the Teacher Database.

Training providers must contact the TSC to check teacher training records before admitting teachers on a course.

# Further reading:

## Introduction to Continuous Professional development

A teacher is expected to upgrade his or her qualifications regularly. This is necessary for the teacher to be up to date with the latest curriculum and developments and trends in the subjects he or she teaches. A teacher is also expected to be up to date with developments in didactics and teaching methods and continuously apply improved strategies to achieve optimal learning outcomes, ensuring that pupils stay in school and pass their tests and exams with good results. Finally, a teacher should develop his or her competencies to nurture a career in the teaching service and comply with the increasing competency levels of the *professional standards for teachers* (TSC, 2019).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) must:

- Ensure teachers continuously develops their competencies in teaching for the benefit of learners.
- Ensure compliance with the professional standards for teachers and school leaders at the different professional levels.
- Provide a basis for a career in teaching and for promotion to higher positions and grades in the teaching service.
- Update and expand a teacher's knowledge and skills in subjects, teaching methods and teaching technology.
- Inspire teacher interest in the subjects they teach.
- Motivate teachers to learn more and become life-long learners.

CPD includes:

- Short professional development courses offered by TSC, TTCs, MBSSE, SLTU, and various international agencies and NGOs. This includes Competency Classes provided by TSC



- On-the-job training, supervision by the school leader or a senior teacher, and mentoring
- Self-directed learning online and regularly reading relevant books, articles, newsletters, etc
- Learning in connection with membership of professional subject associations, professional networks and communities of practice.

It is essential that CPD is carried out systematically, that it is needs-based and that it builds up a teacher's or school leader's gradual career orientated acquisition of increasing competencies.

Implementation of professional development may include the following key elements:

- Learning needs assessment to ensure CPD is needs based
- Identification of training and non-training solutions
- Planning of the CPD
- Design of courses and modules
- Development of learning materials and tools
- The facilitator's preparations
- Professional course management, organisation and administration
- Delivery of training courses
- Assessment and certification
- Evaluation of the results of the training course.

When the circle is completed the training provider should submit detailed information to the TSC.

The TSC will register successful training course completion, certification and accreditation in the Teacher Database.

CPD may:

- Address a teacher's competency gap.
- Prepare the teacher for the next career step
- Keep the teacher updated on subjects, teaching methods, and IT/teaching technology
- Meet the school's requirements for subject specialisation
- Meet the school's requirement for counselling pupils, mentoring peers or junior teachers, teaching pupils with special requirements, administrative and managerial tasks, etc.

## Who is responsible for CPD

The primary institutions in Sierra Leone responsible for CPD of teachers include:

### **Teaching Service commission**

- Formulates rules, regulations and practices for CPD
- Sets standards and determines accreditation for in-service training of teachers
- Certifies providers of in-service training of teachers
- Serves as a common platform for CPD, coordinates CPD
- Registers completed training in the Teachers' Database
- Ensures training is needs based and develops teacher competencies systematically
- Manages and organises in-service training courses for teachers.

### **Teacher Training Colleges**

- Provide in-service training online and face to face
- TTC lecturers frequently act as trainers and facilitators for other providers.

### **Sierra Leone Teachers' Union**

- Provides in-service training for teachers in different subjects
- Provides in-service training with a focus on female teachers.

### **Other providers of CPD**

International organisations, NGOs, and CSOs also offer training courses for teachers. These courses are expected to adhere to TSC's standards and criteria.

# Best Practice: The CPD Cycle

For CPD training courses to be effective and have a real impact on learners and their performance in schools, each of the steps in the circle must be well executed. Therefore, training courses for teachers and school leaders should be prepared, managed and delivered by professional institutions and facilitators. The circle may vary based on the scope of the exercise, but the logic is the same.



# Best Practice: How to assess the learning needs of teachers

To be cost-effective CPD should be based on identified needs of teachers and school leaders to improve and develop their competencies. These needs must therefore be assessed systematically through a Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) before CPD is planned, prepared and delivered.

An LNA of teachers and school leaders may include:

- Observations of performance at school and in the classroom
- The annual performance appraisal including the Personal Professional Development Plan
- Assessment of competency implications of planned career advancement to higher positions requiring additional competencies
- School Improvement Plans, school supervision, quality assurance, etc. which identify collective learning needs among a school's teachers and leaders
- Changes in curriculum, introduction of new technology, restructuring, etc.

A major survey of needs for improving competencies and of learning needs may be conducted with appropriate intervals, such as every five years. Such a survey may contribute in the macro planning of teacher education in terms of national policy, planning and budgeting; increases in number and size of institutions and colleges, admission criteria, national curriculum, learning technologies, and upgrading of facilities, equipment, and materials for teachers.

At the district, cluster or school level, a school leader, TSC-DO staff, and other bodies involved in CPD should be able to conduct simple LNA, which may then be processed locally or feed into larger programmes.

LNA, even in its simplest form, must adhere to the highest standards of HR. It should be:

- Professionally carried out

- Objective and based on relevant and measurable criteria
- Evidence-based
- Free from bias
- In support of equal opportunities.

Not all problems and shortcomings can be solved by training. The LNA may identify other solutions such as improvements in management practices, systems changes, introduction of new technology and availability of better tools or guidance.

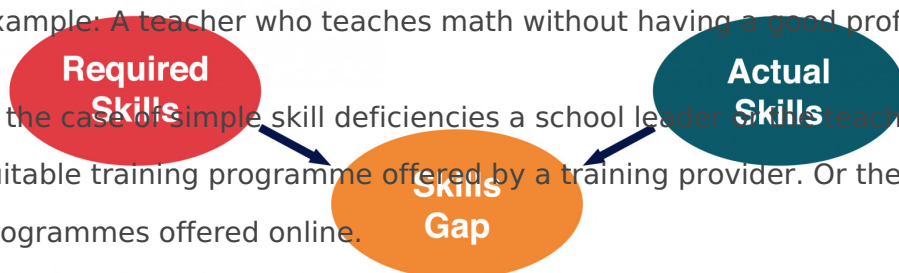
Even if the solution is learning orientated, there are many ways of learning in addition to attending a training course. These include mentoring, job-based training, and self-directed learning. The latter has become easy through online opportunities for learning. These learning solutions are usually attached with a lower cost and can be equally effective.

Due of the large number of teachers, all teachers may not gain access to a CPD training course. In connection with the needs assessment it is essential to prioritise the most urgent training needs. Some teachers may have excellent teaching knowledge and skills and do not require much training. Since CPD is a criterium for promotion, it is essential to ensure that such teachers have equal opportunities for promotion even without CPD credit points. Excellent teaching skills can be captured in the annual performance appraisal.

In its simplest form an LNA exercise identifies any gaps in competencies.

Example: A teacher who teaches math without having a good professional grasp of the subject.

In the case of simple skill deficiencies a school leader or the teacher him/herself may search for a suitable training programme offered by a training provider. Or they may search for teaching programmes offered online.



If the same kind of learning needs are common to several teachers within a cluster of schools or in a district, a training course may be arranged at a school or a TTC or at another suitable venue. In such cases the TSC-DO and the district education authorities should be consulted for approval based on available information on the candidates, following which the training should be registered appropriately.



LNA is just as much about a positive development to nurture careers and meet the demands of the future. The gap in this case would be forward looking, for instance what kind of competencies is

required for a proficient teacher to become a highly accomplished teacher or a school leader. For example, a teacher who shows an aptitude for leadership in a school whose Head Teacher is due to retire in one year.

The most convenient way of assessing the learning and development needs of teachers is in connection with the annual performance appraisal and the associated completion of the Personal Professional Development Plan.

If the assessment of a teacher for a specific responsibility, task or competency points to inadequate performance, it could mean there is a learning need. However, it could also point to a deficiency in management, systems, tools or conditions under which teaching tasks are carried out.

The identified learning needs must be prioritised and the most critical added to the teachers' Personal Development Plan subject to identification of realistic CPD/training opportunities.

# Best Practice: Identification of training and non-training solutions

The assigned LNA team or panel should always try to identify the most optimal training solution. This part of the LNA exercise may include:

- A list of training topics
- Identification and assessment of alternative strategies to address the learning needs
- Analysis of the cost-effectiveness of alternative strategies
- Selection of the most cost-effective strategy.

Where the LNA highlights non-training issues, such as deficiency in systems and school management, non-training solutions can be applied that may relate to: improvements in school management practices, provision of better teaching materials and tools, making guidelines available, introduction of new teaching technology, or improving the working environment and climate.

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# Best Practice: Strategies for addressing learning needs

May include:

- Open (standard courses offered to a wide audience) versus tailored (courses tailored to specific needs of an organisation) learning, in-house (within the organisation's premises) versus external training.
  - Examples of open external training courses are the standard in-service training courses for civil servants offered by IPAM, the Institute of Public Administration and Management and by the Civil Service Training College.
  - Example of tailored internal training courses for teachers with similar training needs are the current competency classes offered by TSC at selected schools in the country.
- Training at an institute abroad. This option is only valid if the return on the investment can be expected to be high.
- Online/distance or blended learning (mixture of face to face and online training) courses suitable for trainees in remote areas and for economies of scale in case of large numbers of trainees.
- On-the-job training.
- Supervision and mentoring by a school leader or a highly accomplished teacher
- Team-based learning, communities of practice, and similar
- Self-directed learning, on-line or through books, articles, etc.



# Best Practice: How to analyse the cost-effectiveness of alternative strategies

It is essential to assess the cost-effectiveness of alternative learning strategies to achieve the optimal outcome for the least cost.

When selecting the optimal solution, the cost must be weighed against expected outcome and priority of the training. This could mean opting for a more expensive solution. However, in many cases a low-cost strategy might be just as effective or even more effective. In some cases, it can be necessary to choose the second-best solution in order to stay within the given budget.

A teaching service body may choose a low-cost solution for training, which requires the school manage, organise and deliver the training with its own resources. Before taking this route, the school needs to estimate whether they have the expertise and resources required to deliver it. Outsourcing training to a professional training institute may save time and ensure higher standards in training. In some cases, there may be middle-way solutions.

An alternative cost-effective strategy may be to develop the competencies of school leaders. If school leaders are competent it reduces the need for teacher training, as the school leader is able to run the school more effectively, ensure a sound school economy, promote a conducive work environment and climate, build well-functioning teams of teachers, make work practices more effective, deliver his or her own on-the-job training, guide teachers, and so on. Investment in learning & development programmes for school leaders is therefore a worthwhile investment.

When choosing a learning and development strategy it is important to ensure training is of a high quality and needs based, irrespective of which solution is chosen. When training is provided by a

professional training institute, the institute must be carefully scrutinised and the quality and relevance of the training guaranteed through proper arrangements, contracts and oversight. This also applies to training provided by donors, who must meet the set standards of the teaching service.

# Best Practice: How to plan a learning event

The detail required to plan training depends on the scope of the training. There is a big difference between planning a course for 5,000 teachers, sending 20 teachers on an external training course, and organising a learning event at your school. Irrespective of the scope, planning should always be linked with learning needs assessment and the selection of the most cost-effective strategy.

In general planning a learning event involves:

- Prioritisation and selection of the participants based on needs
- Identification of a suitable provider (if external training is opted for)
- Choosing a venue (if internal or self-organised training is opted for)
- Profiling and identifying teachers (if internal training is opted for)
- Preparation of a training plan and schedule
- Writing a budget for the training plan
- Consultations and negotiations with providers, tendering (if large scale), etc.
- Planning assessment, certification and accreditation.

If the TSC or MBSSE, a district or a school or cluster of school organises its own training there are several possible venues, all depending on cost and suitability:

- At one or more government schools
- At TTCs
- At facilities provided by national or local education authorities (ministries, TSC offices, local councils, etc)
- In conference centres and hotels.

*On-air or digital venues*

- Via radio or television
- Social media channels, such as YouTube

- As online distance courses delivered on conference screens, computers, tablets and smartphones
- As blended learning, partly online and partly in classrooms or meeting rooms.

# Best Practice: How to design an effective CPD training course

A well-designed learning event or training course is likely to meet with success. Design is therefore an essential step in the CPD circle. Designing learning events and training courses is the responsibility of the provider. However, in order to be able to request and assess CPD programmes effectively it is necessary for the teaching service and the school, to have a rudimentary knowledge of what quality learning and development design entails.

The first step in the design phase is verification and clarification of needs and requirements to be sure to get it right from the beginning. Otherwise the training course may not meet expectations or fulfil the identified needs.

Designing a training course involves:

- Formulating learning objectives
- Selecting learning methods
- Choosing learning technology (if relevant)
- Preparing course and module descriptions
- Preparing the programme
- Preparing a course summary for advertising and catalogues, etc
- Development of tests, assessment and evaluation mechanisms.

*Learning objectives*

It is important to formulate precise and clear learning objectives as these will orientate both facilitators and trainees, help to focus the learning event, and guide the selection of learning methods, tests and assessment, and the evaluation of the results. The learning objectives should reflect the identified learning needs and the competency level of the participants.

Learning objectives should be concrete, realistic and relevant to the learners and they should match exactly the actual expected outcome of the learning event. An easy approach is to base the formulation of the learning objectives on the knowledge, the skills and the attitudes the participants are expected to develop:

Example learning objectives:

- *Having completed the course, the participants will know the advantages, methods, outcomes and assessment of group assignments....*
- *Having completed the course, the participants will be able to organise pupils into groups, design group assignments, use teamwork techniques, assess results of group assignments....*
- *Having completed the course, the participants will be more sensitive to group dynamics and the needs of different individuals in a group of pupils....*

Good examples of learning objectives can be found at the start of a chapter in almost any recent academic or professional book on learning and development or training.

### *Learning methods*

Learning methods applied during a training course often determine the degree of learning.

Learning methods should reflect:

- The competency level of the participants
- Learner-orientation rather than teacher-orientation
- That it is an adult learning programme

And they should:

- Be appropriate to the subject
- Not overload the training course
- Be applied with decorum considering the sensitivities of participants
- Be applied professionally by a skilled facilitator

Common learning methods and activities		
Learning method/activity	Description	Caution
<b>Icebreaker</b>	People learn much better if they are relaxed and comfortable with the facilitator and their co-learners. This is the purpose of icebreakers which usually start a training session or workshop. There is a range of icebreaker activities available to facilitators which can be accessed on the internet or found in professional literature.	Icebreakers must be a sensitivity to the participant's social standing, cultural personal mindset. The alternatives to icebreaker asking everyone to hold the furniture, begin the with plenary brainstorm
<b>Presentation with questions and answers</b>	The purpose of a presentation is usually to present new knowledge to an interested audience. It is important that the presenter has excellent presentation skills and is able to listen to and be aware of the audience. He or she must provide opportunities for the audience to ask questions either during or at the end of the presentation.	A presentation should more than 20-30 minutes essential that the audience participate with questions should be followed by activities, reflection and on the subject-matter.
<b>PowerPoint slide show</b>	A PP slideshow usually accompanies a presentation. If applied correctly, it can be effective in summarising subject matter to make it easy to remember. A PP slideshow should use minimal text and apply colours, graphs, figures, tables, photos, symbols, drawings, videos, etc. as appropriate.	A PP slideshow should merely summarise in the facilitator's presentation. The facilitator should NOT his/her back to the audience reading the slides out.

<b>Guest lecturer</b>	<p>Inviting a guest lecturer to speak is a good break from the facilitator and a way to introduce real world experience to a training course. A good guest lecturer can be an eye-opener as well as an entertainer. Professional training institutes often have a cadre of experienced practitioners attached to the institute. A guest lecturer should also have good presentation and facilitation skills.</p>	<p>The danger of inviting lecturers is if the lecturer does not understand the learner's needs, the purpose and approach of the course, or if the lecturer is too nervous or dominant. It can be a setback if the lecturer does not hear him/herself speaking for too long. The facilitator should be able to politely steer the lecturer.</p>
<b>Brainstorming, mind-mapping, problem identification, etc.</b>	<p>It can be very productive in a training course or workshop to allow the participants to identify problems and solutions for themselves. They take ownership, are committed, and engage. Another advantage is that it may produce a link between learning and the real world and enhance relevance. Brainstorming, etc. provides an opportunity to discover valuable solutions to real problems.</p>	<p>The danger of this approach is if the facilitator loses control, or if there is too much deviation from the plan, or if some participants become antagonistic. This approach requires a very skilled facilitator.</p>
<b>Reflection</b>	<p>Participants should be given time for reflection during a training course or learning event. This will enable participants to integrate their learning experience, learn more through reflection and identify questions to be addressed.</p>	



<p><b>Group exercises and discussions</b></p>	<p>Group exercises and discussions are excellent and effective ways of engaging learners actively. People in a group learn from working together and from one another. It is important that a group has a clear learning task or a set of questions which they are asked to address. For this they may have access to the internet. The group should elect a chairperson for timekeeping and staying on track, a secretary to take notes, and someone to present. Results may be recorded on flipcharts or be projected on a screen.</p>	<p>Group discussions may involve too much talk, tensions between participants in a group may be dominant people with strong opinions, therefore requires a good facilitator who can steer the process in several groups simultaneously, guide in the right direction, and answer questions.</p>
<p><b>Plenary discussions</b></p>	<p>Plenary discussions normally follow a presentation or a group exercise. It is a way of sharing knowledge and learning. Such discussions may enhance active participation, motivation, inspiration and creativity, and plenary discussions may produce viable solutions to issues in the real world of work.</p>	<p>Plenary discussions can track and stir up tensions, arguments between participants. Sometimes a participant may dominate and force their own ideas. Plenary discussions require a competent facilitator to handle situations that arise.</p>
<p><b>Individual exercises, tests</b></p>	<p>Individual exercises and tests create intensive learning and enable participants to review his or her own acquired competencies and develop more advanced levels of mastery. It provides an opportunity for the trainer or facilitator to discover where improvements in skills are required.</p>	<p>In planning exercises, it must be ensured that the difficulty is appropriate, neither too high nor too low. Attention must be given to the smooth running of technical mechanisms and confidentiality.</p>

<b>Demonstration</b>	<p>Demonstration is one of the best ways to learn a practical skill, perhaps in connection with theory and explanations. It is important the first demonstration by the facilitator is slow and step by step, and that participants all have opportunities to try it out individually. Lack of skill can be dealt with on the spot and improved upon under professional guidance.</p>	<p>It is essential trainees the full rationale for w done in a specific way facilitator should not r the exercise fast, be i show temper, but sho patient and encouragi</p>
<b>Case study</b>	<p>The learning method of case study has been developed to advanced academic levels by universities. Case studies might involve individual as well as group work and they might be long or short. A case study is an excellent way of imitating situations in the real world and learn by exploring alternative options and opportunities and experiencing the results of wrong decisions. Case studies can be developed as online journeys into real life situations where the result of actions are dramatically unfolded.</p>	
<b>Role play</b>	<p>Role play simulates real life work situations. They can be useful in breaking participants' psychological barriers and develop courage to act first in an artificial setting and subsequently in the job. It provides a good opportunity to test difficult and challenging situations and develop professional working skills with colleagues under an experienced facilitator's supervision. It is also a means of seeing another's viewpoint (through acting the other) learning to negotiate, deal with conflict, and so on.</p>	<p>The facilitator must be to overstep the red lin participant personal s Another risk is if some players do not take it all. To plan it well and effective requires a gc understanding of the j job situation.</p>

<b>Games</b>	<p>When you have fun, your mind is open, and you learn easily without straining yourself. Some games can also be engaging and are a good way of promoting full attention. Games are socially fulfilling. Games might be a way of learning how to solve real life crises situations and problems, in the worst case learning by mistake (but without causing any harm).</p>	
<b>Videos</b>	<p>Videos provide an excellent break to the flow of demanding instruction and exercises, and at the same time enable participants to learn in a relaxed fashion. Timing is important, for instance entertainment in evenings, after lunch when participants need to digest or in the late afternoon.</p>	
<b>On-the-job practice</b>	<p>Learning in the class or conference room may be enhanced considerably by practical on-the-job learning and job assignments which may take place during an interval in the course or after completion. It is important to reinforce learning through trial and error and through applying what has been learnt.</p>	<p>If learning is not reinforced by putting it into practice soon after the learning, this is a valuable investment and one doesn't apply acquired competencies, one is likely to forget the knowledge.</p>

<b>Various online and distance learning methods and blended learning</b>	<p>Online programmes, distance learning, e-learning, mobile learning, etc. are becoming increasingly popular and have many advantages such as low cost for the participant, the possibility of learning at home in free time, distribution of learning opportunities to a large number of learners, reaching learners in remote areas, etc. It may involve webinars, short programmes on YouTube as well as long complete educational degree courses. Blended learning means e-learning with short periods of face to face classroom-based session, which can be an advantage for the long education programmes.</p>	<p>Learners may feel isolated, lack motivation and self-discipline. If not provided by group trainers and facilitators, there are mechanisms of communication, do not have the same grasp of the individual participants or the opportunity to focus on and adapt to individual learners. The elements of the programme seem mechanical, too lacking in depth.</p>
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### *The course description*

The course design is captured in the course description. This is an important tool for the trainer or facilitator in preparing the details of course delivery, including duration, methods, materials to be applied, etc. It also provides a good overview for course management and marketing.

Module descriptions are mainly relevant for longer courses which need to be broken down into several subordinate subjects and topics.

The format and detail of course descriptions may vary, but they usually include the following:

- Title, duration, venue, and other basic information
- A descriptive summary of the course
- Profile of the facilitators – (for marketing purposes with names and photos)
- The objective – why the participants need this training, what is expected to be achieved
- Learning outcomes – precise knowledge, skills and attitudes to be acquired.
- Topics of the training course (if large scale can be subdivided under modules)
- The learning methods and activities

- Reference to learning tools and materials
- Profile of the participants and criteria for participation (for instance: must have completed HTC plus 3 years working experience as a teacher)
- Assessment, accreditation and certification (if any).

## How to compile and develop learning materials and tools

Learning materials for knowledge acquisition, reflection, exercises and other forms of application during a course is an essential supplement to the course programme and should be given considerable attention during preparation. Such materials may include:

- A compendium of information on the course, selected articles, book passages, quotations, references, and the following (which alternatively may be distributed when relevant and inserted by the participants in the binder)
- Handouts including exercises, cases, questionnaires, tests, etc
- PowerPoint slides printed for the benefit of participants (however, this intrudes with the surprise effect and is not recommended)
- Literature and books.

To save on paper, learning materials, such as academic and professional articles, may be accessed online through links provided to participants.

Trainers and facilitators may use the following tools and equipment during the training sessions:

- Whiteboard
- Flipchart
- Screen
- Projector
- Computers
- Tablets and smartphones
- Laboratory equipment
- Equipment for demonstration
- Note blocks, pens, etc.

## The facilitator's preparations

A facilitator or trainer always needs to be well prepared. Often the success of a learning event is

directly equivalent to the amount of preparation. When things go wrong participants are likely to develop a negative attitude and the performer may lose his or her confidence and equilibrium. From then on things tend to escalate in the wrong direction. Good preparation provides a safety net to fall back on.

Nevertheless, part of a facilitator's range of skills is also to improvise, adapt to changes, be able to handle unexpected situations, and deal politely but firmly with difficult participants.

## Lesson Notes

Lesson Notes are the facilitators own tools for the systematic planning of a learning event. Lesson Notes provide an easy overview, or checklist, of subtopics, details of timing, and for each topic the methodology, handouts and materials, learning tools, equipment and references.

Lesson Notes may be supplemented by personal notes, which are easy for the facilitator to refer to while running each session without moving the attention away from the participants.

Each facilitator has his or her own style and both Lesson Notes and the facilitator's notes are usually personalised.

## Ensuring training goes smoothly

To ensure a training event goes according to plan the facilitator should:

- Go through the programme mentally and try to memorise the broad outline – without overburdening the brain, which may block the mind
- Check projector, computer, tools and equipment the day before or at least in good time before starting
- Ensure back-up technical staff and service staff are easily within reach during the training
- Organise furniture for informality and groupwork
- Have everything arranged and orderly before starting
- Check all external arrangements, such as transport, lunch, registration, etc.

# Best Practice: How to manage and administer a learning event

Depending on the size and scope of the learning event one or more competent staff should be in charge of course management and administration. Trainers and facilitators should be relieved from this dimension of learning events allowing them to focus on content and delivery.

For larger programmes and programmes delivered at institutes, there may be a hierarchy of managers and administrators from a course director at the top to service staff who take photocopies.

In the case of an external provider, a training institute or a highly professional venue part of the course management and administration will be taken care of. This should be included in the agreement with them, but it is important in any case to check every point.

Management and administration include:

- Managing overall planning, budgeting, tendering, reporting, etc
- Monitoring agreements with external providers
- Managing budget and expenditures
- Taking care of DSA, transport arrangements, accommodation, etc
- Registering participants
- Acting as host: welcoming and directing participants when they arrive.
- Taking care of meals, refreshments, special diets, etc
- Assist with handouts, photocopying, etc
- Handle unexpected situations (if the power fails) and emergencies (if someone gets sick)
- Interacting with technical and service staff associated with the venue (a different employer)
- Simply being there for the facilitators and trainers.

# Best Practice: How to deliver an effective CPD training course

How much teachers participating in CPD training courses and learning events learn ultimately depends on the quality of delivery. It is important to remember adults learn differently to children and youth.

- Organisers and facilitators of learning events should be aware of the professional level of participants, taking care not to under or overestimate their knowledge and experience.
- A training event should be well prepared in advance. The facilitator should check everything is ready the day before such as lesson notes, slides, handouts, etc. and that equipment, such as projectors, work.
- The arrangement of furniture in the conference room or classroom should promote an informal atmosphere and enable group work and exercises.
- A session may start with an appropriate icebreaker or another activity to break down participant psychological resistance or shyness.
- Application of learning methods and activities should be balanced and appropriate, they should fit the topic, and there should neither be too little, nor an overload of different learning activities.
- A learning event should carefully balance short presentations, question and answer sessions, participatory activities, moments of reflection, breaks, etc. A small break every hour is desirable as well as physical activities after lunch. Evenings are perfect for videos.
- The facilitator must respect adult learners and their views and experience. In many cases adult learners have considerable knowledge and experience to share with their co-participants. They may not previously have formulated their knowledge and experience and not considered it as valuable experiential learning before the course.
- Adult learners should be enabled to discover answers and solutions themselves with the aid of the facilitator and the group. This enhances ownership of the findings and is the rationale



behind the term *facilitator*.

- It is beneficial to draw on participant work realities when possible to ensure a high degree of relevance and subsequent application in the workplace.
- Presentations should be lively and engaging and not last more than 20-30 minutes.
- PowerPoint slide shows should be applied with great care. They should never merely summarise the spoken statements of the presenter, but should supplement the statements through use of symbols, images, figures, graphs, etc. The slides should apply colours creatively and be entertaining in order to enhance the attention of the learners and the learning impact.
- There is a range of participatory and engaging learning activities available to the facilitator to enhance the learning experience. A facilitator should know these and make use of them professionally.
- Practical arrangements that support the learning event such as lunch, accommodation, etc. must function smoothly so as not to interfere with an otherwise positive experience.

# Best Practice: How to assess effectiveness of a learning event

Participant learning and acquisition of competencies may be assessed through tests such as:

- Multiple-choice
- Questionnaires
- Written exams
- Results of exercises during the event
- Results of cases
- Results of group work.

Assessment tools may be combined. Tests may be of individuals or of groups, rewarding groups for their results collectively.

If a course is accredited and rewarded by a diploma or recognised certificate, tests are a requirement in order to ensure objectivity and fairness.

For minor learning events tests should be kept simple and quick.

# Best Practice: How to evaluate the results of a learning event

CPD training courses and learning events are evaluated to ensure learning is effective and to improve the quality of the course. There are four kinds of evaluation:

- Pre- and post-tests:

*Pre/Post-tests* are conducted before and after a training course to measure the competencies acquired during the training course. Such a test should comprise a simple multiple-choice test which should not take up too much time. Often it is only the post-test which is applied which demonstrates the learning achieved.

- Immediate reaction evaluation:

The *immediate reaction evaluation* captures participants reactions on the closure of a training course. Participants evaluate the performance of the trainer(s) or facilitator(s), the quality of handouts and materials, what they have learnt during each lesson, logistics and arrangements, and other matters. This type of evaluation is subjective, though valuable. In some cases, the trainer or facilitator will also evaluate the course. For TSC teacher training participants are asked to complete an EVALUATION FORM.

- Outcome evaluation

The *outcome evaluation* measures concrete improvements in work behaviour and demonstrated knowledge and competencies as against course objectives. This is a measure of the success of the course and measures how much is learnt and subsequently applied in the workplace. Outcome evaluation typically takes place 3 and/or 6 months after course completion through questionnaires sent to participants and their supervisors.

- Impact evaluation

*The impact evaluation* usually examines impact of larger training programmes in relation to government policies, strategies and plans, or the impact on education in, for example, quality of teaching, reduction in drop-out rates, increase in pass rates, improvement in gender balance, and effect on the labour market and the economy. Impact can usually only be measured after a couple of years and CPD may only be one of several factors that influence impact. Impact can be determined from statistics, surveys, government reports, etc.

# Best Practice: Follow up of a training course

An important dimension of learning is to practice what you have learnt in real life to reinforce the learning process. Many training courses fail to have an impact because this does not happen.

It is the duty of training organisers and the managers of participants to ensure mechanisms are in place to enable training participants to practice what they learnt and get experience while it is still fresh in their mind. When teachers participate in CPD events, school leaders should be involved from the outset and systematically follow up afterwards.

To focus the attention of both teacher and school leader, CPD should evaluate training outcomes where results must be demonstrated in performance in the classroom.

Following up on training may be incorporated in mentoring, coaching or supervision programmes. Participants in training may also be given targeted job assignments on completing a course. This is particularly relevant in the case of leadership training. Finally, a CPD training course may be supplemented by e- and mobile learning modules.

# Best Practice: Out of the classroom, on-the-job or spare-time learning

Job-based and spare-time learning are low-cost solutions to develop competencies which, if appropriately applied, can be very effective. It includes:

- Virtual classroom and webinars
- E- and mobile learning
- Blended learning which combines periods of self-study, working and occasional meetings with facilitators/lecturers and co-learners
- Systematic on-the-job instruction or supervision, which might involve demonstrations. This can be facilitated by the school leader or a highly accomplished/distinguished teacher
- Mentoring
- Coaching, which is more personalised and systematic than mentoring
- Provision of instructions on posters, easily accessible manuals, etc
- Team learning on-the-job
- Communities of practice (Can be organised as a Facebook or LinkedIn group with similar professional and subject interests who maintain contact, discuss online, exchange literature, etc.)
- Self-directed learning.

# Best Practice: How to initiate self-directed learning

There are many opportunities for teachers to pursue knowledge and skills outside of training courses, mentoring or other on-the-job CPD opportunities if they take the initiative.

The internet has made self-directed learning easy. For example, if a teacher feels inadequate teaching math, there are excellent free and low-cost programmes available online to help the teacher build his or her knowledge, understanding and confidence of the subject. Courses also usually include methods for effective teaching of learners at different grades.

A reflective and interested teacher will also learn by his or her own experience, called experiential learning. This requires an aptitude for mental processing of experiences, using one's intuition, a willingness and courage to experiment, and systematic accumulation of best practices.

A teacher also acquires knowledge, skills and aptitude by interacting with and watching more experienced teachers perform. This is an informal way of mentoring. Such learning can be effective if the teacher is critical, alert and takes note of what works well and what does not. A teacher should not imitate a senior teacher's bad habits or outdated practices, but should be able to distinguish between what benefits the learners and what does not.

The impact of self-directed learning can be increased by learning in groups. This allows teachers to support one another, engage in regular dialogue, share knowledge and experiences and stimulate each other's interests. The learning achieved in a group will exceed the sum of the knowledge of each member of the group and is therefore an extremely valuable approach to learning. In small schools, teachers might form just one or two groups, one focusing on science subjects and one focusing on arts subjects. In larger schools, groups of teachers may refer to grades or they may, and especially in secondary school, be based on subjects.

The group approach to learning can be extended beyond the school involving professional subject associations and communities of practice.

At the heart of self-directed learning is the notion that the human mind by nature is geared to continuously learn, and that knowledge is formed instinctively in the subconscious mind.

A teacher can apply the *Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders (TSC, 2017)* as a guide and inspiration for self-directed learning.

It is important school leaders and distinguished or highly accomplished teachers take the initiative to stimulate and guide self-directed learning among teachers.