

Introduction

Continues learning is important in an ever changing world. Teachers are no exception to this. In this paper the different forms of professional development are examined. These opportunities range from formal to informal ways in which teachers can develop themselves. First, formal ways of professional development are looked at before moving on to non-formal and informal ways this can take place.

Teacher development through formal learning

In the country where I live and teach (the Netherlands) several opportunities exist for teachers to develop themselves through professional learning. Once in their career teachers are allowed to do a Masters on a teaching related subject paid for by the government. If teachers decide to pursue this opportunity they are given paid leave, tuition is paid and the school they work is given a grant to hire a temporary replacement. This makes doing this a interesting option for both the teacher and the school he/she is working on. Although I have been a teacher for just one year, this option is already interesting for me. However, I decided to wait a few more years to use this opportunity as this allows me to really master the teaching itself before continuing my growth by means of this programme.

Teacher development through non-formal learning

Many non-formal opportunities exist to develop oneself professionally. In the Netherlands teachers in primary and secondary education are given a yearly budget which they can spend on courses and workshops in order to develop. The topics of these activities are not predefined and can range from teaching special needs students to personal development courses. It also is not limited to courses offered by educational institutions but can also be from other organisations such as trade unions or even the Scouts. For example, I almost have completed a course offered by the Scouts on personal development and leadership which was paid for by my employer even though the connection with my teaching job is only a indirect one. Besides face-to-face courses a number of education centred MOOCs exists with which one can develop himself/herself professionally.

Teacher development through informal learning

Although professional development through formal and non-formal education is a good way for teachers to develop themselves, it requires some infrastructure to be in place to facilitate this. Even though this infrastructure it exists in most countries it requires often significant time and money to participate in those. Luckily, there are some easy ways in which a teach can develop himself. The first is through the use of feedback. By regularly asking the students what they think of the lessons one can learn from students. To obtain the feedback one can use questionnaires. These do not need to be complicated or long. Using these can help you in identifying areas of improvements. Observations by and observing lessons of fellow teachers can also serve a similar purpose. A more structured form of

professional development are so called Teacher Development Teams (TDTs). These are groups of teachers meeting on a regular basis and working towards a similar goal. Participating in these teams can help you to develop yourself to become a better teacher.