School Based Continuing Professional Development: The Role of School Principals.

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Abstract: At school level, processes that affect teacher professional growth are associated with management or staff development perspective. School principals are expected to coordinate professional progression of their staff and also manage the learning community as a whole. Their leadership is crucial in providing working conditions that offer learning opportunities. The principals work together with parents, teachers, and community members as a community of practice to ensure quality teaching and positive classroom achievement. However, existing Continuing Professional Development initiatives in Sub Saharan Africa have not successfully addressed the needs of the teachers as they appear to be far removed from the learning contexts. Using interviews, document analysis and observations, this study looked into the role of head teachers in promoting professional development opportunities of their teachers, challenges they face and possible intervention strategies. Findings reveal that despite the existence of policy documents that support Continuing Professional Development of teachers, the structures required to translate theory to practice are lacking. Attempts to introduce or strengthen school-based staff development programmes are faced with inadequate school level supervisory capacity and teacher resentment.

Key words: Continuing professional development, teacher learning, Staff development, community of practice, school based learning.

1. Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD), or teacher staff development as referred to in other literatures, is one of the strategies used by education systems across the world to ensure quality teaching. Arguments for (CPD) include the notion that good teaching methods have a significant positive impact on how and what students learn (Guskey, 2000; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Young, 2000). The need for CPD is not, however, an indication of inadequate training but simply a response to the fact that not everything that teachers need to know can be provided at pre-service level (Richards & Farrell, 2005). There is also a growing recognition that teachers are not simply ‘variables’ that need to be changed in order to improve educational outcomes but they are also agents in these reforms (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

Continuing Professional development is a term used to describe all the activities in which teachers engage in, during the course of a career, which are designed to enhance their work (Day and Sachs 2004). The main argument is that teachers keep learning from practice and become experienced in every passing year in their careers. CPD therefore involves a wide range of activities and training programmes or methods used to help teachers develop professionally throughout their career. Kelchetermans (2004) describes this as a learning process in which results not only become visible in one’s professional practice but also in one’s thinking about the how and why of that practice. It is a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically, (Guskey 2000, Villegas-Reimers 2003) to promote growth and development in the profession.

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990:245) give characteristics of effective professional development as follows:

- Programs conducted in school settings and linked to school wide efforts.
- Teacher participating as helpers to each other and as planners with administrators of in-service activities.
- Emphasis on self-instruction with differentiated training opportunities
- Teachers in active roles, choosing goals, activities for themselves.
- Emphasis on demonstration, supervised trials and feedback.
- Training that is concrete and on-going.
- On-going assistance and support available on request

Many professional development programmes, however, lack some of these critical elements, and few have been successful (Guskey, 1986). Christie et al., (2004), for example, found that teachers play...
limited roles in educational reform; they simply implement prescribed programmes. Consultation programmes are not robust and, where teachers have participated, they tend to be used to rubber stamp what has already been proposed, a practice that reduces the teacher to a sheer ‘technician’ rather than a ‘reflective practitioner’. Many such reforms have met strong resentment from teachers; if implemented, chances of success are minimal.

Further, even donor funded CPD programmes have not succeeded either as governments are likely to take up programmes not because they are deemed beneficial to their education systems but because of the external support they are receiving. As Johnson, Monk, & Hodges, (2000: 179) comment: "Northern/Western ideas about teacher change and development are poorly suited to modelling practices and challenges for those who are historically disadvantaged. The environment in which teachers work – physical, social and political – act to select a more limited repertoire of behaviour than those providing in-service might imagine."

In line with the above comments, Speck, (1996) argues, that professional development learning and day-to-day activities should be relevant to the teachers work and/or personal lives; it should provide opportunities for activities that allow educators to practice the learning and receive structured, helpful feedback and; should accommodate their previous experiences, knowledge, self-direction, interests, and competencies. This means that coaching and other kinds of follow-up support are needed to help teachers to transfer learning into daily practice so that it is sustained.

In Kenya, for instance, lack of relevant knowledge about school based CPD on the part of the teachers is a question of concern. In a one week workshop with the school heads on curriculum implementation for all school heads held in 2010 at the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI), the idea of school based CPD was tabled. The new approach was meant to decentralize CPD provision to the school level. Head teachers were required to assume the role of the directors of the school based professional development committees. They were to liaise with Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASO) at the district level to form CPD committee within their schools. The committee was expected to oversee the CPD activities within the school. This was not practical given the limited induction that was provided at the workshop. According to the school principals, besides lacking the necessary expertise to lead the school based Quality Assurance, they also felt that the teachers would not take this position seriously as they were not involved in the decision making process.

It was therefore the aim of this study to seek views of the people directly involved in CPD activities, to identify challenges, and find possible ways to improve participation.

2. Background

After independence in 1963, Kenya inherited an education system with an underdeveloped teaching profession, lacking both in quality and quantity. There were few teachers, the majority of whom were untrained (Christie et al., 2004). The training colleges that existed at the time only enrolled a few teacher trainees (Eshiwani, 1993). Educational development since independence has been challenged by high population growth and the uncertain state of the economy, placing severe constraints on the resources available for educational development (Otiende, Wamahiu, & Karugu, 1992). Currently, the government has suspended the recruitment of teachers as a structural adjustment strategy to cope with economic pressure, a development with far reaching consequences in education.

The Kenya MOES&T has articulated several strategic plans aimed at improving the quality of education, of which professional development is one. Its vision is ‘to provide quality education for development’ while its mission is ‘to provide, promote and co-ordinate lifelong education, training and research for Kenya’s sustainable development’ (MOES&T, 2005b). In the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP), the government is committed to the attainment of Millennium Development goals (MDG), the broad objective being to give every Kenyan the right to quality education and training. Quality education and training is thus a prerequisite for economic growth and the expansion of employment opportunities (MOES&T, 2005a).

According to MOES&T (2005b), pre-service training alone cannot prepare teachers for the challenges of lifelong teaching and learning in which characterise the rapidly changing society. The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards is therefore mandated to: conduct subject-based content mastery improvement and pedagogical skills upgrading training; monitoring school level curriculum delivery to determine existing discrepancies in instruction methodology and areas that need attention; undertake continuing research to determine the quality of education being offered; establishing a formalized system of in-service training for teachers at all levels. The officers are deployed at the district, county and national levels, with the responsibility of looking at the educational institutions and carrying out an audit of the activities of educational institutions activities and how they impact on the curriculum implementation and

Despite policy emphasis on the continuous improvement in the quality of services through ongoing skills upgrading for teachers, there is growing concern over the quality of education being provided in Kenya. Student failure has been linked to teacher non-performance while recent exam malpractices have been attributed to poor preparation of students. This study therefore aimed at seeking views geared towards possible CPD strategies, advising policy in the process.

3. Method

This study used a qualitative approach to explore views and practices of teachers and school heads regarding CPD provision in Kenya. The participants were drawn from five counties: Nairobi, Kajiado, Nakuru, Kiambu and Machakos. The study, which was conducted over a period of four months, involved head teachers who were directly involved in supervision of quality teaching and learning in the schools, and teachers who are meant to implement the CPD activities. Data were collected using individual interviews, observation and document analysis. Six school principals and fifteen teachers participated in the study. The study was not meant to generalize to the wider Kenyan region but rather aimed to create an awareness geared towards bringing change in both policy decisions and supervision practices.

3.1. Research questions

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the general views and perceptions of head teachers regarding the existing CPD practices?
2. What conditions constrain the head teachers’ active involvement in CPD of teachers?
3. What are the possible strategies that can be used to improve CPD provision of teachers?

3.2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that guided the study was Knowles’ (2005) theory of adult learning which suggests that adults are autonomous and self-directed; hence their learning cannot be treated like children’s. He observes the following principles: the need to know, the learners self-concept, the role of learner’s experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning and motivation. This means that adults will commit to learning when the goals and objectives are realistic and important to them; when they are responsible for their decisions on education; when they are involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction and when they are motivated. These features of adult learning theory should be considered when professional development activities are designed for educators. As Surgrue, (2004) notes, existing CPD policies and practices have not been able to address teachers’ needs as teachers have no control over decision making. The classroom is seen as a place where the focus is on performance and accountability. These conditions inhibit the teachers’ freedom to make rational decisions regarding their practices and thus greatly impact on their identities and sense of professionalism.

4. Findings

4.1 CPD practices in schools

4.1.1 Staff meetings. The school principals reported that staff meetings were one of the CPD strategies employed at the school level. This included whole school or departmental meetings. Whole school staff meetings, often chaired by the Principals, were held at the beginning and end of the term and occasionally during the term if there was need. Teachers also met at departmental level during the term and a report of the issues discussed submitted to the principals’ offices. In these meetings, planning and decisions were made jointly and policies communicated. Discussion tended to focus on issues of syllabus coverage, remedial learning, testing and feedback and teacher roles. Fullan (2006), however, observes that merely granting teachers greater responsibility for decisions that affect their jobs, such as school policy and curriculum, doesn’t guarantee that instruction will improve. Teacher A, for instance, reported that the recommendations arrived at in the staff meetings were never followed up by the school head.

4.1.2. Team building. The study also revealed that the head teachers used teamwork as a CPD strategy in their schools. They did this by delegating duties to the staff, mainly to the heads of departments, to ensure that work was done effectively. This meant that department heads were used as a means of liaison between the principals and the teachers. In one school, for instance, matters of teachers’ work were dealt with by the senior teacher in charge of academics. Principal B noted that delegating roles to his staff made them assume leadership roles, something that not only motivated them but also made them feel part of the decision-making processes. The senior academic teacher, for instance, attended to issues of learning, leaving the Principal to attend to issues that were difficult to
handle. He carried out analysis of the students’ as well as teachers’ work to identify areas of need and then advised the Principal accordingly.

Citing the case of the newly introduced School-based Quality Assurance programme that was meant to decentralize CPD programmes to school level, the Principals noted that there were, however, instances where they did not win the cooperation of the staff, a situation which he attributed to the constraints on their work. This confirms that new responsibilities, by themselves, don’t always translate into increased focus on teacher professional competence. Teachers may resist performing the extra administrative work that empowerment efforts bring, or they may resist involvement in their school’s decision-making process because their vision of professional conduct does not include an emphasis on issues of power and control. In such cases, as Fullan, (2006) observes, the mechanisms intended to empower teachers can either augment a principal’s control of the school or shift the focus from essential issues that affect classroom work.

4.1.3. Supervision. The head teachers’ involvement in CPD include observing and checking teachers’ work, internal classroom supervision and ensuring that all departments had enough teachers. In addition to external evaluation by school QASO, the head teachers, regarded as ‘first inspectors’ (ROK, 2005), are also expected to evaluate teachers in their respective schools. This include checking teaching standards by reference to schemes of work, lesson notes, records of work done, and pupils’ exercise books; also by actual visits to the classroom to see the work of individual teachers. The head teachers are provided with annual confidential report forms by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), which they are expected to complete and return. Information entered into the forms includes the general conduct and personal characteristics; performance in teaching and carrying out assignments; administrative and organizational ability; cooperation with colleagues; and overall assessment.

Although the head teachers were aware of their role as first inspectors, their workload did not allow them to adequately meet the expectations. They did not have enough time, for instance, to go through the teachers’ work, so the confidential reports they wrote about the teachers were based on the reports they received from the heads of departments. Class observations did not seem to happen at all and, according to Mr N, the practice was intimidating to the teachers, because of the connotations of ‘inspection’ associated with the previous regime. He preferred to allow his teachers to work independently and, in case of any problem, he expected them to seek help at departmental level.

The idea of carrying out evaluation on the teachers and writing confidential reports about them seem to contradict the purpose of observation. The most appropriate use of classroom observation, according to Guskey (2000), is to allow teachers to become aware of practice which may have gone unnoticed and also help identify specific strengths and areas that may need refinement or adaptation rather than for evaluation issues or staff development purposes.

4.1.4. Learning Communities. Communities of Practice (CoP) are, according to Wenger (1999), groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. It is a mechanism through which beliefs, attitudes and practices can be reformed. In education, CoP involves collaborative sharing of ideas and finding solutions to problems (Edwards, 2009; Wright, 2007) and willingness of its members to assume responsibility for their colleagues growth and development (Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2001).

The school principals are facilitators of staff learning –leaders of a learning community. They are instructional cheerleaders who teach, and promote the professional development of teachers (Fullan 2006). Their availability to their staff enhances motivation, self-esteem, sense of security, and morale. School principals set the tone for a community of teachers who freely exchange information and ideas. They recognize that the members of staff are learners, just as they are teachers, and need professional development experiences and materials that support their learning and their work in classrooms. They have the opportunity to create and foster a culture of adult learning (NAESP, 2001), where teachers work collaboratively in order to learn. How, then, did the head teachers in the present study consider that they matched up to these challenges?

In their view, community learning was facilitated in various ways including: creating space where teachers met to discuss issues of their professional growth; allowing time for teachers to meet and discuss issues affecting their work; allowing teachers to come up with and try out new ideas related to learning, giving time off from school for teachers to participate in externally organised CPD activities; and meeting and interacting with the teachers on matters affecting their work.

4.2. Challenges

4.2.1. Establishing learning communities. For a professional community to develop and grow within a school Fullan, (2006:9) suggests that the following structural conditions should be met:
• Time to meet and talk. This is essential to beginning and maintaining meaningful education reform within a school.
• Physical proximity. Schools can increase teacher contact by creating team planning rooms or other common places for discussion of educational practices.
• Interdependent teaching roles. Creation of recurring formal situations in which teachers work together including team teaching, and integrated lesson design. The team provides a lasting, substantial structure for sustained communication based in shared goals. As teachers work together, they develop a sense of community and a greater sense of effectiveness.
• Communication structures. Opportunities that encourage an exchange of ideas on instruction, curriculum, assessment and other professional issues, both within and across such organizational units as teams, grade levels and subject departments.
• Teacher empowerment and school autonomy. Teachers make decisions regarding their work and respond to the specific needs they see. Instead of being guided by rules, they are guided by the norms and beliefs of the professional community.

Developing learning communities, however, was not a problem free process, as expressed by Principal X. He observed that, as school leaders, they were faced with various tensions including: balancing and integrating internal versus external change demands and instances where they could apply autocracy versus democracy to get things moving. For instance, there was, a new policy giving more responsibilities for quality assurance to the schools, and in particular to the school heads who were to be the directors of the School-based Quality Assurance programme. This policy was aimed at allowing schools to develop and run their CPD activities that were appropriate to their circumstances and demands.

According to X, the new innovation was not well received by the teachers because of weaknesses associated with the planning process. Although he was required to ensure that the programme was set up, he was under no obligation to force teacher participation. The Principals blamed the failure on the policy makers for their poor planning and ignoring the involvement of the teachers in the process, hence the resentment:

It is evident that there were no shared interests regarding the new programme among the policy makers, head teachers, and the teachers, who were the implementers. Shared vision and ownership, according to Levin & Fullan (2008), are the outcomes of a quality process rather than a precondition. Lack of cooperation on the part of the teachers was an indication that they did not understand how they were to benefit from the new innovation.

Principal N also reported misunderstanding between him and his staff about his role in CPD provision. He said that his inability to support his teachers in CPD activities was caused by factors that were beyond his means. For instance, that he could not do much about the scarce resources available in the school.

4.2.2. Workload. Research confirms that the most effective principals are those who spend time in the classroom as it lets them know what is going on and gives teachers the opportunity to receive help with their instructional efforts (NAESP, 2001). However, for busy school administrators, this is an enormous task. The principals observed that other responsibilities did not allow for effective interaction with the teachers. Besides teaching, they had to attend to administrative issues of the school related to the government, teachers, students and parents. These roles fit into Kwakwa, (1973) cited in Lydiah & Nasongo, (2009) description of the head teacher as the keeper of keys, the director of transportation, the coordinator of correspondence, the quartermaster of stores, the divisor of intricate schedules, the publisher of handbooks, the director of public relations and the instructional leader.

The problem of workload was thus cited as one of the reason why the Principals could not take up the role of leading the School-based Quality Assurance and instead delegated it to their deputies. The deputies also had a heavy workload, so any delegation involved transfer to already overworked colleagues. The result was a lack of motivation and frustration.

The above is a counterproductive by-product of the transference of responsibilities, a feature common in schools. According to Timperly & Robinson (2000), a common occurrence in schools is empowering teachers with additional responsibilities without the necessary training. The additional tasks often attribute to increased levels of stress, burnout, and low job satisfaction among teachers. Fullan (1996) attributes this phenomenon to fragmented leadership and over-saturation of teacher empowerment. He recommends a more comprehensive networking and shared leadership approach.
4.2.3. External pressure. The effectiveness of the school managers is determined by the general performance in examinations (Lydiyia & Nasongo, 2009). Pressure for accountability and effectiveness from the government and other stakeholders saw the school principals direct attention to CPD activities that were geared towards improving performance in the national exams. Whether improved examination performance is an indication of quality teaching has been a point of debate. For instance Bryk et al. (1994) observe that it is possible to increase scores on standardized achievement tests in the short run with tightly led and monitored changes. However, others argue that such changes are superficial and non-lasting because they do not meet the long-term goals of education.

The way in which head teachers responded to certain state policy agendas revealed the influence of more managerial pressures upon the activities of the teachers. For example, the idea to set up an Internal School Based Quality Assurance department in which the principals were to be the directors was not well received. The principals felt that it was an added responsibility and that they were not well inducted on how to go about it. Rather than openly expressing their fears and concerns, they instead shifted responsibility to their deputy head teachers for trying it out with the teachers. In the end no progress was made as teachers claimed that they were not inducted on the same.

4.2.4. Training. It emerged from the study that although the principals as leaders of learning were responsible for the coaching, mentoring and guiding teachers, they lacked adequate skills to do so. Besides, there was evidence to show that they were not up to date with the current CPD practices. While the school has been found to be the most effective place for CPD provision, the Principals seemed to support externally organized activities. Their reluctance to implement the newly introduced School based Quality Assurance programme was a clear indication of lack of knowledge of the current trends in CPD provision which supports context based models of teacher development. For instance, Principal B admitted inviting speakers to the school to speak to the teachers but he said the topics were not anything related to classroom approaches and subject knowledge development.

This suggests that CPD on issues of subject knowledge and classroom approaches only happens outside school in externally organized programmes. These programmes have, however, been criticized for being irrelevant to the needs of the teachers and their daily work in schools and classrooms (Wanzare & Ward, 2000). It is therefore important that head teachers understand the most effective CPD practices so as to be able to support the teachers effectively. Mr. D’s statement that ‘the fact that I am the principal does not mean I can guide teachers on CPD matters’, is a clear indication that he did not feel competent to take up the role of a facilitator of CPD activities at the school level. As Fullan (2005) argues, a key component in a change process is having the right personnel in leadership positions to facilitate school-site professional learning communities. He puts it as having ‘the right person on the right bus in the right sea’ (p. 68).

4.3. Teacher’s views on school-based CPD

A range of activities was viewed as school routine rather than teacher learning practices. For instance, according to the school principals, teachers were expected to hold at least two departmental meetings and two whole school meetings per term. In addition to the cascading programmes facilitated by teachers who attended external CPD trainings, speakers were occasionally invited to come and give talks to the teachers. Observations of these activities, however, indicated that these made little contribution to change in classroom approaches or subject knowledge as attention seemed to be focused on syllabus coverage, examination performance and issues of the schools such as student discipline.

In School E, the school deputy principle argued that the department of QASO was directly responsible for the CPD of the teachers and saw it as an added responsibility on his part. Another head teacher reported that she had tried it with the heads of departments with no success. ‘I think teachers would need a lot of motivation because if we are talking of HOD’s they are busy running their departments...‘. From the teachers’ perspective, the establishment of the school based CPD was simply a response to yet another demand imposed upon them by the policy makers. As a consequence, they simply ignored calls to collaborate with colleagues.

5. Discussions

5.1. School-based CoPs or external provision

A recurrent theme in interviews with teachers concerned their understanding of what constituted CPD – externally provided workshops and courses, or on-going support of colleagues as part of a CoP. Data gathered from observations of departmental meetings in the schools suggested that teacher learning was considered to be an external activity, rather than an on-going part of professional life. The main issues addressed during these meetings included: syllabus coverage, assessment, and teaching strategies.

5.2. Identification of teacher needs

According to Speck (1996), adults want to be responsible for their own learning – and thus their
professional development – need some control over the what, who, how, why, when, and where of their learning. Participants in this study, however, reported that the content, the venue, the methods and the pace of instructions were pre-specified. The CPD providers made the decisions with regards to the topics that teachers should be trained on, allowing participants to only choose from the proposed topics the ones that interested them. As expressed by teacher R, there was little consultation regarding what was to be included in the CPD programmes. Hence, most of the available CPD programmes did not address teachers’ needs.

Although there exists activities such as informal interactions, networking, learning groups which fall within the scope of CPD, the teachers do not consider them as part of CPD activities; a possible reason for their preference for traditional methods of CPD provision.

It also emerged that there were occasional supervisory visits by personnel from the department of QASO aimed at facilitating teacher development. The head teachers were also expected to offer instructional support at the school level. These were however faced with a range of challenges, including, limited CPD expertise, resources, external pressure, time, and lack of teacher cooperation.

Throughout the research, teachers expressed the desire to take part in a wide range of professional development activities. They described subject-based CPD as one of the most highly regarded forms of professional development. However, such enthusiasm was constrained in many cases by frustration at existing structures for planning, resourcing and delivering CPD. Inadequate subject-based professional development meant that many teachers were only able to access CPD on general issues such as examinations and curriculum change.

The availability of CPD depended to a large extent on the schools where teachers were based. There was widespread consensus that the varying distribution of government funding across the schools had resulted in unfair CPD provision, with some teachers feeling overlooked, and others feeling barely able to address their CPD needs on top of their already considerable workloads.

In the context of the school, CPD meant meeting as departments to discuss issues of syllabus coverage and assessments, while learning about new pedagogical innovations and developments concerning the content of instruction took place externally. The teachers reported that their desire to build learning communities was often constrained by inappropriate school structures, and the pressures of workload. They complained that they had little input regarding the what, when, who how and where of CPD. As a result, most of the available programmes failed to address their needs. They described them as repetitive, too short or, irrelevant to their needs.

The head teachers admitted that there was need for teachers to be involved in CPD activities, identifying their greatest motivation to do this as improving performance in the examinations. While they favoured externally organised CPD events, they also pointed to the budgetary and time constraints associated with sending their teachers to these events. The new role of leading the school-based Quality Assurance was perceived to be an added responsibility; therefore, they did not want to be involved. They cited, limited CPD expertise, and lack of teacher cooperation as factors which seemed to work against their efforts to build professional learning communities in the schools.

Lack of monitoring and evaluation on the transfer of skills and knowledge into the classroom, was one of the biggest impediments to the transfer of theory to practice. There was insufficient follow-up to determine the relevance and productivity of the CPD programmes. Monitoring at the school level by principals seemed weak; hence the impact of CPD on student learning was rarely evaluated. There was inadequate follow-up of the workshops that could help make teachers aware of gaps and weaknesses in their practise. The most frequently evaluated component was participant satisfaction, which often happened at the CPD venues according to CPD providers. The most widely used evaluation tool was a survey or questionnaire which, in many cases, was viewed by participants as routine exercise that had little impact on programme improvement.

6. Recommendations

There is need to emphasize the move towards school-based professional development. This will ensure that CPD activities are planned around teachers’ practical needs. Teachers also need more say in deciding what CPD activities are appropriate for them. School-based CPD will be less expensive for both the Ministry and the teachers bypassing the need to travel away from school and costs related to allowances and meals. Teachers within the school can be given specialised training to run CPD activities for the schools. When there is need, external trainers can also be brought into the school to offer support for different subject areas. In addition, appropriate induction programmes for newly qualified teachers need to be devised to eliminate barriers and difficulties they might experience in their work. Observation, visits to other schools, providing relevant literature and supervisory feedback from supervisors and colleagues are some of the activities that can be incorporated into school-based CPD for effectiveness.

Teachers need to be able to see that what they learn in CPD programmes enables them to improve their teaching and produces positive results in their
classrooms. Schools therefore need to develop effective supervision and evaluation systems in order to promote professional growth of teachers. This should include monitoring of performance, and application of skills into the classroom.

Instructional supervision at school level needs to be strengthened to facilitate the professional development of teachers. Head teacher supervision should be directed specifically towards the improvement of teaching and learning strategies and provision of a favourable teaching and learning atmosphere. Development in this area requires a community of practice approach characterised by collaboration, commitment, sharing of information, shared decision making, and team work.

More resources need to be injected towards research and development of new innovations in CPD, including subject-based provision. Research into different CPD models will ensure that teachers receive relevant support in their work. Teachers, on the other hand, need to be receptive to new CPD approaches; awareness needs to be raised that no one approach can work for all teachers or schools. Traditional workshops, conferences, and courses should be combined with current CPD models, such as classroom observation, peer coaching, partnerships, and communities of practice for effectiveness.

There is urgent need to develop a comprehensive set of tools and techniques for policy analysis, dialogue, and communication to help strengthen the countries’ capacity to formulate educational policies and most importantly implement reform. Developments in this area should be in collaboration with the teachers who not only better understand their learning contexts but also are the implementers of these reforms. There is need to involve them in dialogue about strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning and carrying out research on the same.

7. Conclusion

Head teachers admit that there is need for teachers to be involved in CPD activities, the greatest motivation being improving performance in the examinations. Attempts to introduce or strengthen school-based CPD, however, are faced with inadequate school level supervisory capacity and lack of teacher cooperation which seem to work against their efforts to build professional learning communities in the schools. As leaders of the schools, they bear the greatest blame if the schools do not perform well in the examinations. There is, therefore, need to build the Principals’ capacity for capacity building of the teachers and, teachers need to be part of the change process, constantly involved in the what, when, where and how of their professional development act.

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4. References


