Professional Development Committee
Academic Year 2017/2018
English Language Center
Dr. Sabah Salman Sabbah, Ph.D.
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Introduction

In an era of constantly-developing educational, epistemological, technological, and linguistic trends, the focal need is, nowadays, on issues of “teacher quality” and ‘academic excellence’, namely the ability of a teaching faculty to improve student learning and meet expected standards for performance. This inevitably involves the importance of planning on-going continual professional development programs and activities to qualify teachers theoretically and pedagogically. Professional development encompasses formal education, pre-and in-service specialized training to promote ESL knowledge, competence, classroom strategies and classroom differentiation techniques to meet students’ individual differences with the ultimate goal of maintaining effectiveness and excellence in teaching to improve student achievement.

Theoretical Background

Murray (2001: 488) elaborated on the definition of professional development by identifying three purposes of professional development programs:

1. “To increase quality of education for students,
2. To revitalize the institution, and
3. To renew the faculty”

This approach to discuss the purposes of PD programs highlights the fact that such programs aim to improve students’ performance, institutional effectiveness and faculty efficiency.

In order to maintain professional development, teachers can engage in certain activities that include self and peer appraisal and reflection by peer classroom visits, writing diaries and journals, video and audio taping, obtaining learner feedback, attending local
and international conferences, participating in webinars, seminars, and training courses, conducting action research, and subscribing to professional teaching journals. Sapre (2000) and Tawalbeh (2005) pointed out that teachers need to be highly competent, responsible for quality education, and independent decision makers. Similarly, Limbo (1975) cited in Shdaifat (1998) suggested that teachers need to be skillful in the use of different diagnostic, planning, facilitative, and evaluation procedures. Wallace (1991) described three major models of professional development: the craft model, the applied science model, and the reflective model. The following diagrams illustrate how each model works:

The Craft Model: Knowledge is acquired by observation, instruction, and practice.

![Diagram of the Craft Model]

**The Applied Science Model** is based on the following premises:

1. Teaching is a science and should be examined rationally and objectively.
2. Teachers learn to be teachers by being taught research-based theories.
3. Good teachers start to apply these theories in practice.

**The Reflective Method**: is based on the assumption that teachers develop professional competence by reflecting on their own practices in classes. Teachers become more self-aware and self-monitor of their own teaching.

Recently, researchers have recommended a PD model that cares about the whole learning-teaching community. It is the Community of Practice Excellence, COPE. Community of Practice is defined by
Timperley Helen, Wilson Aaron, Barrar Heather and Fung Irene (2007:200) as the “complex network of relationships within which teachers participate, usually for the purpose of promoting professional teaching.’ The researchers highlighted the benefits of such model,

“Teacher’s confidence, problem-solving skills, professional abilities and identity are enhanced as a result of this participation, strengthening their ability to stimulate students’ interest and achievement.”

In this respect, it would be beneficial to quote Newmann’s(1994) elaboration on the benefits of COPE (cited in Timprly et al 2007: 203). Newmann (1994) emphasized the fact that

“Teaching requires information and support for beyond the resources available to the individual teacher working alone in an isolated classroom. Teaches who collaborate with their colleagues are more likely to be effective with students because they will benefit from expanded resources.”

As the new PDC chairperson, I would like to follow my colleagues’ steps in managing PD activities for the academic year 2017-2018. My intensive reading about the communal approach - the Community of Practice Excellence - COPE to professional development makes me fully aware of the advantages of such an approach to our PDC. By adopting this approach, the community of teachers will support each other by sharing ideas, skills, educational beliefs, and collaborating in all teaching areas as they consider learning to be a communal activity. They do this with the ultimate goal of improving their teaching strategies for the sake of developing students academically, socially and educationally. The credit goes to Dr. James and various educational researchers for the
enlightenment they have shared regarding the practical benefits of this approach. This model is more appropriate to experienced teachers, such as those at CCQ; it helps teachers to share ideas and expertise; it develops trust among teachers; it fosters teachers’ collaboration to reach excellence in teaching; and it enhances sense of collegiality.

The goals, objectives, and action plans of our Professional Development Committee will be based on Schon’s (1983) classification of knowledge (cited in Kaur,Yuen,and Kaur,2011). Schon pointed out that an effective teacher needs two types of basic knowledge:

1. Received Knowledge: knowledge gained from research-based theories. It consists of facts, data, and theories. Thus, language teachers should be familiar with concepts from science of linguistics, assessment, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics, instructional technology, leadership and team building, contrastive analysis, native language interference (similarities and differences), and classroom management.

2. Experiential or pedagogical knowledge: knowledge related to classroom pedagogy and differentiation(teaching the four language skills) and teacher reflection on professional performance.

The Roles and Responsibilities of PC Committee Chairperson

1. Call and schedule all meetings of the committee, including special meetings as requested or needed; prepare an agenda; distribute minutes; conduct all communication, including the committee’s recommendations and decisions, to all interested parties

2. As assigned, write all official committee reports required by administrative staff in a timely manner

3. Make sure the business of the Committee is conducted in a fair, open, and timely manner
4. Oversee all committee activities, including registration, room assignments, equipment availability, attendance, documentation, videotaping, taking photos, or recording if necessary, evaluations, etc.
5. Communicate with department chairperson in case logistic problems arise during PD activities
6. Meet with College Curriculum Committee to discuss the possibility of joint activities.
7. Assign tasks and responsibilities to professional development Committee members.
8. Write monthly reports about the progress of PDC activities.
9. Create a questionnaire to get teacher feedback about PDC activities at the end of the academic year.
10. Participate with members in charge of arranging a guest speaker event.
11. Write the committee goals, objectives, and action plans in a timely manner
12. Ensure that activities are conducted on time as scheduled
13. Communicate with other committees’ chairpersons to solve problems hindering teachers’ development: the Student Affairs Committee and the Curriculum Committee.
14. Celebrate faculty accomplishments by emailing these accomplishments to CCQ administration

Organization and Management:

The committee objectives and action plans determine how the members’ responsibilities will be distributed. The members will be given the option of selecting the activities they will supervise:

1. **Group ‘A’ will be responsible for technology:** They will design the PD web page: downloading faculty power point presentations, conducted research, photos of presentation, brochures, resources and so on. They will cooperate with the instructional technology center to recommend classroom strategies.
2. **Group ‘B’ will be in charge of action and empirical research.** This group will help faculty researchers by providing the faculty with APA referencing, guidelines to write proposals, guidelines for presenting in conferences, updating the faculty with the dates of local and international conferences, and so on.

3. **Group ‘C’ will arrange monthly PD presentations.** They will motivate teachers to participate in PD presentation sessions and ensure that the PD topics vary to include pedagogy, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, classroom management, curriculum development, psychology, and assessment.

4. **Group “D” will share ideas to write required PD surveys.**

5. **Group “E” will be responsible for editing and proofreading instructors’ articles, research, brochures, and ELC newsletters.**

**The Main Goal of Professional Development Committee is:**

To maintain educational excellence by revitalizing faculty knowledge and understanding ELC and inter-disciplinary issues, theories, and practices that develop classroom teaching strategies and classroom management to ultimately stimulate a good educational environment and improve students’ performance.
References


